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Angela Menchaca

angela.menchaca@jaguar.tamu.edu

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SUPPORTING A MORE EQUITABLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: IMPLICATIONS OF  
PERSON-CENTERED PRACTICES ON TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY

A Thesis by:

Angela Menchaca

Submitted to Office of Graduate Studies  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Supporting a more equitable learning environment: implications of person-centered practices on

teacher self-efficacy

(December 2023)

Angela Menchaca

Thesis Advisor: Michael Mary

This research aimed to identify any implications Person-Centered Thinking training has on creating an equitable learning environment. Through an Embedded Mixed Methods study the researcher utilized the CRTSE and CRTOE instruments to collect quantitative data. Two rounds of interview questions were conducted to collect qualitative data. Quantitative and qualitative data was analyzed to identify comparisons in self-efficacy, outcome expectancy, and person-centered practices. The Person-Centered Thinking training received by participants was an adapted version of The Learning Community's PCT training curriculum. The sample size included two participants. Collectively participants had 14 years of teaching experience in grades K-12. One participant is a high school teacher and the other is an instructional specialist. A rudimentary analysis of the quantitative data was performed. Qualitative data went through two cycles of coding that produced the emergent themes identified. Findings provided evidence of PCT training supporting equitable learning environments.

## **Dedication**

*For my grandma who always encouraged me to learn and played teacher with me, even though her school experience prevented her completing or going beyond first grade. My grandmother has been one of the greatest teachers in my life. Everything she taught me so long ago remains true and relevant. There isn't a day that passes that I don't apply her teachings.*

*For every person young and wise that hoped someone would ask you what was important to you, while decisions about your lives were being made on your behalf, without them ever knowing or taking the time to discover what ignited the passion within you. Your thoughts matter, make your voice heard.*

## Acknowledgements

*Many moons ago my mom and dad planted within me the seeds of tenacity, strength, hard work, and dedication. I will be eternally grateful for the solid foundation you both diligently provided for me. Throughout the years you have nurtured me with your support and have been an example that a person can grow and evolve no matter the stage of life you're in. You both have contributed to my growth in immeasurable capacity. Without the examples of tenacity, strength, hard work, and dedication I saw in you both I would not be the woman I am today for my own children.*

*To my husband Joseph, you lift me up when I am at my lowest and celebrate me through the highs of life. When I've set my mind to the biggest task possible, and find myself questioning my ability, you constantly remind me that I can do anything. Thank you for your constant support and always believing in me. Loving and being loved by you is the greatest treasure in my life.*

*To my children Leah and Alvino, your lives led me to my purpose. You gave meaning and love to my passion for advocacy. You inspire me daily to be and do better. Aside from getting to love your dad there is no greater gift I've been given than to have the honor of being able to call myself your mom. You both are perfect exactly the way God created you.*

*To my close, extended, and distant family, thank you for the moments of encouragement throughout the years. Those moments have made my journey bearable and have reenergized me when I felt I could go no further. You are never far from my thoughts.*

*To Jennifer McCown Caruso, you are my introduction to the world of Person-Centered Thinking (PCT). Your light brightened my path when I needed it most. Jeff Garrison-Tate thank you for pouring your time, passion, and energy into mentoring me on my journey to becoming a PCT trainer. I've enjoyed every moment of the adventure and look forward to many more.*

*Dr. Michael Mary, you're the teacher I wished I had in high school. You never saw my ambition, drive, or confidence and assumed I had it under control on my own. From day one you listened to me ramble on about PCP and never tuned me out. You guided me, sharpened my thoughts, and gave me the guidance I sought. You listened to what drove my passion and challenged me to be better because of it.*

*To my coworkers past and current, (Denise, Theresa, Virginia, Liz, Renee, Martha, Cassandra, & Caprice) you are a blessing in my life. We've laughed, cried, prayed, and gotten each other through good and tough times while I was on this journey. Thank you for your unwavering friendship, encouragement, and for being available when I needed you most.*

*To my classmates, your lived experiences as classrooms teachers enhanced my learning. It gave me the information I sought to guide my critical thinking process while figuring out the needed strategies to apply person-centered thinking in the classroom. May your journey onward be filled with blessings that pour over in abundance to all the lives you will surely pour into.*

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

This Embedded Mixed Methods research will examine supporting a more equitable learning environment: implications of person-centered practices on teacher self-efficacy. For this study, cultural responsiveness will be examined through the lens of teacher perception of self-efficacy pre-and post-receiving person-centered thinking training. The implications of treatment will be examined and related to the key classroom components discussed in the introduction. While person-centered practices are not a new concept, the research will describe applying person-centered practices using a new model to the field of education. The curriculum used in this study, adapted for the environment of an education setting, has the potential to create a universal model applicable anywhere where an equitable learning environment is desired. The person-centered approach discussed in this research is both different and similar to the teacher-centered and student-centered classroom models currently used in schools today. As with most new ideas and concepts, there will certainly be more questions than answers. The hope is that educators will find themselves seeking to further understand through the replication of this study and the expansion of their knowledge of person-centered practices.

