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## Beyond Bandwidth: An Examination of Making Learning Accessible for All Students

Authors	Walker, Christal
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## ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation, BEYOND BANDWIDTH: AN EXAMINATION OF MAKING LEARNING ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL STUDENTS, by CHRISTAL WALKER, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Doctor of Philosophy, in the College of Education & Human Development, Georgia State University.

The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student's Department Chairperson, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty.

---

Diane Truscott, Ph.D.  
Committee Chair

---

Nancy Jo Schafer, Ph.D.  
Committee Member

---

Andrea Lewis, Ph.D.  
Committee Member

---

Joyce Many, Ph.D.  
Committee Member

---

Natalie Davis, Ph.D.  
Committee Member

---

Date

---

Laura May, Ph.D.  
Chairperson, Department of Early  
Childhood and Elementary Education

---

Paul A. Alberto, Ph.D.  
Dean, College of Education &  
Human Development

## **AUTHOR'S STATEMENT**

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CHRISTAL WALKER

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Christal Walker  
Department of Early Childhood and Elementary Education  
College of Education & Human Development  
Georgia State University

The director of this dissertation is:

Diane Truscott, Ph.D.  
Department of Early Childhood and Elementary Education  
College of Education & Human Development  
Georgia State University  
Atlanta, GA 30303

## CURRICULUM VITAE

Christal Walker

ADDRESS: 30 Pryor Street SW  
Atlanta, GA 30303

### EDUCATION:

Ph.D.	2021	Georgia State University Early Childhood and Elementary Education
M.A.T.	2016	Teachers College Elementary Inclusive Education
B.A.	2014	Spelman College Political Science

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

2017-present	Doctoral Graduate Research Assistant Georgia State University
2019-present	Fourth Grade Teacher
2016-2017	Third Grade Teacher Achievement First Linden

### PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS:

**Walker, C. L.**, & Truscott D. (2021, April). *Using cultural responsiveness to promote access in the virtual setting*. Symposium session 2021 meeting of the American Education Research Association, Virtual.

Lewis, A., Taylor, N., **Walker, C.L.** (Eds.). (2019). *Unsung Legacies of Educators and events in African American Education*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature Switzerland AG.

\*Schafer, N.J., Kruger, A.C., & Hickey, D.T., **Walker, C.L.** (in revision). *Using formative video feedback to facilitate classroom argumentation around assessments*.

**Walker, C. L., & Truscott D.** (2019, November). *Teachers' perceptions of children who struggle with behavioral challenges*. Paper session 2019 meeting of the National Association of Multicultural Education. Phoenix, AZ.

Santini-Diaz, Y., Pickens, M. T., Marshall, D., & **Walker, C.L.** (2019, October). *Conducting Action Research in the Urban Elementary Classroom*. Invited guest presentation in the course ECEE 6800 - Urban Education Capstone Seminar. Georgia State University. Atlanta, GA.

**Walker, C.L.,** Obiwo, S. M., Starks, F., Bostic, Q., & Pickens, M. T. (2019, April). *Staying true to you: A discussion on how to remain authentic in your life's work*. Panel Presentation at the Scholars of Color Conference. Philadelphia, PA.

**Walker, C. L.** Schafer, N.J. & Barker, K.S. (2019, April). *Teachers' developing definitions of classroom management and their use of children's literature to support practice*. Paper session 2019 meeting of the American Education Research Association, Toronto.

Barker, K.S., Schafer, N.J. **Walker, C. L.** (2018, April). *Teachers' developing definitions of classroom management and their use of children's literature to support practice*. Paper session 2018 meeting of the American Education Research Association, New York City.

#### PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

2017	American Educational Research Association
2020	National Association of Multicultural Education
2020	Association of Teacher Educators

**BEYOND BANDWIDTH: AN EXAMINATION OF MAKING LEARNING  
ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL STUDENTS**

by

**CHRISTAL WALKER**

Under the Direction of Diane M. Truscott, Ph.D.

**ABSTRACT**

The dissertation research examines culturally responsive practices in virtual learning settings in relation to teacher accessibility and is presented in a review and research format. The first paper constitutes a comprehensive scoping literature review that explores the proposition that virtual accessibility is an equity construct in Title 1 urban schools. A constant comparative approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) identifies themes in the literature related to how culturally responsive virtual learning components demonstrate support for the argument that connecting with students virtually is more than bandwidth. The review study finds that virtual accessibility is created by centering culture, building and sustaining culturally informed relationships, and fostering care. The second paper is a qualitative case study examining what is known about culturally responsive virtual learning in one second grade elementary Title 1 classroom. Collection and analysis of data occurs in four phases across 12 weeks and included bi-weekly data sets representing non-participant observations of reading or writing lessons, lesson plans, case participant interviews, and analytic memos. A constant comparative approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) identifies themes using Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings,

1995a, 2014) Culturally Informed Relationships (Milner, 2006), and an Ethos of Care (Jackson, Sealey-Ruiz, & Watson, 2014) theories. The case study illustrates that culturally responsive practices (CRP) can be part of virtual learning by centering culture through relationships within an intentional virtual learning community. Implications for re-tooling technologies to facilitate virtual CRP are presented.

INDEX WORDS: culturally responsive, online learning, virtual learning, ethos of care, teacher education

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A Dissertation

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Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Early Childhood and Elementary Education

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the College of Education & Human Development

Georgia State University

Atlanta, GA  
2021

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, who has encouraged me every step of the way. Thank you for pushing me, encouraging me, supporting me, and always reminding me “Knowledge is Power.”

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## **Chapter One** **A Research Review of Culturally Responsive Online Learning**

### **Introduction**

On Monday, March 16 schools changed drastically. Over the year a thought that constantly comes to the minds of educators is how can we find innovative ways to implement instructional strategies and supports to reach students beyond bandwidth. Even though we are not in a traditional brick and mortar setting and our methods of implementation look different we want to ensure our students are still receiving what they need to be successful.

Educational researchers recognize the importance of the sociocultural theory in face to face instruction. Vygotsky's (1978) work confirms through language, social exchanges, and connections with lived experience to new knowledge, learning is made responsive to the student, thus the foundation for culturally responsive pedagogies (Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

#### **Culturally Responsive Pedagogy**

We know the crucial role culture plays in learning based on the research from multicultural educational researchers. Scholars and researchers such Geneva Gay, 2004, Gloria Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2009, and Jaqueline Irvine, 2002, give us culturally responsive practices to support culturally and linguistically diverse students. The first concept that developed was the work of Geneva Gay (2002, 2010, 2013); coined to be culturally responsive teaching, this concept of multicultural education focuses on the teaching practices. The next strand that developed was culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). Gloria Ladson-Billings portrays this in her work, *Dreamkeepers* along with other publications(1994, 1995, 2009, and 2014). This strand focuses on teacher posture and paradigm. Ladson-Billings (1994) coined culturally relevant pedagogy as one that “empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and

politically using a cultural reference to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (p. 16).

*DreamKeepers* (Ladson-Billings, 2009) uses “Afrocentric feminist epistemology” (Collins, 1991). This pedagogy is characterized by the following: a basis of concrete experience as a criterion of meaning; the use of dialogue; an emphasis on caring; and an emphasis on personal accountability. The key behind culturally responsive pedagogy is the ability to link principles of learning with a deep understanding of (and appreciation for) culture (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Although the frameworks are similar because they all have a vision guided by a commitment to social justice, Gay (2010) focuses on the teaching to show what a teacher should be doing in the classroom to be culturally responsive. Ladson-Billings (2009) focuses on pedagogy mainly to influence the attitudes and dispositions a teacher might take when determining planning, instruction, and assessment.

The union of home culture and school culture further support the learning of diverse students and occurs when teachers build supportive culturally informed relationships with students and create classrooms that center culture and foster care. We understand that learners bring culture and knowledge to the classroom. In this sense, student success can only be measured in relation to the success of his or her community and a certain level of connectedness to that community (Jackson, Sealey-Ruiz, & Watson, 2014; Milner, 2006). The purpose of this research review is to provide support for the proposition that virtual accessibility is an equity issue in urban Title 1 schools. I begin by providing a rationale for the importance of the review study and follow with the method used, the findings and a discussion of the importance of this work for teachers and their students.

### **Rationale for the Study**

The purpose of this research review study is to explore the intersect between culturally responsive practices and virtual learning in urban Title 1 settings in order to support the proposition that accessibility is an equity issue. I begin with an overview of existing literature around issues of access for Title 1 schools and diverse learners, considerations of online teaching practices, and a focus on established pedagogy used in urban Title 1 schools, Culturally Responsive Teaching. Components of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy are woven throughout my discussion of the issues.

#### **An Issue of Access for Title 1 Schools and Diverse Learners**

The classroom composition is changing. More than half of the public-school population includes minority children, those whom traditionally do not have the same access to instructional materials (such as books), qualified culturally responsive teachers, or quality infrastructure to support student cultures as their white counterparts (Talbert-Johnson, 2004, 2006). Urban low-resourced (Title 1) schools are often characterized by having higher concentrations of students who are racial and ethnic minorities, of low socioeconomic status, and on free or reduced lunch (Jacob, 2007). Accessibility experiences of Black and other minoritized students in the United States continue to be substantially separate and unequal (Darling-Hammond, 2001) and include access to qualified teachers, learning resources, and learning experiences (Talbert-Johnson, 2006).

Poor and minority students have less access to qualified teachers than do more affluent and nonminority children (Darling-Hammond, 2004; Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2004; Oakes, 1990; Rosenbaum, 1976). Successful teachers in schools where the majority of children are culturally diverse understand the importance of linking student home culture and the school

(Ladson-Billings, 1995). Less qualified teachers may mean less knowledge of and experience with culturally responsive practices to support students who attend Title 1 urban schools.

Classrooms filled with diverse learners need to examine how teachers can use cultural responsiveness to make learning more accessible for all students. One lens for solving this complex issue is multicultural education, specifically culturally responsive teaching. Culturally responsive teachers make learning more accessible to students while in the classroom. Being a qualified teacher is more than knowledge and skills about practices but beliefs in the importance of what children are capable of, human capital, student experiences, and teachers need to help them see themselves as in control of their world and their future (Talbert-Johnson, 2004).

Culturally responsive teaching in the virtual learning space is an accessibility marker and connection to the virtual world. Research has not provided clear direction on how to support diverse learners within a virtual learning context (Huerta et al., 2015). Research on what successful culturally responsive teachers offer means understanding how to extend virtual learning spaces with learners, not just tools, in mind.

In a 2015 report on educational equity, the National Educational Policy Center asserted that policymakers should promote culturally responsive curriculum, and that students must encounter “culturally responsive teaching in order to have equal opportunity” (Rice, 2015, p. 5).

Culturally responsive education can provide opportunities for virtual learning instructional practices for diverse learners. A primary goal of culturally responsive education has been to reform educational institutions so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social class groups will experience educational equity.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy relies on teachers’ willingness to get to know their students. Pang and Barba (1995) advocate for teacher usage of the culture that students bring to

the table as an integral part of concept and knowledge building, moving away from a deficit model that assumes “cultural disadvantage” for students who do not belong to the dominant culture. This model recommends that teachers become familiar with the sociocultural context of students’ lives so that they begin to include more culturally inclusive instructional practices in the classroom environment (i.e., the virtual learning environment). Given the state of education since March 2020, this context now includes considerations of the online learning environment.

### **Considerations of Online Teaching**

The use of culturally responsive practices in the classroom extends to spaces of learning that are now different (Archambault & Kennedy, 2014; Borup, Graham, & Drysdale, 2014; DiPietro et al., 2008). Traditional components of quality online learning are new and rising (Lawrence, 2017, 2020). The qualities of effective teaching may be similar across the online context, yet as Archambault and Kennedy (2014) indicate implementation is not the same. Unlike other studies that focus on instructional strategies, Borup, Graham, and Drysdale (2014) identify teacher engagement as critical when describing the practices of successful K-12 online teachers. The authors pinpoint 6 elements of teacher engagement among effective K-12 online instructors in their findings: designing and organizing, facilitating discourse, instructing, nurturing, motivating, and monitoring. Borup, Graham, and Drysdale (2014) address how teacher practices (i.e., nurturing and motivating) help engage students. Borup, Graham, and Drysdale (2014) use the same nurturing description as that of Picciano, Seaman, and Allen (2010) which state that teachers “are incredibly important socializing agents who nurture and provide social and emotional support” (p. 29). Borup, Graham, and Drysdale (2014) does not specifically address diverse students nor Title 1 schools, however, they do state K-12 teachers are held to a higher standard because they serve as additional parents to the children’s birth parents. The

authors go on to describe the next element, motivation, as an important factor in facilitating discourse and possibly used through praise and incentives. However, this form of motivation is different from culturally responsive teaching practices that focus on intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is also more effective and puts more consideration on learners in Title 1, urban schools (Weinstein, 2004). It is important to note the Borup et al. study uses teachers to look closely at the nature of support needed for application by Open High School of Utah, an online charter school. The researchers do not differentiate between recommendations for elementary, middle, and high school students, however they make generalizable findings for elementary school teachers. Because of the bounded nature of their research, at an online charter school, the authors must use technology as a tool to nurture and motivate students. This is atypical for a culturally responsive environment where there is a focus on nurturing and motivating directly through people. In this sense, technology is reimagined to address culture in the virtual setting. In the Borup study, web-based surveys and telephone interviews are analyzed using descriptive studies and inductive analysis. The results show that course developers (not teachers) have a strong desire to use interactive elements in their courses. Interactive elements may include interactive collaborate boards allowing multiple students to respond at once, or zoom polls which quickly capture students' understanding of concepts. Both types of innovations can support equitable culturally responsive virtual practices but rest on technology as a tool, not teachers.

DiPietro et al. (2008) identify the best practices in teaching K-12 online schools. The purpose of their study is to determine the best practices of 16 virtual teachers from the Michigan Virtual School. DiPietro identify 37 best practices of online teachers, grouped into eight categories: classroom management strategies, pedagogical strategies, assessment, engaging

students with content, making course meaningful for students, providing support, communication and community, and technology. These categories focus on academic engagement and community engagement but not through the lens of CRP. This study provides justification for the lack of care and culture in K-12 online learning studies. This study also includes separate instructional roles such as teacher, instructional designer, course facilitator, local key contact, mentor, and technology coordinator. However, in a culturally responsive teaching context this is solely the role of the teacher. In a CR environment the teacher must act as the support person for all students' needs. DiPietro et al. (2008) categorizes engagement as the student motivational aspect of establishing presence virtually. DiPietro et al. (2008) defines *community* in ways closely related to CR teaching as the following: teacher expectations for student use of discussion boards, one to one interactions (student to student or teacher to student interactions), establishing nurturing relationships, and a community of learners. The authors do not address considerations for learners in Title 1 urban schools nor do they address separate accommodations for elementary students. Rather they state "there are many similarities between teaching online secondary and online elementary classes" ((DiPietro et al., 2008, p.28). Thus, while the study provides some helpful information related to understanding effective online instruction, it does so outside of considerations of elementary classrooms committed to culturally responsive practices.

While most studies of K-12 online learning do not consider specific pedagogies, April Lawrence's (2017) award winning dissertation study investigates the factors of effective online teachers and ways culturally responsive teaching occurs virtually. Using grounded theory, she analyzes observations of online classes, interviews with four high school teacher participants, and teacher-written narratives to discover how teachers implemented culturally responsive online

pedagogical practices in a state-supported online program. Lawrence (2017, 2020) found that teachers engaged in frequent and continuous dialogue with their students and used a variety of strategies to get to know their students, to create and sustain class community, to adapt instruction to students' learning needs and preferences thereby making learning relevant. Both Gay (2000) and Ladson-Billings (1994) named dialogue between students and teachers and between students and students as one characteristic of a culturally responsive classroom. The act of teaching as dialogue presumes that teachers listen and respond to their students' care and helps form culturally informed relationships as a part of the learning process. Rather than talking *at* students, this dialogic pedagogical approach implies that teachers talk with their students, and get to know them, including cultural connections, beyond the boundaries of the classroom setting. Teachers in Lawrence's (2017, 2020) study also discussed contextual factors that impacted their practice. Lawrence's (2017, 2020) study as well as other research on culturally responsive online pedagogy (CROP) provides some direction for this research review. While critical CRP components were found important for online instruction (dialogue, community, instructional adaptations) absent from this work are three important characteristics of culturally responsive pedagogy: centering culture, cultivating care, and developing culturally informed relationships. Each of these important aspects of CRP are discussed in the next section.

### **Accessibility and Culturally Responsive Online Learning**

Culturally responsive online learning as a solution to educational problems in equity and access is recurrent in the literature on K-12 online learning (Picciano & Seaman, 2010; Selwyn, 2011; Staker, 2011). Culturally responsive online learning can also provide opportunities for more accessible curriculum and more student access to differentiate instructional practices

(Staker, 2011; Sturgis, Rath, Weisstein, & Patrick, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology, 2010).

Camardese & Peled (2014) outlines a qualitative study of a technology-based literacy and social studies program. This program matched 141 middle school students from Israel and the United States cultures. Students in the program used e-mail and videoconferencing to discuss the story of an 11-year-old boy who hides in the Jewish ghetto during World War II. The authors use two data collection methods: an open-ended questionnaire designed to identify program strengths and weaknesses and semi-structured interviews. The authors chose these data collection methods because interviews gave participants a space to share their experiences and provided an opportunity for them to ask follow-up questions. The semi-structured interviews allowed the authors to identify emerging themes about the perspectives of students, teachers, and principals on the implications of the International Book Sharing Program (IB-SP). All student participants read *The Island on Bird Street* by Uri Orlev (1997), and each Israeli student is paired with one U.S. student. Teachers from both Israel and the United States pose questions related to the reading for students to respond to via e-mail. Teachers in each respective country follow a curriculum developed to engage students in the classroom and in e-mailing and to foster understanding of culture (Jewish Agency for Israel, 2011). Sharing experiences, dialogue, connections to community, and understanding and appreciating for diversity made this a culturally responsive online learning project.

Another study on culturally responsive online learning focuses on the power of language in learning. Finkelstein et al. (2013) establish that students showed greater achievement during virtual learning when culturally relevant dialects are used. Finkelstein et al. (2013) analyzes the relationship between academic performance and dialect differences displayed in a learning

environment by gauging 3rd grade students' science performance after illustrating with a "distant peer" technology that employed one of three dialect use patterns. All participants were native speakers of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and showed the strongest science performance when they used technology with AAVE features throughout the peer interaction. This study shows the importance of instructional practices inclusive of culture in virtual learning spaces. Berge and Clark (2005) determines several benefits of online learning through a collection of essays. The authors establish that virtual learning can expand educational access to students and can provide more opportunities for students with different or multiple learning styles (Barbour & Reeves, 2009; Berge & Clark, 2005). For example, asynchronous flexibility in virtual learning promotes more thoughtful or reflective communications (Tinker & Haavind, 1996). Online collaboration boards help build community with students, gives students an equal opportunity to participate in discussions, and holds particular benefits for students who are usually shy or reflective. In addition, virtual learning offers students space to collaborate with individuals from other cultural backgrounds as illustrated in the studies described earlier (iNacol & Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2006). Culturally responsive online learning has the potential to support students' learning needs in innovative differentiated ways.

Differentiated instruction has been identified as the process of modified curriculum and teaching methods to fit individual student needs (Hall, Strangman, & Meyer, 2003; Van Garderen & Whittaker, 2006). Brown-Jeffy & Cooper (2011) state the ability to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of learners is also one of the best practices of multicultural education. Even if standards are the same, culturally responsive online teachers make instructional decisions to cater to the needs of the student (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology, 2010). Student learning contexts are crucial in choosing the best practices of

culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1994). The scoping review centers on the importance of contexts and practices and asks the following research question: what is known about virtual accessibility in a title 1 urban school?

### **Method**

The research review study contributes to literature related to CRP and the virtual space. The current study adopts a scoping review method. Scoping reviews utilize an exploratory literature review procedure to map literature (Arksey & O'Malley, 2007). They are unlike other types of literature reviews in that they do not seek to answer narrow research questions (Arksey & O'Malley, 2007). The purpose of the research review is to identify, examine, and find themes across the literature to explore the proposition that virtual accessibility is an equity construct in Title 1 urban schools. The introductory literature offers the following definitions that guide analysis of the review.

- Accessibility – access to what is needed for learning.
- Bandwidth - teacher capacity to deal with something in relation to practices and capabilities as a service student needs.
- Care – “caring for” rather than “care about” by demonstrating respect and appreciation for cultural diversity (Brown, 2004; Garrison- Wade & Lewis, 2006; Price, 2006, Roberts, 2010,) and through their own deep interpersonal empathy and understanding (this can be both instructional and non-instructional).
- Classroom Culture- an environment where students feel safe, accepted, and free to be included in all aspects of teaching and learning.
- Construct - real but unobservable objects of study in psychological research.

- Culturally responsive teaching – teaching that acknowledges, responds to, and celebrates fundamental cultures. Recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning (Gay, 2010).
- Community- a strong classroom environment where students feel empowered, valued, and thrive (Ladson-Billings, 1994).
- Culture - a fluid set of practices and beliefs shared by members of a particular group that distinguish that group from other groups. amalgamation of human activity, production, thought, and belief systems (Ladson-Billings, 2014).
- Relationship - a connection between two parties.
- Virtual learning - an online learning environment. It takes places through online applications such as Zoom, Google Meets, or Microsoft Teams. It can be both synchronous and asynchronous.

This search intends to be inclusive therefore use of EBSCO database ensures a wide range of articles and books on culturally responsive virtual learning teacher practices. Key terms used in the scoping review process to find books and articles published from 1994 to 2020 include, (a) culturally responsive, (b) culturally relevant, (c) online/distance/virtual learning (d) relationships (e) teacher responses (f) teacher beliefs (g) teacher practices (h) Title 1 and (i) urban schools. The electronic database search strategy is limited to academic articles and books between the years of 1994 (*Dreamkeepers* published date) and 2020 (the start of the pandemic) resulting in 626 EBSCO articles.

The next stage in a scoping review determines which documents identified in the search would be included or excluded from analysis (Tricco et al., 2016). Final articles for analysis (i.e., the corpus) mention or focus on teacher practices; elements of culturally responsive or relevant

pedagogy; virtual, online or distance learning; and/or K-12 urban populations. Articles excluded describe home-schooling, college populations, and articles from nonacademic journals. I reviewed the titles and abstracts of 626 EBSCO articles, and narrowed down to 14 applicable studies or book chapters. For example, Plante & Asselin (2014) made it into the corpus because these authors identified 18 ways online teachers demonstrate caring online, including explicit teacher behaviors such as providing prompt feedback, posting communications, using tones of affirmation, and engaging in frequent contact. Their other strategies, like supporting others, encouraging interactions through teamwork, and promoting a safe environment are aimed at generating social presence. This social presence contributes to a sense of classroom community, a notion that has been identified as an integral component of effective online instruction connected to the culture, care and relationship components of the study. Cast (2011) also made it into the corpus because the author discussed classes designed using the principles of universal design and provided multiple ways of accessing academic content, demonstrating student learning, and engaging with content. Finklestein et al. (2013) made it to the corpus because the participants in this study who used African American Vernacular English (AAVE) (associated with CRP), demonstrated the strongest science performance when the technology used AAVE features consistently throughout the interaction. Lawrence (2017) made it to the corpus because this dissertation study offered important information on ways to implement culturally responsive teaching in a virtual setting. Articles for analysis are noted in the reference list with an asterick and listed in Table 1 below. The EBSCO reading and reviewing process also identifies additional articles for this study. These articles were reviewed, read in-depth, and coded. Figure 1 provides an example of how codes were applied during analysis of the articles. Table 1 illustrates the

codes that were applied to all 14 articles. Then, I used constant comparison to identify themes comparing across them for the three main components (see Figure 2).

**Figure 1**

**Scoping Analysis**

<p>In the Camardese and Peled (2014) article, the authors show facilitated online communication and interaction can impact <b><i>cultural understanding</i></b> and online communication tools have potential for allowing students to interact in <b><i>meaningful ways with students from different backgrounds</i></b></p>	<p>In the 2008 Dipietro article, the authors findings show teachers who have success with online learning have a deep understanding of the learning styles of their students, motivate their students, <b><i>establish strong relationships</i></b>, and use strategies to <b><i>connect with students</i></b>.</p>	<p>In the Picciano &amp; Seaman’s (2010) articles the authors. States a effective K-12 online learning strategy is identifying and <b><i>“meeting the needs of specific students”</i></b> as a characteristic of online learning.</p>
<p><b><i>Culture</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Relationships</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Care</i></b></p>

Table 1

Article Findings and CRP Codes

Article	Findings	CRP Category
Barbour, 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• online K-12 teaching involves new or additional skills that do not automatically translate from face-to-face teaching.</li> <li>• online teachers take on roles in excess of traditional teacher.</li> <li>• K-12 online teachers must adopt 3 roles: instructional designer, teacher, and course facilitator.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Culture</b> <b>Relationships</b></p>
Camardese & Peled 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• facilitated online communication and interaction can impact cultural understanding.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Culture</b> <b>Relationships</b> <b>Care</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• online communication tools have potential for allowing students to interact in meaningful ways with students from different backgrounds.</li> </ul>	
CAST, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• classes designed using the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) provided multiple ways of accessing academic content, multiple ways for students to demonstrate their learning, and multiple ways of engaging with content.</li> <li>• teachers all recognized that different instructional approaches and different ways of presenting and engaging with content appeal to different learners.</li> <li>• teachers continuously add to and adapt their course content, and frequently offer multiple ways to access information (ex. video, audio, and text). This design principle, coupled with the recursive nature of their work, resembles a responsive UDL.</li> </ul>	<b>Care</b>
DiPietro et al., 2008	<p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are skilled with technology</li> <li>• are flexible with their time</li> <li>• have a deep understanding of the learning styles of their students</li> <li>• motivate their students</li> <li>• understand the pedagogical strategies they use (sense of community)</li> <li>• use logical consequences</li> <li>• use multiple strategies to assess student learning</li> <li>• teach content to reflect the interests of students</li> <li>• establish strong relationships</li> <li>• use strategies to connect with students</li> </ul>	<b>Culture Care Relationships</b>
Farmer, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• varied learning activities in online teacher education classes helped to promote more culturally sensitive online instruction</li> <li>• culturally responsive online classes include easy navigation, images and concept maps, self-checks for understanding, opportunities for student-choice, clear directions and expectations, and a varied resources and materials</li> <li>• online learning teachers establish and maintain a culturally inclusive and supportive online learning community</li> </ul>	<b>Culture Care Relationships</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>deliberate facilitation of class discussion and interactions by the teacher contributes to the development of an inclusive learning community</li> </ul>	
Ferdig et al., 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>online K-12 teaching involves new or additional skills that do not automatically translate from face-to-face teaching</li> <li>online teacher are clearly defined, and may incorporate such roles as mentor, interactor, and telecommunications specialist, moving much beyond the traditional role of teacher</li> </ul>	<b>Care Relationship</b>
Finkelstein, S., Yarzebinski, E., Vaughn, C., Ogan, A., & Cassell, J. (2013).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>participants, all native speakers of African American Vernacular English (AAVE), demonstrated the strongest science performance when the technology used AAVE features consistently throughout the interaction</li> </ul>	<b>Culture Relationships</b>
Lawrence (2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>teachers engaged in frequent and ongoing dialogue with their students</li> <li>teachers used multiple strategies to get to know their students, to build class community, to adapt instruction to students' learning needs and preferences, and to make learning relevant</li> <li>teachers also discussed contextual factors (e.g., program structure and student enrollment) that impacted their practice.</li> <li>infusion of students' cultures into the curriculum and helping students to challenge power and hegemony, did not emerge</li> </ul>	<b>Culture Care Relationships</b>
Picciano & Seaman, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify "meeting the needs of specific students" as a characteristic of online learning</li> <li>show students have access to individualized choices, teachers can provide one-on-one differentiated instruction as ways to engage students in learning, and to customize education</li> </ul>	<b>Culture Care</b>
Plante & Asselin, 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>caring is expressed through social presence in an online environment.</li> <li>identified 18 ways online teachers can demonstrate caring online, including explicit teacher behaviors like providing prompt feedback, posting communications, using tones of affirmation, and</li> </ul>	<b>Culture Care Relationships</b>