### **Classroom Environment**

In a classroom environment where equity pedagogy is fostered Banks & Banks (1995) say that “students can acquire, interrogate, and produce knowledge and envision new possibilities for the use of that knowledge” (p.153). There is not a one-size-fits-all approach of how an environment should look and feel that will work for every classroom; however, there are certain classroom functions that are essential to achieving progress in the environment based on standard approaches of what it means to create, establish, and maintain a healthy culturally

responsive learning environment (teaching quality, classroom organization, teacher-student relationship).

According to Mascolo (2009) Learning occurs within socio-cultural activities, meaning that it is influenced by the social and cultural context in which it takes place (p. 9). The concept of participation goes beyond simply being active in learning; it emphasizes that learners are an integral part of the social and cultural processes surrounding them. Regardless of the teaching method used, learners acquire knowledge and skills by engaging in activities that are culturally embedded. By participating in these activities, learners create the conditions for their own learning.

### **Classroom Power Structure**

For the duration of this paper, students will be referred to as “young learners” to support viewing them as such rather than as people that need to be controlled to meet outlined objectives, similar to the Lekshmi (2021) does in his study discussing culturally responsive pedagogy.

The classroom dynamic, when presented in black and white terms, seems simple. The teacher is the leader and the students, by default, are the followers. For decades this is what has been done and it has worked, or seemed to work, because the system continues to support this model. However, when the system encounters a new condition, for example a young learner advocating for themselves, how the teacher responds can positively or negatively impact the sense of trust between the teacher and young learner. A moment like this has the potential to support growth or cause a setback that produces a feeling of defeat for both young learner and teacher.

Establishing an equitable balance of *power with* (The Learning Community for Person-Centered Practices, 2023), rather than *power over* (The Learning Community for Person-Centered Practices, 2023), could mean the difference between supporting positive young learner growth or

promoting young learner setback. Shifting teacher power to a PCP *power with* perspective when identifying a young learner's motivation in any student-teacher engagement will encourage an equitable classroom balance. Supporting growth means looking for potential rather than seeking a punishment justified reaction. By only looking at young learners as disciplinary problems when they test the boundaries, is the educator's response one that values the young learner through their curiosity or is the response one that devalues the young learner's desire to experience the world around them a little differently?

### **Student-Centered Approach**

According to Mascolo (2009) “Advocates of student-centered pedagogy generally proceed from the constructivist position that maintains that learners construct their understandings through their actions and experiences on the world” (p.1). The student-centered approach, as it is typically conceived, is a form of stereotyping which is informed by arbitrary demographic data such as race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, at-risk status, etc. coupled with the teacher's presumptions of the young learner's abilities; for example, assuming that a young learner is a struggling reader based on data alone. By not engaging in a conversation with the young learner about their process when tasked with reading, and not guiding them through the *discovery process* of self-awareness, the teacher misses an opportunity to empower self-advocacy. What is currently considered student-centered may be producing young learners that remain dependent on authority figures as opposed to empowering the young learner to gain independence and become the drivers of their own academic journey.

### **Teacher-Student Relationships**

According to Petrone et. al (2020) “the actual voices and perspectives of young people are oddly absent from the process of preparing teachers to teach them” (p. 244). The teacher-

student relationship is key to the success of teachers supporting a young learner's learning outcomes. Strong relationships foster environments of trust, support, and cultural responsiveness. When people have a genuine connection with others, they are more likely to engage and feel safe seeking guidance. According to Wang et. al (2020) "teacher-student interactions are proximal processes that structure opportunities to learn and influence students' willingness and ability to engage in those opportunities" (p. 1987). It is through the process of nourishing a strong relationship that teachers may have an opportunity to gain insights into their young learner's inner motivators; motivators that will create opportunistic possibilities to engage learning.

The goal of a teacher should always be to support young learners to thrive within their learning environment, so that when they leave, they are empowered to conquer any challenge they encounter. Passing a young learner along should never be the goal of the institution.

According to Morgan (2021):

"...adolescents desire to feel respected and supported. Opportunities to provide them with this respect occur when they participate in undesirable behavior. However, when educators ignore pupils' needs as they punish them, students feel a sense of disconnection with their school. A supportive system is aligned with young people's needs and strengths" (p. 198).

Relationships that produce positive engaging transactions make the potential of the goal more attainable. But how does a teacher begin to build this type of relationship with their young learner? It begins with the approach of inviting the young learner to a conversation about their education. By doing this the teacher is acknowledging them as a contributing member to the decision-making process. This act by the teacher displays their recognition of the importance of

the person (young learner) regardless of their grade, age, background, values, beliefs, socioeconomic status, limitations society places on the person, etc. Without taking this first step in building a relationship with a young learner, opportunities to establish a thriving pathway to success are left to chance rather than intentionally created. For the purpose of this study the researcher will conduct an examination on whether Person-Centered Practices has any implications on creating an equitable learning environment.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### Introduction

According to Cornelius-White (2007) “person-centered education is a counseling-originated, educational psychology model, overripe for meta-analysis, that posits that positive teacher-student relationships are associated with optimal, holistic learning” (p. 113).