	<p>engaging in frequent contact. Their other strategies, like supporting others, encouraging interactions through teamwork, and promoting a safe environment are aimed at generating social presence. This social presence contributes to a sense of classroom community, a notion that has been identified as an integral component of effective online instruction.</p>	
Rovai, 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a sense of community in online college courses was positively correlated with students' perceptions of their own learning</li> <li>• sense of connectedness also improved both cognitive learning and retention</li> </ul>	<b>Culture Relationships Care</b>
Selwyn, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• K-12 online learning has emerged as a potential vehicle for educational reform, that virtual instruction can revolutionize learning by increasing educational opportunities and by facilitating student learning and engagement</li> <li>• online learning can provide a solution to educational problems in achievement, equity, and access is recurrent in the literature on K-12 online learning</li> </ul>	<b>Culture Care</b>
Staker, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• online learning can provide a solution to educational problems in achievement, equity, and access is recurrent in the literature on K-12 online learning</li> <li>• online learning can also provide students with more individualized attention and teachers with more opportunities to differentiate instruction</li> </ul>	<b>Culture Care Relationships</b>
Valasquez, Graham, & West, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• caring that happens in the online learning context <i>technology-mediated caring</i></li> <li>• collaborative technologies like Google Docs helped to provide students and teachers with shared experiences, and that closely observing students' online interactions with other classmates helped them to learn about their students' needs and respond to them appropriately.</li> </ul>	<b>Culture Care Relationships</b>

## Findings

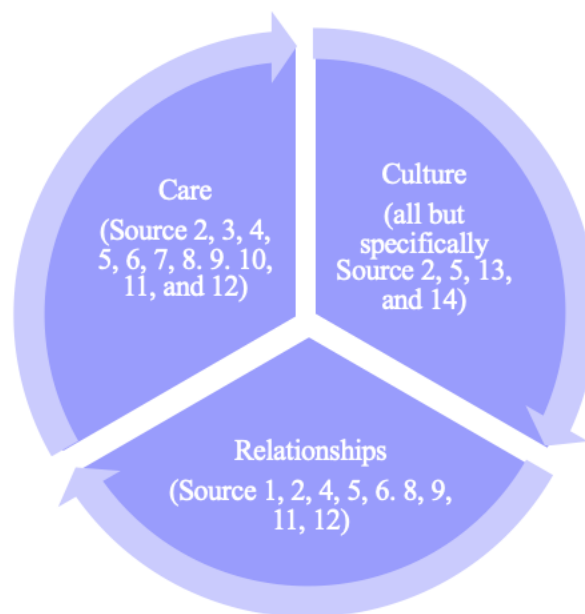
Data from the research on K-12 online learning highlight accessibility as an equity construct. The term accessibility takes on different meanings in different contexts. In urban Title 1 schools, accessibility traditionally refers to making sure students have access to qualified teachers, learning resources, and learning experiences (Talbert-Johnson, 2006) especially Black and other minoritized students in the United States who continue to be substantially separate and unequal (Darling-Hammond, 2001). Accessibility in the virtual classroom refers to availability of and support for online tools, technology, internet, and features of synchronous and asynchronous instruction. This type of accessibility is not specific to urban settings. However, findings from this research and review study supports the argument that accessibility, when contextualized in urban Title 1 schools, is more than whether students have internet. Accessibility must include culturally responsive practices supported by technology which foster care, build culturally informed relationships, and center culture to meet the individual needs of the learner. If success is measured in terms of what happens in the learning community and *we know* that accessibility *within virtual classrooms* is an issue for many students, then virtual accessibility presents as an equity-based construct. A difference in considerations of accessibility from the studies used in this chapter is that while modifications can foster access, a commitment to centering culture, building culturally responsive relationships and fostering care serve as the *rights* of all learners.

Specifically, this work shows that centering culture is key to students in urban schools and any practices that are responsive to students, even virtually, need to center culture. A second finding from the literature is that relationships are key and while they may be difficult to form in virtual space, students need them. Finally, the research review found that care is important,

regardless of the teaching space, and care is critical to diverse learning communities. These findings support the argument that in virtual learning spaces when teachers work with children in urban Title 1 schools they cannot ignore these important variables that they would acknowledge in the regular classroom space. Being virtual does not excuse teachers from doing what is important and critical for students in Title 1 urban schools to create more access to equitable culturally responsive learning experiences. Each of these findings are described next with examples from the literature.

Figure 2.

#### Literature Analysis



#### Centering Culture

Centering culture and culturally responsive practices are key to students in urban Title 1 schools and should be included in all practices that are responsive to students, even virtually. Rovai (2002) found that a sense of community in online learning was positively correlated with students' perceptions of their own learning thus more accessibility. Camardese and Peled (2014)

study shows how facilitated online communication and interaction has the potential to improve cultural understanding. Gay (2000) advocates for the integration of content and materials that represent diversity to provide equitable learning experiences for students in Title 1 urban schools. Borup et al. (2014) found that all but one teacher participant in their study of K-12 online teacher engagement noted that they consistently modified curriculum for their online learners in order to make the learning more accessible and relevant. Gay (2000) recommended that culturally responsive teachers engage in critical analysis of texts, images, and documents in order to be better equipped to engage students in an accessible culturally responsive curriculum. Farmer (2009) found that accessible culturally responsive online classes include: applications with easy navigation, opportunities for student-choice, images and concept maps, clear directions and expectations, and a varied resources and materials.

These studies illustrate that by centering culture, the teacher can harness and build community in their virtual classrooms despite not being face to face. A virtual classroom space is still a site where students learn and develop pride in their own cultures as well as be exposed to others' cultures. However, this level of pride is only be possible in a virtual space if teachers provide elements of accessibility by supporting culture.

### **Building Relationships**

Relationships may be difficult to do in virtual space, but they are key for students, hence an equity issue. Milner (2006) defines culturally informed relationships as “high expectations, deep care for Black children, [and] beliefs in their [Black students’] capacity to succeed.” (p. 98). This is crucial in the Title 1 urban context because without culturally informed relationships virtual learning is not accessible to all learners. Milner claims (2006),

The idea is that Black teachers, by virtue of their out of school interactions and their deep cultural understanding of what it meant and means to be Black in America, often brought a level of knowledge and connectedness into the classroom that showed up in their teaching Black teachers were equipped to bring cultural understanding and connections into the classroom, partly because of how they lived their lives outside of the classroom. (p. 99)

This level of knowledge is needed to make accommodations and considers for learners in a Title 1 urban context. While it may look different teachers must learn how to pivot to serve their diverse learners in a CR virtual learning setting. Milner (2006) poses a valid question, “how do all teachers from various backgrounds develop and sustain culturally informed relationships with their Black students?” Teachers can do this in a culturally responsive virtual learning settings by using the cultural knowledge about the students’ (home) community to build and sustain culturally informed relationships with them. Milner touches on the importance of cultural knowledge in the process and development of teacher student relationships. Culturally informed relationships are crucial for diverse low-income students given the obstacles faced and tendency to have less access to high-quality educational experiences. Teachers who engage in culturally informed relationships with students encourage them to develop confidence, pride, a sense of responsibility, and critical consciousness. In a practical sense, teachers who develop culturally informed relationships provide academically demanding learning experiences (a key tenet of culturally responsive pedagogy). Borup’s et al. (2014) teachers indicated that they worked to cultivate “caring relationships with students” (p. 800). The authors stated a way for teachers to provide children with equitable experiences and ensure they are successful in school is to encourage parent involvement and to build positive parent-teacher relationships. Henderson and

Berla (1994) found some benefits of positive and consistent parent-teacher communication included higher student satisfaction, higher test scores, and overall increases in children's achievement in school. Shirvani (2007) found strong parent-teacher communication led to more positive student attitudes. Throughout their investigation, Kraft and Rogers (2015) found that all of these conclusions could be achieved simply by sending a one-sentence note home weekly with each student. All authors provide practices that led to more accessibility through relationship building thereby making learning more equitable for children in Title 1 urban schools.

### **Cultivating Care**

Care is important in the virtual teaching space and is critical to diverse learning communities. Ethos of Care (Jackson, Sealey-Ruiz, & Watson, 2014) theorize that student success can only be measured *in relation to the success of his or her community and a certain level of connectedness to community (emphasis added)*. Shevalier & McKenzie (2012) argue that cultural and linguistic diversity is a valuable resource in urban schools and that teachers who combine culturally responsive teaching practices with caring, ethics-based approaches have the means to do “a far better job” of educating our urban students. These authors provide distinctions between “caring about” and “caring for” urban students. This study focuses on “caring for”, a deeper level of care with ongoing development of a reciprocal relationship. In order for a relationship to be culturally responsive and respond to the need of students in ways that build and sustain meaningful, positive relationships, that is, to “care for” them rather than “care about” them. Culturally responsive teachers model “caring for” by demonstrating respect and appreciation for cultural diversity (Brown, 2004; Garrison- Wade & Lewis, 2006; Price, 2006, Roberts, 2010) and through their own deep interpersonal empathy and understanding. Literature that discusses teacher care acknowledges that students experience positive school outcomes, such

as improved attendance, attitude, self-esteem, effort and identification with school, if they believe their teachers care for them and their well-being. Effective teachers not only employ but model the skills they strive to achieve with students to create classroom environments in which teacher and students respond to one another freely and eagerly, not because *they had to* but because *they wanted to* (Shevalier & McKenzie, 2012). Modeling the behaviors that teachers ask of their classroom communities illustrates that the attitudes caring individuals hold toward others (understanding, appreciation and empathy) and the actions caring individuals use to “care for” others (clear communication, attention to others’ actions, providing sincere assistance, and self-reflection).

If success is measured in terms of what happens in the learning community and we know that accessibility within virtual classrooms is an issue for many students, then virtual accessibility presents as an equity-based construct. It builds on what we know about access for Title 1 learners technologically speaking by recognizing that fostering care is a critical component for diverse students and access to this type of pedagogy should be available if equity is the goal. The goal of this type of “caring” is to help ethnically diverse students not only excel academically but also contribute to a more caring, humane society. Teachers who enact this level of culturally responsive caring often are characterized as a counselor, an encourager, and a cheerleader to meet the needs of the whole student community (Siddle Walker & Tompkins, 2004). These educators are described as “warm demanders” (Vasquez, 1988) who go beyond their immediate duties to build culturally informed relationships with youth, maintain high expectations, and validate students as intelligent, cultural beings (Delpit, 2012; Haddix, 2010; Sealey- Ruiz & Greene, 2011). Valasquez, Graham, and West (2013) studied how teachers fostered caring interactions in an online high school. The authors discussed caring possibilities in

the virtual learning context. The authors pointed out characteristics of what they refer to as technology-mediated caring: teacher-student accessibility, promptness, initiating dialogue, shared experience, and vigilant observation however they do not address the accessibility for the diverse learner. Plante and Asselin (2014) proposed that caring is expressed through social presence in an online environment. They identify 18 ways online instructors can show caring online including providing prompt feedback, posting communications, using tones of affirmation, and engaging in frequent contact. The authors also discuss Universal Design for Learning (UDL) originating out of the need to provide accessible and engaging learning activities for students with disabilities. UDL is an instructional design framework that increases student accessibility. Research on UDL finds it as a framework used for students with and without disabilities. UDL instructional methods have implications all teachers should learn from. Teachers who use UDL to modify and design their curriculum provide students with multiple ways to access knowledge, demonstrate their learning, and engage with content (CAST, 2011). Asselin (2014) and CAST (2011) both discuss accessibility practices but not in culturally responsive ways. Nonetheless, extensive literature confirms that many African American teachers feel a need to be “vigilant in the fight against ongoing structural inequalities for African American youth and often demonstrate this dedication in their classrooms in unique ways, thus providing culturally relevant critical teacher care” (Roberts, 2010, p. 454).

A difference in considerations of accessibility from these studies is that while modifications can foster access, a commitment to centering culture, building culturally responsive relationships and fostering care serve as the *rights* of all learners in Title 1 urban schools and shifts the conversation about accessibility to one of equity.

## Discussion

Literature on K-12 culturally responsive online learning displays accessibility as an equity construct (CAST, 2011; Ferdig et al., 2009; Rogers, 2015; Selwyn, 2011) and highlights the importance of three components to create accessibility in Title 1 urban schools: centering culture is key to students in urban schools and any practices that are responsive to students, even virtually, need to do center culture; relationships are key and while they may be difficult to form in virtual space, students need them- hence represents an the equity issue in urban Title 1 schools; and finally care is important regardless of the teaching space and critical to diverse learning communities. The use of culturally responsive practices in the classroom extends to spaces of learning that are now different (Archambault & Kennedy, 2014; Borup, Graham, & Drysdale, 2014; DiPietro et al., 2008). Teachers must continue to find innovative ways to implement instructional strategies and supports to reach students beyond bandwidth, and understand supplying students with technology (i.e. chromebooks, hotspots, etc.) is simply not enough. Traditional components of quality online learning are new and rising (Lawrence, 2017, 2020). The qualities of effective teaching may be similar across the virtual learning context, yet as Archambault and Kennedy (2014) indicate implementation is not the same. Online learning is beginning to address the importance of care and culture in assessing its effectiveness. Culturally responsive online learning can provide solutions to educational problems in equity, and access is recurrent in the literature on K-12 online learning (Picciano & Seaman, 2010; Selwyn, 2011; Staker, 2011). We know the crucial role culture plays in learning based on the research from multicultural educational researchers; and culturally responsive teaching in the virtual learning space is an accessibility marker and connection to the virtual world. However, research has not

provided clear direction on how to support learners in a Title 1 urban context learners within the virtual learning space (Huerta et al., 2015).

### **Limitations**

As this scoping of the literature demonstrate, a major limitation of this study is the lack of K-5 research to support the best practices for virtual learners in Title 1 urban schools. The research on culturally responsive online learning focuses on K-12 educations and there is no sufficient data on the implementation methods for elementary aged students. In addition, the research on culturally responsive online learning tend to be located in schools that have been formed and have operated as online for some time (e.g., Michigan Virtual School, an online charter schools). These contexts are very different than the traditional brick and mortar elementary environments that may not have the availability of specialized technology, dedicated personnel and staff specific to supporting online learning, ongoing professional learning, and, of-course, time. Effective teachers need a level of flexibility to shift from face to face learning to virtual learning and support to learn the skills needed for successful transitions. Also, because culturally responsive learning was developed based on in person interactions the direct transference of good culturally responsive instructional practices for in person settings do not always translate to good teaching in online environments.

### **Implications for Future Research**

Research acknowledging the variety of models of virtual schooling would help provide further directions for culturally responsive virtually learning. Additional studies on schools who have transitioned from in person to virtual instruction are needed to provide more data on additional practices used in culturally responsive teaching contexts. In addition, more studies completed in a learning context with a focus on engagement, care and how those components

influence teacher actions in an elementary Title 1 context might offer direction for teachers using face to face instruction as well as virtual applications. This is a critical next step as virtual schools differ in their context, delivery models, and demographics. Best practices based in virtual learning research would help set the stage for understanding instruction in different models specifically differing content areas.

Culturally responsive classroom management is an additional area of future research. Teachers sometimes assume online instruction does not address classroom management. However, when factors such as proximity are not available, now more than ever, teachers must be innovative about ways to develop community and address social emotional needs of students in Title 1 urban schools. Lastly, teacher education programs must begin to focus on culturally responsive virtual teaching. In order to be successful with online learning, preservice teachers need training on culturally responsive online teaching practices. Teaching shifted drastically in March 2020. How education will look in the future is unknown but there is hope that we will learn from and use experiences since then to explore how teaching can center culture, foster care and build relationships in multiple types of learning spaces, both brick and mortar and virtual.

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## **Chapter Two**

### **Using Cultural Responsiveness to Promote Access in the Virtual Setting**

#### **Introduction**

On Monday, March 16, 2020 schools across the country shut their doors to 50 million students and teachers (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). As many districts across the country grappled with the decision to close their schools and monitor the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), they made a decision they felt was best suited for all of their stakeholders. Schools want their families to feel supported at home with their students, confident that their students are making academic gains every day in order to be the next generation of change agents, while making lifelong bonds with their peers. Schools continue to envision the same goals for their students that they always did, by instilling in each student a commitment to excellence, perseverance, teamwork, love, and joy but in new ways that involve inventive strategies and virtual tools. However, the goals and lives of those in the community could not remain the same. Thousands of people have lost their jobs. There has been an influx of health disparities and increasing evidence that some racial and ethnic groups (e.g., African Americans) are being disproportionately affected by COVID-19 (Stokes, Zambrano, Anderson, et al., 2020). Inequities such as poverty and healthcare access are affecting these groups and influence a wide range of health outcomes and risks.

The CDC identified the following social determinant caused by inequities in education: Inequities in access to high-quality education for some racial and ethnic minority groups can lead to lower high school completion rates and barriers to college entrance. This may limit future job options and lead to lower paying or less stable jobs. People with limited

job options likely have less flexibility to leave jobs that may put them at a higher risk of exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19 (p. 2).

This level of nationwide state of emergency requires an innovative teacher who is not only able to understand the struggles of the Black child, but one whom can pivot and use culturally responsive practices that make learning more accessible for children in schools with high populations of families in poverty and who lack healthcare access. This is the case in some Title 1 urban schools. Schools are considered Title 1 if more than 40 percent of their students and families are high poverty. For this study, it is of interest, and urgency, to respond to this discrepancy and make virtual learning more accessible for students who attend schools with a Title 1 designation.

The research review study described in chapter 1 explored the intersect between culturally responsive practices and virtual learning in urban Title 1 settings and supports the proposition that accessibility is an equity issue. Findings from this scoping review suggests three important components to create accessibility in Title 1 urban schools. Centering culture and building relationships are key even though they may be difficult to form in a virtual space. Care was also found important regardless of the teaching space and critical to diverse learning communities. These virtual learning aspects were incorporated into this case study in order to address access, equity and opportunity in urban Title 1 schools.

Access, equity, and opportunity are important conditions when expanding the use of virtual learning (Brown, 2009; Carter, 2000; Larreamendy-Joerns, Leinhardt & Corredor, 2006; U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology, 2016). In large metropolitan areas, school districts like Beta Public Schools <sup>1</sup>began teaching 100% virtually on August 24,

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<sup>1</sup> Beta Public Schools is a pseudonym and the school district for the study.

2020; moving the learning of 52,000 students to two to five hours of virtual instruction each day. While there has been an ongoing trend in virtual learning the recent COVID-19 concerns have led to an even greater investment in virtual learning from schools and parents. As reported by the National Education Policy Center in 2020 the number of students nationally enrolled in virtual learning went from 297,712 to over a million between 2018 and 2020.

Accessibility in virtual settings has traditionally centered on the tools needed to connect to instruction (Kennedy & Archambault, 2012). Kennedy and Archambault (2012) integrated five sets of standards for effective online teaching (e.g. SREB, iNacol, Quality Matters) with the purpose of looking for patterns of recommended skills and teacher dispositions for online teaching. Based on their research, Archambault and Kennedy (2014) reported the following recommendations for successful online instruction: expertise in online pedagogy, instructional design, assessment of student learning, professionalism and ethics, and technical expertise. These recommendations do not account for diversity in culture, and identity. The authors discuss best practices for virtual learning however they do not address any learner differences or consider the context of instruction, such as that for culturally diverse children in Title 1 urban schools. While we can begin to see trends in what comprise best practices for online instruction, the existing research does not yet indicate which instructional strategies and supports work best for students of color (Huerta et al., 2015). This study employs culturally-responsive modes of implementation and argues that connecting with students virtually is more than bandwidth. Online learning is beginning to address the importance of care and culture in assessing its effectiveness. The qualities of effective teaching may be similar across online platforms, yet as Archambault and Kennedy (2014) indicate, “the methods of implementation are different” (p. 227). Methods of implementation must consider the learner, their community, and

the home learning situation. The sociocultural considerations and aspects of instruction that are considered for face-to-face instruction must also be considered when working online.

Educational researchers recognize the importance of the sociocultural theory in face-to-face instruction. We know that it takes more than just providing students with materials. Vygotsky's (1978) work confirms through language, social exchanges, and connections with lived experience to new knowledge, learning is made responsive to the student, thus the foundation for culturally responsive pedagogies (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). We understand that as learners' children bring culture and knowledge to the classroom. In this sense, student success can only be measured in relation to the success of his or her community (Jackson, Sealey-Ruiz, & Watson, 2014; Milner, 2006). Virtual accessibility, beyond bandwidth, therefore, continues to present as an equity-based construct. This study attends to virtual accessibility through culturally responsive pedagogy for the specific purpose of providing equitable learning experiences for children in Title 1 urban schools. This starts with teachers linking students' experiences in school with their experiences at home (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 2014; Pang & Barba, 1995).

Geneva Gay (2000, 2013) and Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995b, 2014) pull from research in multicultural education to provide frameworks for pedagogical practices that are *culturally responsive* or *culturally relevant*. Advocates of culturally relevant pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching recommend moving away from a deficit model of cultural consideration in the classroom and toward a more culturally inclusive model of education. This union of home culture and school culture occurs when teachers build supportive culturally informed relationships with students and create classrooms built on community that center culture and foster care (Gay, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992).

## **Theoretical Frameworks Guiding the Study:**

### **Culturally Informed Relationships and an Ethos of Care**

Culturally Informed Relationships (Milner, 2006) and an Ethos of Care (Jackson, Sealey-Ruiz, & Watson, 2014) were highlighted in the findings of my scoping review. These authors theorize that student success can only be measured in relation to the success of his or her community and a certain level of connectedness to community. Virtual accessibility, beyond bandwidth, therefore, continues to present as an equity-based construct. Milner (2006) defines culturally informed relationships as “high expectations, deep care for Black children, [and] beliefs in their [Black students’] capacity to succeed.” (p. 98).

The idea is that Black teachers, by virtue of their out of school interactions and their deep cultural understanding of what it meant and means to be Black in America, often brought a level of knowledge and connectedness into the classroom that showed up in their teaching. Black teachers were equipped to bring cultural understanding and connections into the classroom, partly because of how they lived their lives outside of the classroom. (p. 99)

Milner (2006) poses a valid question, “how do all teachers from various backgrounds develop and sustain culturally informed relationships with their Black students?” Milner posits, “teachers understand Black students and their experiences both inside and outside of school. They use cultural knowledge about the students’ (home) community to build and sustain culturally informed relationships with them.” Milner touches on the importance of cultural knowledge in the process and development of teacher student relationships. Culturally informed relationships are crucial for diverse low-income students given the obstacles faced and tendency to have less access to high-quality educational experiences. Teachers who engage in culturally

informed relationships with students encourage them to develop confidence, pride, a sense of responsibility, and critical consciousness. In a practical sense, teachers who exhibit culturally responsive caring and develop culturally informed relationships provide academically demanding learning experiences (a key tenet of culturally responsive pedagogy). Valenzuela (1999) argues authentic caring thus relationships must be culturally appropriate for the student. This study will closely examine what culturally informed relationships “look” like in the virtual learning context. The goal of this type of “caring” is to help ethnically diverse students not only excel academically but also contribute to a more caring, humane society. Teachers who enact this level of culturally responsive caring often are characterized as a counselor, an encourager, and a cheerleader to meet the needs of the whole student community (Siddle Walker & Tompkins, 2004). Table 1 provides an overview of the dimensions of the two theories that guided this study. These key components are used to direct data collection and in analysis.

Table 2

*Guiding Theoretical Dimensions*

Centering Culture	
Ethos of Care	Culturally Informed Relationships
community, relationships, love, care, confidence, sense of responsibility, critical consciousness, high expectations, validation, respect, desire to give back (gardening)	connections between home and schools, connections to the community, relationships, high expectations, empathy, student empowerment of self, family, and community, warm demander, other mothering/other fathering, role model

There is an assumption that with proper resources, virtual learning is the perfect way to engage all students in equitable learning experiences (Ferdig & Kennedy, 2014 & Huerta et al., 2015). Advocates of this assumption claim if the school provides the same resources to all children it helps make learning more equal (Ferdig & Kennedy, 2014; Huerta et al., 2015).

Research regarding the positive culturally responsive teacher practices that make virtual learning more accessible for students with regard to diverse and multicultural learners have not been fully explored (Huerta et al., 2015). Lawrence (2017, 2020) offers important information on ways to implement culturally responsive teaching in a virtual setting, however, her study does not examine the specific culturally responsive teacher moves in order to understand how centering students' cultures in the curriculum fosters care and builds student relationships and thus accessibility to teachers. This study extends considerations of virtual learning spaces to consider the role of care, culturally informed relationships, and culture as some of the many priorities that culturally responsive teachers take on. It centers teacher practices as critical in making learning accessible for children during times when helping them remain engaged may be challenging and distracts from their goals and visions of hope for the future. The purpose of this qualitative case study is to shed light on how learning accessibility is more than tools for learning. The study is situated in one virtual learning space where accessibility and equity have historically surfaced. The study is guided by the research question: *How can the use of culturally responsive practices (fostering care, building culturally informed relationships, and centering culture) help make virtual learning accessible for children in Title I urban schools?*

### **Research Design**

Explanatory qualitative case study methodology was chosen to look closely at a phenomenon over an occurrence of events; specifically, a teacher's interpretation and implementation of three CRP components (care, culturally informed relationships, and culture) in a virtual learning context. This section presents the (a) researcher positionality; (b) research methodology; (c) the study setting; (d) the case participant; (e) methods of data collection and analysis; and (f) trustworthiness for the case.

## **The Researcher**

Many years ago, I began my teaching career in Brooklyn, New York after earning my certification in Elementary Inclusive Education. I taught third grade and fourth grade reading, writing, and social studies. I taught alongside teachers who embodied every definition of culturally responsive teaching. I noticed by implementing similar practices I was able to create a classroom built on love and culture similar to the ones I watched through my mentor teachers. My mentor teachers helped me center culture, develop and sustain culturally informed relationships with children and families, and foster care with students. I currently serve as a teacher leader for the fourth grade and I work with teachers to help implement culturally responsive lessons and experiences for fourth grade students. I also serve as a member on the social studies committee, a committee designed to help teachers implement culturally responsive lessons and experiences for elementary aged students.

As a culturally responsive, elementary childhood educator, I am knowledgeable about the skills, knowledge, and pedagogical practice of teachers who are successful with diverse students from Title 1 urban schools. I enter the setting with knowledge about the phenomenon under investigation. Due to my role as a teacher at the site and as a researcher I have knowledge on the resources, training, and materials the teacher will have access to, it will be the same for other teachers in the building. Patton (2002) suggests findings have the potential to identify emerging themes based on shared contexts. This also means that as a researcher, I acknowledge that I am not able to be objective or neutral in this setting. However, I use this motivation to build culturally informed relationships that allow me to better capture the experiences of the participant (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and build rapport. I consider myself an insider to the culture of the school. However, because I am a grade level chair and a researcher, it is important to be

transparent about the importance of the power dynamics between the researcher and the participant. To achieve this, I worked closely with the participant in all phases of research and reflect on what the participant risked by being in the study (Johnson-Bailey, 2004). I also reflect on the importance that the research is meant to benefit the researcher, the academy, and the participant and setting and ask myself, what will we [as researchers] give back? (Johnson-Bailey, 2004). The questions of how participants will benefit as well as what participants may be sacrificing will be revisited regularly throughout the research. I strive to be open and honest about all stages of the research, seeking participant feedback and dialogue throughout the process. The CRT tenet of providing the perspectives of marginalized populations, in this case, the stories of the young Black students, also helps to humanize the research and maintain a focus on the participants' perspectives and experiences representing meaningful authentic data (Merriam, 1998).

### **Research Methodology**

I employ qualitative case study research methodology to understand how components of CRP influence accessibility in a virtual setting. Qualitative case study research methodology is commonly used to capture a phenomenon within a real-life context and contribute to the current knowledge on a phenomenon or individual (Yin, 2003). As a researcher, I study a single bound case (teacher using CRP moves in relation to elements of accessibility) and examine how a teacher employs the CRP elements (fostering care, developing and sustaining culturally informed relationships, and centering culture) in its "natural" setting. A common thread across qualitative research is that it strives to deeply comprehend the issue or problem without "disrupting the natural setting or context" (Merriam, 1998; Stake 1995). By conducting research for an extended period (in the case of this study-daily for twelve weeks) it is possible to conduct a deep

investigation of general education teacher practices used to foster student learning in a virtual setting. The context of the study is different from the other instructional settings because of the virtual nature of learning mandated currently due to COVID-19 restrictions. This study illustrates *how* the use of culturally responsive practices foster accessibility for students in the virtual setting and *how* the use of care, building culturally informed relationships, and centering culture to support learning in the virtual setting, a case study design asset the boundaries of the case under exploration.

Interviews and documents are common forms of data collection in qualitative case studies and are instrumental for examining the use of care, building culturally informed relationships, and centering culture to support learning in the virtual setting.

### **Setting: District Site**

This research takes place in one of the largest districts in the metropolitan area. Beta Public Schools<sup>2</sup> is a school district based in the southeast region of Georgia. It is run by the Beta Board of Education along with the superintendent. The system has an active enrollment of 54,956 students, attending a total of 103 school sites: 50 elementary schools (three of which operate on a year-round calendar), 15 middle schools, 21 high schools, four single-gender academies, and 13 charter schools. Located in the heart of a city, the study took place in one urban elementary school (Kappa Primary School) nested with a close-knit community. Kappa Primary School holds monthly community building events such as: Daddy Daughter Dances, Donuts with Dad, Muffins with Mom, Grandparents Week, and Holiday Luncheons (Thanksgiving and Winter), Math & Literacy Curriculum Nights. As students enter Kappa Primary School they see large murals representing the schools' community.

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<sup>2</sup> Pseudonym used

Kappa Primary School is a community school who holds partnerships with the school, families, and other community resources. Kappa Primary School focuses on academics, health and social services, and community development and engagement. These partnerships lead to improved student learning, stronger families, and healthier communities. Kappa Primary School offers responsive frameworks for math and reading curriculums that highlights the importance of real-world learning and problem-solving. Kappa Primary School is open to all members of the community. Community leaders such as local councilmen, doctors, lawyers, firefighters, nurses, educators, and entrepreneurs frequently visit the school for "Community Read Aloud". Kappa Primary School offers a variety of opportunities and supports built into the daily school schedule that get parents and students the tools they need to continue to learn and grow as lifelong learners and members of the Westside community.

The school population is 100% Black. All students received free & reduced lunch. Kappa Primary School provides every child with home hotspots, chrome books, delivered meals, and online tutoring services. All instruction is virtual at the time of the study and includes both synchronous and asynchronous learning sessions. Kappa Primary School has made the instructional decision to record all lessons and sessions. The school has made this decision so students would always have access to the material both during and after class time. This was to ensure if students needed or wanted to re-watch a lesson or activity they had the opportunity to do so. There are two versions of recorded instructional videos – speaker or gallery. The speaker shows only the person speaking at the time. The gallery view shows all participants. During any PowerPoint being shared– students saw only the PowerPoint. The teacher only chooses to do gallery view at the end of the lesson. Observation of virtual instruction focused on the teacher and their instructional plans and decisions or teacher moves.

### ***Recruitment & Selection of Case Study Participant***

I met with the school principal and explained my study and the criteria for the case selection. I asked the principal to share my contact information and a study information sheet with teachers who had three or more years of experience and who were familiar with culturally responsive practices. Six teachers interested in the study contacted me. From this recruitment pool, two teachers were excluded from selection because of their unfamiliarity of culturally responsive practices. I also excluded one teacher because they had not taught for 3 years or more. While many teacher participant volunteers offered promising practices to examine in this study, I also excluded two teachers who served earlier grade levels because of concerns for young children experiencing school and virtual instruction as their first educational experience. Selection criteria resulted in choosing Kay for this study. Prior to selection Kay was observed by me in order to confirm that she understood cultural responsiveness. Observations similar to this one also suggested to me that her classroom was a place where new and innovative ways to engage with students and build relationships to foster care and center culture could occur in the virtual learning space.

### **Focal Teacher: Kay**

Kay is a self-identified black woman born in Georgia and raised in California and Georgia. Kay has been an Elementary Educator for six years. She was originally credentialed to be an Elementary Educator in California where she obtained an elementary education degree. She taught in California during her senior year of college. Her first three years were in transitional kindergarten (TK) classrooms. During her TK years she taught children with autism and she states how this experience served as the foundation of her teaching. She is currently a second-grade teacher and this is her third year at Kappa Primary School. She has been a virtual

learning teacher since March 20, 2020. Kay has no prior background or experience with teaching virtually. Kay has always worked in Title 1 urban schools. Her parents consistently told her and her brothers “the elevator must always come back down”. She firmly believes we must pour back into the communities that poured into us. Kay’s mother is an educator who went to school at our current school when she was a child. Her mother instilled in her the value and importance of having pride and being proud of the communities that “helped us become who we are today”. Kay discusses how she instills these levels of pride with her students so that they understand how much of a blessing it is to be (her mothers’ definition) of a “SWAN”, Southwest Atlanta Negro. Kay grew up in a small city in California. She describes this city's demographics as 80% Asian 15% Hispanic, and 5% White. She states “my brother and I were the only black kids at our school”. She credits her mother for her love of learning. As an educator’s child growing up in the same school district her mother worked in she understands the ways educators can provide all students with a culturally responsive education. Kay states her mother spoke up on many occasions for students she noticed were underrepresented in the school curriculum. She recognized from a young age even though white students were the minority in her city they were still the majority being represented in the curriculum being taught by her teachers.

### ***A Day in the Life as a Virtual Learning Teacher***

A typical day in the life of a virtual teacher, Kay wakes up at 6:30am. By 7:30am she opens up her computer and reviews her PowerPoint slide deck to make sure there are not any last-minute instructional changes she needs to make (based on student responses from previous day or events that have occurred that she may want to connect to). From 8:00 - 8:30 am she logs in for her team huddle with her coworkers. By 8:50 she is logged into her class link waiting for kids to arrive for class, teaching all day until she logs out at 3pm. Table 1 illustrates a typical

synchronous schedule for second grade. When asked what she feels a virtual learning teacher needs to be successful she emphasizes “The biggest thing is being able to adjust and be flexible. For me this means lots of planning and a lot of scrutinizing and asking myself, and my teammates: what can I do better, was my lesson objective clear, or did you notice any students confused or frustrated?”.

1st-4th	Monday	Tuesday	Thursday
9:00-9:15 AM	Family Huddle		
9:15-9:45 AM	Guided Reading		
9:45- 10:35 AM	Foundational Literacy (Whole Group)		
10:35-11:00 AM	Math		
11:00-11:40 AM	Writing	Close Reading	Wheatley
11:40- 12:05 PM	Enrichment		
12:05-12:30 PM	Lunch		
12:30-1:15 PM	Nonfiction/ Social Justice		
1:15-1:30 PM	SEL		
1:30-2:20 PM	Math	Math Responsive Teaching	
2:20-3:00 PM	Close Reading	Foundational Literacy Responsive Teaching	
3:00-4:00 PM	School Wide Intervention		
3:15-4:15 PM	Content Team Meetings/ Daily Data Dive		

*Figure 3. Daily Synchronous Instruction*

### ***Kay’s Virtual Learning Pedagogy***

When asked to self-define her virtual learning pedagogy she acknowledges three components: family communication, modified curriculum, and wholistic teaching. Kay believes family communication is critical to virtual learning. Kay believes that you should always call parents instead of text or email communication because it can be mis-interrupted; that all parent communication (positive or negative) should be shared with the student so they are able to understand the situation and how to move forward; and that teachers should never call parents on

Thursday or Friday. In addition, Kay records individualized positive videos to send to parents if children do their asynchronous work. Kay's families have stated they love these videos for they "feel another connection and access to Mrs. Kay".

Kay is also an advocate of modified curriculum. She knows the lesson plans given by the district are nothing more than "scripted lessons and frameworks" in which "need modifications to be accessible to all learners". Kay gives all her student access to exit ticket by giving them opportunities to work on their exit ticket in small learning communities (groups of 5-10 of their peers). Lastly Kay believes wholistic teaching is crucial as a virtual learning educator. She believes kids need autonomy and flexibility to build community and learn how to respect others as well as be respected. Kay states, "Teaching students how to be respectful and gain respect from others is more important than teaching obedience. You don't need to teach obedience when you teach the whole child. Whether it be ensuring they have adequate food during and outside of school, social emotional needs, caring adults, overall educators need to be able to attending to the needs of the whole child".

Kay refers to her students as scholars (King, 2005). When asked about her teaching pedagogy she references her experience growing up in a suburban county. Kay goes in depth and discusses her experience at church. She discusses two experiences: one where she is at a church that is extremely quiet where people do not talk or respond to the pastor. Then, she describes another church where people join in, give praise, laugh, and cry. Kay declares,

"I want my classroom to feel like I felt in that church-- alive, woke, intelligent, and proud. I never want my kids to feel like their voices need to be silent. That's not how I learned and that's not how I want or expect my kids to learn. When a child is sassy with me I don't take offense to it because what the world has deemed as sassy oftentimes is

based on a white standard of obedience. When kids explain themselves, we associate it with talking back instead of questioning the situation and asking ourselves are they being disrespectful or trying to make their voices be heard. As a teacher we constantly have to understand the distinction between the two especially in the virtual world where you only really can rely on what you hear and see on the screen and the relationships you build with your students. This is why I pushed for writing in the virtual space at a time when they were trying to cut writing out of the curriculum. Writing is important because our kids' voices need to be heard. Their perspectives matter. Their voices matter and unfortunately when they are virtual they don't have as many opportunities to speak up. However, any opportunity I can get them to write something in the chat or come off mute, I allow them to do it. In my mind that is a part of being culturally responsive. We have to give kids the opportunity to just be kids."

### **Data Sources and Collection**

The qualitative case study consists of multiple forms of data collection: a) participant observational data (writing and reading lessons) (b) interviews, and (c) documents (lesson plans). All instruction is virtual and synchronous learning sessions. Participant observational data includes a weekly data set consisting of four (40 minutes) Reading lessons, two Documents collected that include accompanying lesson plans, and 1-4 analytic memos. Four semi-structured interviews were conducted with Kay each week following 16 observations and document analysis (12 analytic memos and 15 lesson plans).

### ***Recorded Instructional Videos & Lesson Plans***

The first source of observational data is reading or writing lessons. Both the writing and reading lesson plans have a formal structure to allow the teacher to operationalize culturally

responsive pedagogy. All 1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> grade teachers focus on a content area (reading or writing). The recorded instructional lessons were either reading or writing. These lessons occurred asynchronously every Tuesday and Thursday for approximately 40 minutes. At the beginning of this study there were morning (am) and afternoon (pm) lessons, however after parent feedback the schedule was extended to be full day, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm. *Phillis* is the reading curriculum used by the school. It was created by the nationwide school system and implemented in Grades K-12. *Phillis* occurs three times a week (two synchronous and one asynchronous lesson). The flow of the lesson is illustrated in Table 2. Recorded instruction takes place during various times of the day so I was able to capture both morning (10:00 - 12:00) and afternoon blocks (1:00 - 3:00). Recorded instructional videos were conducted focusing on only the teacher moves, specifically how Kay responded to students in relation to care, culturally informed relationships, and culture. A total of 16, 10 - 40-minute lessons were collected. Additional instruction documents (e.g., Nearpod's, and PowerPoints) were also collected.

Table 3

*Phillis Virtual Lesson Structure*

Pacing	Lesson Component
2 min.	Welcome & Virtual Norms & Expectations
2 min.	Read Baby Read
5 min.	Hook/Engagement Activity
5 min.	Teach Skill/Objective
10-15 min.	Read Aloud, TDQ's & Jots
2 min.	Exit Ticket
2-5 min.	Writing Send Off

2 min.	Closing
2 min.	Wiggle

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### ***Interviews with Kay***

Interviews with the case study participant served as the third data source. Each interview had an intended purpose in the study. Interview 1 (60 minutes) helped me learn about Kay, understand her background in culturally responsive pedagogy, build a relationship, and understand her instructional pedagogy. Interviews 2-4 interviews (approximately 80 minutes each) occurred after sets of observations and analysis and served as member checks. Interviews were recorded and transcribed to mask the setting and reference to learners before analysis.

Appendix A provides an overview of interviews and their focus.

### ***Analytic Memos***

Corbin and Strauss (2008) posit that memo-writing adds a level of credibility to researcher results. Considering the amount of rich data used in qualitative research, a researcher must be able to account for all data sources. Analytic memos provide an analysis of the researcher's analysis process. Member checking help to ensure the researcher's interpretations of the teacher's culturally responsive pedagogical moves in a virtual setting accurately convey the teachers' experiences and perspectives. Written analytic memos proceed analysis of each set of observational data and lesson plans and then served as heuristic for subsequent interviews with Kay. Analytic memos include what I noticed, what questions I had, and what I learned about the participant as it relates to the research question, *How can the use of culturally responsive practices (fostering care, building culturally informed relationships, and centering culture) help make virtual learning accessible for children in Title 1 urban schools?* Figure 4 illustrates an

analytic memo from this study. There was a total of 16 analytic memos used to examine themes across data sources.

#### 12.16

Teacher starts a lesson with the writing chant. She sings this song while the kids dance at the beginning of every lesson. The teacher does the chant again after she notices she doesn't have 100%. The teacher tells students at the beginning of the lesson that they are going to be smarter than third third graders because they will know all of their sentence types. The teacher starts their class off with a brain pop video to discuss the four types of sentences. The teacher tells students to say "Period poo" to help them understand declarative sentences and with a period. She sticks with students and they are having Wi-Fi and connectivity issues. If they do not get the answer right she sticks with them to help them understand the correct answer. Teacher uses a nearpod to get and keep all students engaged. Teacher also has students give each other shine and praise (i.e. two claps). Students can choose the shine they want to receive from their peers. The teacher also gives out dojo points for students who are exceeding expectations. The teacher helps students with TDQ questions throughout the lesson instead of waiting until the lesson is complete. This probably helps clear up any student misunderstandings.

Culture/CRP - Period Pooh, use of bitmoji, dj khalid writing chant.

Care - Give yourself shine and make it rain . "I knew you could do it" "I'm so proud of you friend"

#### *Figure 4. Sample of Analytic Memo*

Data was collected over a 12-week period during the 2020-2021 school year as illustrated in Table 3. Two types of data sets are represented in analysis: 1) analysis & synthesis of weekly data collection sets (each week includes 4 morning meetings and 4 observed lessons and 2 lesson plans); and 2) member checking of data set analysis & synthesis and teacher interviews.

#### Table 4

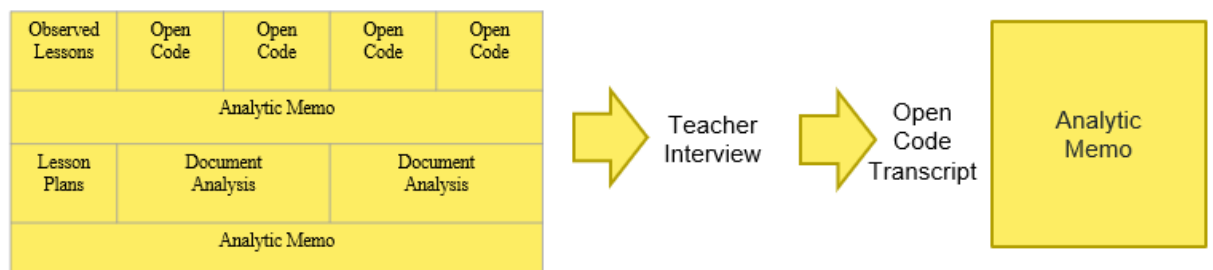
##### *Data Collection and Sets*

Phase	Week
Phase 1	Data Set 1: Teacher interview #1, analytic memo
	Data Set 2: 4 observations, 2 lesson plans, 4 morning meetings

- Phase 2    Data Set 3: Analysis & Synthesis of sets 1 & 2, Teacher interview #2  
             Data Set 4: 4 observations, 2 lesson plans, 4 morning meetings
- Phase 3    Data Set 5: Analysis & Synthesis of sets 3 & 4, Teacher interview #3  
             Data Set 6: 4 observations, 2 lesson plans, 4 morning meetings
- Phase 4    Data Set 7: Analysis & Synthesis of sets 5 & 6, Teacher interview #4  
             Data Set 8: 4 observations, 2 lesson plans, 4 morning meetings  
             Data Set 9: Analysis & Synthesis of sets 7 & 8, Final Member Check
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## Data Analysis

Data is analyzed using a constant comparative approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) to identify themes in virtual CRP components of care, culturally informed relationships, and centering culture and in relation to Milner's (2006) Culturally Informed Relationships and Jackson's, et al. (2014) Ethos of Care (see Table 1). The constant comparative iterative process involves: 1) a holistic reading of the fieldnotes, documents, and interview/member- check transcripts, 2) terms and memos written in the notes of the fieldnotes, 3) each conversation segment from the interviews viewed individually, and 4) codes and themes (care, culture, and relationships) developed based upon the memo. Figure 5 illustrates the iterative process of coding and memoing throughout the data collection and analysis cycles.



*Figure 5.* Data analysis cycle.

During the coding process I reviewed and examined transcripts, analytic memos, videos, and lesson plans. I coded the participants' responses as care, culture, relationships. Most “culture” and “relationship” codes fell within the care realm. I found very few culture and relationship codes that did not fall within my definition of care (i.e. a punitive practice used by the teacher) in a culturally responsive classroom. An example of this process using an interview transcript is provided in Figure 4. Virtual CRP components of Jackson’s, et al. (2014) Ethos of Care include interactions that highlight or indicate community, relationships, love, care, confidence, sense of responsibility, critical consciousness, high expectations, validation, respect, and desire to give back (gardening). Culturally Informed Relationships analysis includes descriptions of interactions that show connections between home and school, connections to the community, relationships, high expectations, empathy, student empowerment of self, family, and community, warm demander, and other mothering. This same data segment (listed below) could be coded as more than one thing. However the example below suggests that the segment is coded as only one thing to show the code that was most impactful.

KW:

Oh yes. Love writing. Writing is my baby. There's like a culture. Like my passion is writing and I want that to be like, to be a culture of passion around writing. Like, I need you to understand why writing is important. I need you to understand, like, this is like a time for you to get hyped, to get just like your own creativity, your own voice out. Um, and so like, and last year, yeah. Wow. Last year, um, the writing teachers all sat down and wrote the writing chant together. We just really decided what do we want scholars to do during writing and how do we want them to feel about writing. Um, and I was like, honestly, it's like a way for them to express themselves, express their ideas. Um, uninterrupted, honestly, like when you're writing, you don't have to pause, stop. You can get all your thoughts out, let it be known, um, without interruption. And so we came up with the writing chant and I know for our second graders, like writing can be a little daunting. It can be a little scary because you do a huge, huge jump from first grade when you're working on writing a sentence to say where I need you to write a whole paragraph. Um, and so like just making that as high as possible, you know, like, um, letting them know this is, don't be afraid. I will help you, let's have fun with it. Yes.

*Figure 6.* Example of coding using interview excerpt. The color coding represents culture (yellow), care (purple), and relationships (blue).

Data analysis is the reflective, integrative and explanatory part of the data that makes use of interpretation based on the connections, common aspects, and linkages among the data, especially the identified categories and patterns that involve abstracting important understandings from data (Kohlbackher, 2005). As suggested by Bogdan & Biklen (2007), I look for patterns and themes to emerge from interviews, documents, and fieldnotes comparing for multiple cases and examples using my developed coding categories. During Phase 1 of the coding process I reviewed and examined the transcript from the interview, analytic memos, observation videos, and lessons plan. All codes occurring multiple times were bolded and italicized on the data matrix and then were grouped developed into themes seen across the data. This synthesis was presented for member checking at the onset of the next interview followed by an additional analytic memo. The analytic memos were guided by questions such as: What do I see now? What don't I see? What I will do next? How am I influencing the process and findings? I looked across the data for each set to gather themes for each week as illustrated in Figure 7.

Data Source	Care	Culture	Relationship	Misc	Instruction
		Swan, a Southwest Atlanta Negro.  make sure you send the elevator back down you don't get to go teach in these communities that always have amazing teachers because one, they get paid more to let the kids aren't surrounded by trauma every day. So of course they behave better. Um, but you have to go to these places where you get to share like the experiences and the opportunities that you have growing up. So yes, my parents were all about sending the elevator back down; virtual learning teachers must be adjust and be flexible and open to change; teaching latino children is different than teaching black students; discusses her experiences in two churches one alive and loving the other quite and cold; shared experiences assist her; im black and im proud			
Interview	Mom advocates for students from all cultures. Mom is an educator. Mom exposed her to <b>modified curriculum</b> when K was in grade school; If her am lesson is not clear she makes modifications for the pm lesson, then she makes a plan to reteach am kiddos; discusses whole child iceberg analogy - don't just teach the tip of the iceberg - teach the whole child;		"So I had like 20 3rd graders and then maybe like 50 2nd graders"; lunch bunches (daily), brain breaks (last 5 of every class); Parents - seesw7; shared experiences help build relationships with students; family survey sent out via seesaw	fifth or sixth year. Um, so I mean backstory it's five years or six years, depending on how you look at Pitt. I was, um, credentialed in California at first and I had a what's it called? Um, a early elementary, um, credentialing, meaning I could teach pre-K through kindergarten. always taught in a title one urban school. Born in CA, raised in CA and GA; T describes a Day in the Life as a Virtual Teacher; Kay asks for consistent feedback from her peers	Kay provides students with sticky words so they can remember the teaching objective (i.e. compare and contrast, hands are separate then together); pioneer white girl traveling across the country?; chat goes off during direct instruction portion of the lesson; native americans not indians
Analytic Memo	The teacher gives extra points for students who are participation. Only discusses positive. At the beginning of the lesson the teacher gives the zoom classroom commitments. The teacher starts the lesson with the college bound leader. The teacher is locked in during the class writing chant and she gives participation points for students who are doing the chant along with their peers and the video. The teacher also uses bitmoji's in her ppt slides.	Throughout her slides the teacher reviews the steps with the standard a couple of times. The teacher has several emotions she asked the students to do during the lesson to make the less and more exciting. The teacher pops jokes and throughout her lesson. The teacher is holding expectations by bringing attention to labels or a nonfiction text feature during her lesson. Teacher pushes students to use nonfiction text feature language i.e. labels and captions. The teacher also uses near near pod throughout her lesson.	Teacher starts a lesson with the writing chant. She sings this song while the kids dance at the beginning of every lesson. The teacher does the chant again after she notices she doesn't have 100%. The teacher tells students at the beginning of the lesson that they are going to be smarter than third third graders because they will know all of their sentence types. <b>Positive Family Calls</b>	Compare to original lesson plans.	
P1 Observations	<b>Brain breaks</b> (last five of all classes) Give yourself shine and make it rain. "I knew you could do it" "I'm so proud of you friend"	Culture/CRP - Period Pooh, use of bitmoji, dj khalid writing chant; Her lesson objective are the same but there are several modifications	Mentions all kiddos are invited to lunch bunches, calls parents for kids who completed asynchronous work	Native americans	
Lesson Plan	Scripted phillips lesson plans	Scripted phillips lesson plans	Scripted phillips lesson plans	Scripted phillips lesson plans	Engage prior knowledge, Direct Instruction, Guided, and Independent

*Figure 7.* Example of Data Matrix. This figure illustrates how individual codes were organized for pattern analysis.

## Trustworthiness

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) a researcher can establish trustworthiness in multiple ways. Strategies to manage trustworthiness in research studies are to connect the study to the theoretical framework (credibility); transfer results to other contexts without generalizing (transferability); make sure the data and the findings are consistent (dependability); attempt to have as little bias as possible (conformability); and the researcher acknowledges his/her active participation in the study (reflexivity) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The triangulation of data sources, engaging in multiple member-checks, and the use of an audit trail can validate qualitative research. I use several of the aforementioned recommendations for qualitative research to ensure trustworthiness in the current study. First, I connect the theoretical frameworks that guide this work throughout analysis and while interpreting patterns. By triangulating my data sources (e.g., observations, lesson plans, interviews) over time, I ensure a complete picture of Kay and her learning environment. During collection and analysis, I regularly re-examine my subjectivities

through the use of memo-making. Member-checking occurs throughout the study and in order to include Kay's interpretation of patterns that emerged and not just at the conclusion of the work.

### **Findings**

This study explores teacher culturally responsive pedagogical moves in a virtual setting and demonstrates support for the argument that connecting with students virtually is more than bandwidth. The purpose of this study sheds light on how learning accessibility is more than tools for learning and asks: *How can the use of culturally responsive practices (fostering care, building culturally informed relationships, and centering culture) help make virtual learning accessible for children in Title 1 urban schools?* Collection and analysis of classroom videos, case participant interviews, lesson plans, and analytic memos occurs in four phases over 12 weeks. A constant comparative approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) results in themes related to how culturally responsive components of care, culturally informed relationships, and centering culture support virtual learning for students in one Title 1 school. The constant comparative approach was used to compare different examples of care, relationships, and culture across the data collection methods of classroom videos, case study participant interviews, lesson plans, and analytic memos. This study informs future research and the field on how access, equity, opportunity, and centering the learner must be considered as important conditions when expanding to virtual learning.

There are three major themes as it relates to accessibility in the virtual space: 1) culturally responsive pedagogy *can occur* in the virtual space by building culturally responsive relationships, emphasizing trust, and modifying the curriculum; 2) use of community building centers the learners in the virtual space, 3) retooling technology can foster accessibility for

students and their families and communities. Each theme is defined in the next section with examples to support them.

### **Theme 1: Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Can Occur in the Virtual Space**

Learning about students' lives is at the epicenter of culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2000). Despite the lack of informal, spontaneous and multiple personalized opportunities to employ CRP in face-to-face instruction, Kay utilizes components of culturally responsive pedagogy to foster accessibility in a virtual learning space. Data reveals that building culturally responsive relationships is fostered by emphasizing trust and modifying the curriculum.

#### ***Building Culturally Responsive Relationships***

A key component of being a culturally responsive teacher is being proactive with behavior practices rather than reactive. A proactive teacher sets systems and structures in place that encourage community and collective success (e.g., community building exercises, logical consequences). A reactive teacher uses punitive practices (e.g., color chart systems and punishments). Kay uses a platform by the name of ClassDojo. ClassDojo (<https://www.classdojo.com/>) is a classroom management and communication platform designed for use in schools and classrooms by teachers, school administrators, students and parents. Teachers use this platform to keep parents informed of the progress their child makes throughout the day through instant notifications in real time. ClassDojo has been considered by some to be a punitive tracking system. For example, in one interview<sup>3</sup> at the start of the virtual school year Kay made the decision to instead use ClassDojo solely for the purpose of tracking student's positive community building points. She made this instructional decision because she felt virtual learning could feel irrelevant and unwelcoming at times and she wanted to ensure her kids were

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<sup>3</sup> All data sources were used in analysis to generate the main findings.

consistently celebrated in the virtual space. The simplest way to track this was to use ClassDojo for new purposes. Kay adapts the use of Class Dojo by using it solely to reinforce positive participation in learning. Kay's current students used ClassDojo last year during face-to-face instruction to keep track of points earned (positive) or lost (negative) throughout the day. Kay believes now, more than ever, that educators "need to learn to show grace over everything". Instead of using the technology for monitoring of behavior during the day, she gives "points" for helping the community, finishing their exit ticket (or daily formative assessment), encouraging community members in the chat, and being a leader in the classroom. Students help the community in Kay's classroom in numerous ways such as adding the Nearpod code or link to the chat and helping their teammates answer questions via the chat. Kay tracks her students' positive interactions so she is able to acknowledge all students for the ways they help the community.

Kay states,

When we were in the building. I did not use ClassDojo. I thought it was a ridiculous system to use with black children in the bluff. We had a marble jar and when the jar was filled to the top. We celebrated as a class. Sometimes we had pizza parties or extra time during recess. Normally I am not a fan of ClassDojo but using it to track positive interactions ensures they are being rewarded and acknowledged for their hard work.

Kay creates spaces for frequent non-academic dialogue with students, often initiated by her, in order to get to know her students. She provides prompt feedback to students through messaging via the chat, collaborate (an online whiteboard used for all students to add their ideas) via Nearpod chat and video technology (via Seesaw) for engaging in synchronous just-in-time interactions. Kay indicates that collaborative technology applications paired with her culturally responsive teaching provides her with shared experiences with students. Closely observing

students' online interactions with other classmates also helps her learn about students' needs and respond to them appropriately. This collection method gave her an opportunity to encourage students to go above and beyond.

### *Building Relationships through Trust & Behavior*

Lawrence (2017, 2020) suggests online teachers get to know their students individually and maintain caring relationships with them. Kay strove to get to know her students by building relationships through trust and behavior. Kay is a proponent of calling parents only if she feels students are a danger to themselves or others. Students in Kay's class know if they make a mistake in her classroom she will address them privately and will not bring in their parents. This practice created a level of trust between Kay and her students. Kay also advocates for the power of praise in the virtual space. When she praises her students, she goes completely over the top (by doing their favorite dance or favorite chant celebration or calling their families for a positive call during lunchtime). On the other hand, if she notices her students are struggling with something she tries to send them a message privately using the chat function or invite them into a breakout room. Kay stated in an interview, "if they know they can trust me and they know I will not do anything to embarrass them they will be more invested during class time". She argues this helps ensure that the culture in her classroom stays positive. Observations of her teaching confirm that students know if they made a mistake Ms. K will support them to get back on track. When reflecting on how she builds trusting relationships with her students in the virtual space Kay states in multiple interviews it must start with their families. Kay builds relationships with students by including families in the learning community. This school year Kay asked her families to complete a variety of surveys and held a virtual Back to School Night at the beginning of the year to get to know her students and their families. Her survey data and

interactions with families at the Back to School Night captured everything from preferred methods of communication to extracurricular activities and hobbies. Kay vocalizes, “If we were face-to-face kids could easily pop in my room or ask to have lunch with me anytime of the day. This is tricky in the virtual space”. Due to restrictions that come with being accessible Kay has to proactively think about and plan how she will find time within and outside of her workday to build relationships with kids. She credits her parents for her outlook on teaching in low resourced communities,

”Make sure you send the elevator back down. You don't get to go teach in these communities that always have amazing teachers because one, they get paid more. Two those kids aren't surrounded by trauma every day, so of course they behave better. You have to go to these places where you get to share the experiences and the opportunities that you had growing up. You must give back to the communities that gave so much to you”.

She builds relationships with her families by ensuring they trust her as a teacher and as a caretaker for their child. In another interview she states, “They are in second grade. You have to start by gaining their families' trust”. Kay expresses importance of mutual respect in building relationships, “I am relying on them to ensure that their kids are up every day and are ready to engage in class and I want them to know I have their scholars' best interest in mind”.

Another way I build trust is by letting kids know I care about them outside of their academics. It can be a huge struggle sometimes but I try to fit in as much time for them just to chitchat. Not a forced talking time or SEL [social emotional learning] time (Kay laughs) but if I notice that they want to discuss a separate topic then I give them a space to talk. There will always be time to finish a lesson or to go over some key concepts but

it's super important that when they need to discuss things to just be kids they have the space and opportunity to do that.

“I’m black and I’m proud” projects are completed by scholars <sup>4</sup>to identify parts of their individual or family culture that they want to shine. Kay claimed that every year scholars are asked to complete this assignment, however, this year scholars went much more in depth to ensure she was building culturally informed relationships with her scholars even in a virtual setting. When asked why she believes scholars went more in depth this year she states,

“there’s lots of hustle and bustle however this was at the beginning of virtual learning for the school year families were excited and all in. Parents came into class to ask questions and you can tell they were truly excited about the assignment. I also limited parent communication to only Seesaw. I put all pertinent information there so they do not have to search around. I just want to make things as easy as possible for them.”

### ***Modified Curriculum***

Kay believes teachers have to know how to change the curriculum and not be afraid of the potential pushback from other team members or administration. Multiple observations show Kay continuously makes modifications to the curriculum based upon what her scholars need. Kay modifies her lesson plans. Kay states that even though teachers are given a “framework” to pull lessons from that she modifies her lessons and plans based on what her kids need. Lesson plans, when compared to the scripted Phillis lesson formats, illustrate that Kay frequently changes the curriculum provided by the school to be more responsive to her students and their needs. During our final member check Kay states,

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<sup>4</sup> the use of the word scholars instead of students is important because it maintains intent and integrity of CRP

Rescript all lessons - Look at lesson. You already know the standard and the objective. Rework the stepping stones so kids arrive at the final plan. Exit tickets should not be graded. Kids should come off mute and we should all work together. Lastly model, model, model! The actions you want to see, the thinking you want them to do, and the people you want them to see. Show kids what respect looks like as a teacher and a student. Teaching students how to be respectful and gain respect from other. Teach kids respect over obedience. Teach the whole child and again model the behavior If kids see you lost it when you internet goes out or when someone asks a question during a lesson. They will lose it when something doesn't go there way. Be the teacher you would want your kids to have.

Kay modifies her instruction by bringing in critical consciousness (a component of CRP) into the curriculum and encouraging kids to think with it. One of the books that students are expected to read during the year talks about how Columbus discovered America. During an observation, Kay takes a pause to let students know “at no point can anyone discover land”. In this lesson, she pushes them to understand no one can rename something that is already there or already discovered. She then spends time discussing the importance of point of view as it relates to culture. Kay discusses the proper language we should use around certain groups and people as it relates to culture. Kay notices a good portion of the second-grade curriculum includes words like “Indian” instead of “Native American”. Throughout data collection I observe Kay in several conversations with her students about how “we don't call them Indians we called him Native Americans”. Kay uses discourse and questioning to help her students to become more open

minded and to give them the proper vocabulary when discussing certain groups of people. She argues that discourse has been a crucial component of the virtual space.

Kay's interactions show the importance of critical consciousness by using student voice and multiple worldviews. Kay's practices to build relationships and trust are crucial to be able to do this kind of critical consciousness work. Also, Kay's willingness to modify curriculum and open space to do it are key. Kay argues that a virtual teacher should implement culturally responsive practices to ensure they are providing students with an equitable and responsive learning experience.

### **Theme 2: Use of Community Centers the Learner in the Virtual Space**

By centering culture, the teacher can harness and build community in their virtual classrooms despite not being face to face. A virtual classroom space is still a site where students learn and develop pride in their own cultures as well as be exposed to others' cultures. However, this level of pride is only possible in a virtual space if teachers provide elements of accessibility by supporting culture. Every year Kay creates a writing chant with her students. The chant is meant to get them excited about writing. This year Kay's kids created a chant based on DJ Khaled's "All we do is win". I observed this chant during the first 2 minutes of every writing lesson. The students chant the words, "All we do is write write write no matter what! Got writing on the mind and it's never going to stop! Every time we get an idea all our pencils go up...But they don't stay there, they don't stay there, they don't stay there! Let's write! Let's write! Let's write!" Exercises like this one help teachers harness and build community with their students. Kay included elements like this in the virtual space so "my scholars still feel the same level of connectedness they would feel in a brick and mortar setting". Data reveals that building a

community of learners can *center the learner* in the virtual space. In Kay's classroom this is accomplished through intentional shared activities and by fostering care.

Several studies argue that when students see themselves in a community they also report higher levels of satisfaction, retention, and learning (Epstein 2009; Ferdig & Kennedy, 2014; Siegler et al., 2006). However, virtual learning can also lead to feelings of being alone (Brown, 2001). These feelings of being alone may be overcome when a community of learners is formed within the virtual learning space. Community Building is creating a space for a community where students feel empowered and valued and where children will ultimately thrive. A community of learners is characterized by a sense of belonging and being connected to others and to a set of ideas and values (Brown, 2001). Each classroom video observation shows Kay's engagement with community building activities on a daily basis. During an interview Kay states,

“I start every class with the writing chant followed by some type of engagement activity. This is similar to the share portion of a traditional morning meeting. They (referring to the learners) look forward to it because they want to share their personal lives with their peers and I. It seems simple but they really look forward to this share time. They need those same opportunities in the virtual space.”

Building community looks different in a virtual space, however, it is feasible with the proper modifications. In the brick and mortar setting Kay would have her students for the first hour of the day. Traditionally she would use this time to implement a community building morning meeting including a Greeting, Share, Activity, and a Message format. She felt this time was critical for developing a community of learners. She prioritizes time in the virtual space during every 25-minute lesson she teaches (Guided Reading, Foundational Literacy, Reading/Writing, Social Justice, and Responsive Teaching) to building community among her students. Kay

intentionally creates a space for community building activities virtually through activities such as show and tell, weekend/holiday break share time, random prompt share time, dance parties, lunch bunches, and YouTube time. During the last 5 minutes of *all her lessons* her students engaged in community building activities to get to know each other better. Community buildings helps Kay foster relationships *with* her students by providing spaces for teamwork, social emotional learning, engaged sharing activities, deeper bonds and connections, cooperation, self-confidence, and social awareness. Community building create space for a community of learners inclusive of teachers and students.

In addition to creating a time and space for intentional community building activities, Kay also fostered her community through acts of care. Kay attends to the social emotional needs of her students by including 2-5-minute brain breaks throughout the school day. Brain breaks are defined as a short period of time when we change up the dull routines of the day. Brain breaks are reported to help students process new information and positively impact student social emotional states and learning (Sidik, 2020). On January 5, 2021 the student schedule changed from an option of a morning block from 10-12 am or an afternoon block of 1-3 pm to a mandatory all-day 9 am -3pm schedule. This change occurred after a large percentage of parents at Kappa Primary School expressed concern that their students were not receiving enough learning time. Kay knows, regardless of her sentiments about the extended schedule, that this schedule is tough on students because of the length of time they are expected to stay on, or in front of, the computer. Therefore, Kay made the instructional decision to fit in one brain break before and after lunch and offers as many brain breaks as possible to respond to the virtual needs of her students. Kay fosters this level of “caring” with her students to help her students not only excel academically but also to give them the tools they need to contribute to a more caring,

community. Teachers, like Kay, who enact this level of culturally responsive caring often are characterized as a counselor, an encourager, and a cheerleader to meet the needs of the whole student (Siddle Walker & Tompkins, 2004). Educators with a similar teaching pedagogy to Kay are described as “warm demanders” (Vasquez, 1988) who go beyond their immediate duties to build culturally informed relationships with youth, maintain high expectations, and validate students as intelligent, cultural beings (Delpit, 2012; Haddix, 2010; Sealey- Ruiz & Greene, 2011). Understanding her learners’ social and emotional needs is only one way Kay expresses care for her students. Kay also “retools” technology to emphasize care for her students and their families.

### **Theme 3: Retooling Technology to Foster Accessibility**

Kay’s deliberate use of technology to increase learning accessibility (what I am calling *re-tooling*) illustrates her deep concern and care for her students. Retooling technology facilitates student accessibility to the teacher by fostering care through technology applications (i.e., seesaw), and through family communication and partnerships.

#### ***Retooling Technology to Foster Accessibility for Students***

Recently, some educational researchers have begun to explore the intersections of educational technology and multicultural education (Camardese & Peled, 2014; Finklestein et al., 2011). Finkelstein et al. (2013) found that students showed greater achievement using web-based applications and technology that used culturally responsive dialect. Technology applications, such as Seesaw (Moorhouse, 2019), gives Kay the capability to record instructions and assign work in a manner that is responsive to the needs of her students. Kay states, “I love Seesaw! It makes virtual learning not feel so weird! (Kay laughs) Parents have told me it feels like I am in their homes when they hear me reading directions or responding to student work via audio”. Kay

advocates for teacher usage of Seesaw (Moorhouse, 2019) for it gives students more accessibility to their teacher and learning by allowing students to show their understanding of a particular assignment or standard in a variety of ways (i.e., via drawing, audio message, video message, written answer, etc.). Kay admits she was not as knowledgeable on how to retooling technology to increase student's accessibility to her. She did not have to be innovative on the ways to foster care with students in the brick and mortar setting. Now she does.

Technology applications (e.g., Seesaw) allow for authentic opportunities for students to show their knowledge. Seesaw creates a space for additional accessibility to the teacher through a variety of documentation and collection methods for students to demonstrate their learning, show creativity, and learn how to take ownership of their learning. During observations, I saw that Kay always records and rewords her directions for exit tickets in ways that makes sense to her students (via Seesaw). Kay does this to ensure students have the accessibility to go back and listen to her directions again. Thus, she states there is less student confusion and frustration. Kay argued Seesaw has made virtual learning "accessible for all students." She states,

"Before virtual learning students would call or text me if they had questions about their homework or assignments. Which is fine, but kids are not always comfortable doing this in the beginning of the school year. This year we really did not have time for trial and error. COVID was here and alive and we had families who needed our help. We did not have time to wait until October/November to get to know our families. However, because of the capabilities Seesaw gave me as a virtual teacher, students could access directions and information on any assignment regardless of the time or day."

Seesaw also is a digital portfolio app used to post pictures and videos of children as well as communicate with parents using its private messaging feature. Kay's lesson plans show student

work submission and her families use it to see their students work and communicate with all of their students' teachers (i.e. homeroom, math, reading, writing, social studies, etc.). Kay's deliberate use of technology to increase learning accessibility (what I am calling re-tooling) illustrates her deep concern and care for her students. In the field, this type of care has also been illustrated through what has been termed *technology-mediated care*.

Valasquez, Graham, and West (2013) studied how teachers facilitated caring interactions in an online high school. They identified six characteristics of technology-mediated caring: continuous dialogue, teacher-student accessibility, promptness, initiating dialogue, shared experience, and vigilant observation. Similar to teachers in the Valasquez et al. (2013) study, Kay creates spaces for frequent dialogue with students, often initiated by her, collaborate board (via Nearpod), poll questions and chat messages (via Zoom).

### ***Retooling Technology to Foster Accessibility for Family Communication and Partnerships***

Retooling technology facilitates accessibility to the teacher through family communication and partnerships in which are essential to virtual learning. Culturally responsive teachers engage in frequent conversations with their families and are able to create the same type of relationships they would cultivate in the brick-and-mortar setting (Lawrence, 2017, 2020). Observations show Kay engages in frequent and positive communication with her families. She typically starts each week by giving students an overview of the week and to let them know what assignments, quizzes, or tests are coming up. Her partnerships with families are not only impactful, but crucial for the virtual learning space. She aims to get to know her families on a personal level to ensure they are well versed with all learning platforms, all ways to get in touch with her, and all ways to support their students at home. During our final member check Kay

offers some words of encouragement for virtual learning teachers who aim to be culturally responsive in the virtual space. She states,

Parent Communication is key (whether it is positive or corrective treat parents like they are adults) -Never text or email. Always call. It feels better. Parents love it when you take time out to call them instead of sending a impersonal message. Also make sure everything is shared with the scholar. I would even ask to speak to the child so you can explain the situation and talk through how to move forward. Don't be that guy who calls parents on Thursday or Friday with corrective messages. Also, record some personalized videos to send to parents if kids do their asynchronous work. Now, those you should send on Thursday mornings. Parents love it and they feel more of a connect to you, their babies' teacher.

Kay envisioned families as a crucial part of the visual learning process and cultivates relationships with them by building trust. Kay believed virtual learning was successful when she is accessible to her students and their families. Her practices illustrate culturally responsive pedagogy can occur in the virtual space, community building can happen in the virtual space, and retooling technology fosters accessibility through technology applications (i.e., seesaw) in which allow for more accessibility to the teacher, and family communication and partnerships.

### **(De)Limitations of the Study**

This study and future investigations placed at the intersection between virtual learning, culture, and access, may provide a new way to understand and approach the promising future of culturally responsive virtual learning practices (specifically the role of culture, culturally informed relationships, and care) in Title 1 urban schools. Yet there are several delimitations and limitations to address. The study was conducted at the workplace of the researcher and may not

be as subjective as an outside researcher. It is also important to note the small number of participants included in this study, one teacher in depth may not provide the generalizable results across other teachers. There was also a time change in the hours of data collection during the study and this may provide the results to be nongeneralizable to other settings. Lastly, this study only is an in-depth examination of three aspects of CRP (culture, relationships, and care) as opposed to a broad study of all components of CRP. Some of the data collection methods (classroom videos, analytic memos) provided counter examples for my targeted coding. Data brought up CRP language around academic success and critical consciousness. This limited some of my data collection methods for the data did not portray care, culture, or relationships therefore some of the themes from the data was not illustrated in the results.

The future benefits of virtual learning are limitless. However, there are some limitations which need to be discussed. There was a change in schedule in which led to the researchers' engagement with the participant's observations because of their professional job responsibilities. Lessons were recorded instead of observed in real time; this may have impacted the researchers' ability to see a more holistic vision of the participants' teaching pedagogy. The research site is also departmentalized, and therefore, a non-departmentalized classroom setting may have led to different results due to the teacher and students increase in time spent together throughout the school day. It is also important to address the restrictions during COVID-19. The study focused on collecting data virtually from one source, the teacher. Being able to have access to and include information from students and families would add a richness to this work. Another limitation of the study applied research from culturally responsive practices to a new setting-online. So the expectations, and hence criteria, for what constitutes each component of CRP rests on generalizing practices from brick and mortar settings to those that are virtual. We may

reconsider what think “care” “culture” and “relationships” should like in new contexts. Finally, while the pandemic served as the impetus to explore this topic, it also influenced all teaching and learning and research that is conducted during it. The study didn’t just examine what CRP looks like in a virtual setting. It examined what CRP looks like during an unprecedented pandemic.

### **Implications**

The results from the study indicate virtual learning for culturally responsive teachers should rest on building community, fostering care through use of online applications such as Seesaw, developing relationships through trust, and centering culture through customs and academics.

Accessibility in virtual settings has traditionally centered on the tools needed to connect to instruction (Kennedy & Archambault, 2012). Kennedy and Archambault (2012) integrated five sets of standards for effective online teaching (e.g. SREB, iNacol, Quality Matters) with the purpose of looking for patterns of recommended skills and teacher dispositions for online teaching. Based on the data, Kay showed expertise in online pedagogy, but she uses it to ensure culturally responsive pedagogy is enacted in a virtual learning space. Archambault and Kennedy (2014) recommendations do not account for diversity in culture, and identity. Archambault and Kennedy (2014) discuss best practices for virtual learning however unlike Kay they do not address any learner differences or consider the context of instruction, such as that for culturally diverse children in Title 1 urban schools. A glimpse into Kay’s virtual classroom illustrates what comprises best practices for online instruction and which instructional strategies and supports work best for students of color (Huerta et al., 2015). Archambault and Kennedy (2014) employ culturally-responsive modes of implementation and argues that connecting with students virtually is more than bandwidth. The qualities of effective teaching may be similar across

online platforms, yet as Archambault and Kennedy (2014) indicate, “the methods of implementation are different” (p. 227). Kay’s methods of implementation consider the learner, their community, and the home learning situation. This case study shows the sociocultural considerations and aspects of instruction that are considered for face-to-face instruction must also be considered when working online.

Virtual CRP components of Jackson’s, et al. (2014) Ethos of Care include interactions that highlight or indicate community, relationships, love, care, confidence, sense of responsibility, critical consciousness, high expectations, validation, respect, and desire to give back (gardening). This study finds that student success is measured in relation to the success of his or her community and a certain level of connectedness to community. Milner (2006) defines culturally informed relationships as “high expectations, deep care for Black children, [and] beliefs in their [Black students’] capacity to succeed.” (p. 98). Kay shows a deep level of understanding for Black students and their experiences both inside and outside of school. She uses cultural knowledge about the students’ (home) community to build and sustain culturally informed relationships with them. She does this by showing culturally responsive pedagogy can occur in the virtual space, community building can happen in the virtual space, and retooling technology fosters accessibility with students and families. Culturally informed relationships are crucial for diverse low-income students given the obstacles faced and tendency to have less access to high-quality educational experiences. Teachers, similar to Kay who engage in culturally informed relationships with students encourage them to develop confidence, pride, a sense of responsibility, and critical consciousness. This study closely examines what culturally informed relationships “look” like in the virtual learning context. The goal of this type of

“caring” was to help ethnically diverse students not only excel academically but also contribute to a more caring, humane society.

### **Implications for Future Research**

This study informs future research and the field on how access, equity, opportunity, and centering the learner must be considered as important conditions when expanding to virtual learning. With these limitations in mind, future research will create a more holistic view of culturally responsive virtual learning if it focuses on family voice and student voice. The results from the study indicate virtual learning for culturally responsive teachers should rest on building community, fostering care through use of online applications such as Seesaw, developing relationships through trust, and centering culture through customs and academics. Reimagined future research could focus on the culture, care, and relationships components of culturally responsive virtual learning like another grade levels, content areas (i.e., math, social studies). If the study were conducted in a different grade level or with a different content focus the teacher may show care in a different manner but the elements of (culture, care, and relationships) would still be present.

During our final member Kay offers some words of encouragement for virtual learning teachers who aim to be culturally responsive. She states,

Parent Communication is key (whether it is positive or corrective treat parents like they are adults) Never text or email. Always call. It feels better. Parents love it when you take time out to call them instead of sending an impersonal message. Also make sure everything is shared with the scholar. I would even ask to speak to the child so you can explain the situation and talk through how to move forward. Don't be that guy who calls parents on Thursday or Friday with corrective messages. –Also, Record some

personalized videos to send to parents if kids do their asynchronous work. Now, those you should send on Thursday mornings. Parents love it and they feel more of a connect to you, their babies' teacher.

Certain elements of CRP can and must happen in CR virtual learning contexts. This study informs future research and the field on how access, equity, opportunity, and centering the learner must be considered as important conditions when expanding to virtual learning.

The results from the study indicate virtual learning for culturally responsive teachers should rest on building community, fostering care through use of online applications such as Seesaw, developing relationships through trust, and centering culture through customs and academics.

Future investigations placed at the intersection between virtual learning, culture, and access, can be replicated with additional exemplary cases may provide a new way to understand and approach culturally responsive virtual learning practices (specifically the role of culture, culturally informed relationships, and care) in Title 1 urban schools.

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## Appendix A

*Interview Questions*

Interview	Purpose	Question
Interview 1	The purpose of this interview is to learn about the teacher, understand their background in culturally responsive pedagogy, build a relationship with the teacher, and understand their instructional pedagogy.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How long have you been teaching?</li> <li>2. How long have you been teaching virtually?</li> <li>3. Have you always taught in Title 1 urban, why is this important to you?</li> <li>4. Describe a typical day as a virtual instruction teacher.</li> <li>5. How do you define CRP?</li> <li>6. What do you think about CRP?</li> <li>7. What do you know about CRP? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. If you foster care with your students virtually, how do you do this?</li> <li>b. If you build culturally informed relationships with your students, how do you do so?</li> <li>c. If you center culture in your curriculum, how do you do this?</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

## Interview 2

A second follow up interview occurred after Phase 1. The interview served as a member check from the analysis in Phase 1. The interview protocol will be informed by recorded instructional videos and themes that emerged in the videos and the 1<sup>st</sup> interview.

1. In what ways do you support/engage with students differently in the virtual space? Why?
2. I noticed you (discuss what I have noticed). Do you do this more now because we are virtual or was this something you have always done?
3. What are some indicators of care in your classroom?
4. What are some indicators of centering culture in your classroom?
5. In the previous interview you mentioned the importance of X. Why is that important, and how do you do that?
6. What are some indicators of culturally informed relationships in your classroom?
7. Is it harder to get to know the kids now because we are virtual?
8. Do you have any final thoughts or anything you would like to share about culturally informed relationships?

## Interview 3

A third follow up interview occurred after Phase 2. The interview served as a member check from the analysis in Phase 2. The interview protocol will be informed by recorded instructional videos and themes that emerged in the videos and the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview.

1. Is it harder to get to know the kids now because we are virtual?
2. I noticed you (discuss what I have noticed). Do you do this more now because we are virtual or was this something you have always done?
3. Do you have any final thoughts or anything you would like to share about culturally informed relationships?
4. Do you have any final thoughts or anything you would like to share about fostering care?
5. Do you have any final thoughts or anything you would like to share about centering culture in your curriculum?
6. I have noticed you spend a lot of time on building community. Why is that?
7. I have noticed you make a lot of modifications to your lesson plans. Can you talk a little bit more on why that is?

Interview 4

A third follow up interview occurred after Phase 3. The interview served as a member check from the analysis in Phase 3. The interview protocol will be informed by recorded instructional videos and themes that emerged in the videos and the 3<sup>rd</sup> interview

1. Is it harder to get to know the kids now because we are virtual?
  2. I noticed you (discuss what I have noticed). Do you do this more now because we are virtual or was this something you have always done?
  3. Do you have any final thoughts or anything you would like to share about culturally informed relationships?
  4. Do you have any final thoughts or anything you would like to share about fostering care?
  5. Do you have any final thoughts or anything you would like to share about centering culture in your curriculum?
  6. I have noticed you spend a lot of time on building community. Why is that?
  7. I have noticed you make a lot of modifications to your lesson plans. Can you talk a little bit more on why that is?
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