#### Origins of Person-Centered Approach

To best understand the simplistic yet complex concept of person-centered approaches it is important to understand where the concept began. The concept was originally developed by Carl Rogers through his development of client-centered theory. According to Holosko, Skinner, and Robinson (2008) “client-centered theory is an ever-evolving approach to human development conceptualized by Carl Rogers in the 1940s, eventually known as ‘person-centered’ theory (PCT) in the 1970s” (p. 297). According to Rogers (1979), “the individual has within him or herself vast resources for self-understanding, for altering the selfconcept basic attitudes, and his or her self-directed behaviour - and that these resources can be tapped if only a definable climate of facilitative psychological attitudes can be provided” (p.1). In *Freedom to Learn*, Rogers (1969) defines the:

...elements which are involved in such significant or experiential learning. *It has a quality of personal involvement*-the whole person in both his feeling and cognitive aspects being *in* the learning event. *It is self-initiated*. Even when the impetus or stimulus comes from the outside, the sense of discovery, of reaching out, of grasping and comprehending, comes from within. *It is pervasive*. It makes a difference in the behavior, the attitudes, perhaps even the personality of the learner. *It is evaluated by the learner*. He

knows whether it is meeting his need, whether it leads toward what he *wants* to know, whether it illuminates the dark area of ignorance he is experiencing. The locus of evaluation, we might say, resides definitely in the learner. *Its essence is meaning*. When such learning takes place, the element of meaning to the learner is built into the whole experience (p. 5).

According to Swan et. al (2020) Rogers “identified three ‘core conditions’ that support facilitative practice in both counseling and education: empathy, genuineness, and unconditional positive regard. He theorized that these three conditions: empathy, genuineness, and unconditional positive regard were necessary for the creation of relationships that support and facilitate both therapeutic conversations and educational interactions” (p. 4).

### **Person-centered practices defined by The Learning Community**

The Learning Community for Person Centered Practices (TLCPCP) defines itself as “an international community of volunteers that organized themselves to promote the use of person-centered practices globally. We strive to be diverse, inclusive, and accessible so that people with lived experiences of disability, family members, advocates, professionals, and all others can participate” (The Learning Community for Person-Centered Practices, 2023). Person-Centered Thinking (PCT) is a set of instructional strategies used by The Learning Community for Person Centered Practices, originally designed for persons supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). PCT is a curriculum resource available as part of the person-centered approaches umbrella used by The Learning Community for Person-Centered Practices. When the acronym PCP is referenced throughout this paper it will be referring to person-centered practices as defined by The Learning Community for Person-Centered Practices unless otherwise noted. PCP support the person's development in the areas of communication, cultural

responsiveness, self-awareness, and positive reputations to create a person-first culture and approach to supporting others.

General person-centered approaches are being used in educational contexts; in addition, they are widely used in other areas. Carl Rogers began the foundational work of applying person-centered approaches in education settings that build off his client-based therapy approach. Frieberg & Lamb applied Carl Rogers work in their classroom management research (Swan et. al, 2020, Freiberg et. al, 2009).

The skills and strategies learned through PCP and PCT training as outlined by the TLCPCP are currently being used on a national level to support Medicaid and Medicare funded programs. Per the Texas Administrative Code “A person-centered service planning process is provided in accordance with 42 CFR §441.540” to maintain compliance with federal regulations when providing Medicaid and Medicare funded programs. PCP and PCT training focus on the whole person [young learner] regardless of age, race, gender, disability, etc. and teaches the skills teachers need to provide individual or group-based support in any environment. PCP and PCT training bring to the forefront the person being supported and challenges teachers to truly listen to their young learners before actions are taken. According to the National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems “Person-centered practices ensure that the people we serve get to live the life they desire. Using person-centered practices also can improve job satisfaction for the professionals who use them” (2019, Person-Centered Thinking, Planning, and Practice: A National Environmental Scan of Foundational Resources and Approaches). PCP and PCT skills teach people to embrace the cultures and diversity of others through the support provided, creating culturally responsive learning environments and relationships. The Learning



Community for Person Centered Practices has many PCP approaches. The approach adapted for the purpose of this research is the Person-Centered Thinking (PCT) Curriculum.

In academic settings, plans for young learners are established “based on the belief that students with disabilities can make progress on challenging goals aligned to the general education curriculum at the enrolled grade level with specially designed services and supports” (Texas Education Agency, 2023, Standards-Based Individualized Education Program Guidance) through the IEP development process. For the plan to be truly *person-centered* it must be developed with input and guidance from the person for which it is being developed. According to The Learning Community for Person-Centered Practices (2023, Person Centered Thinking) “If people who use services are to have positive control over their lives, if they are to have self-directed lives within their own communities, then those who are around the person — especially those who do the day-to-day work — need to have person centered thinking skills”.

Person-centered practices and skills can be applied to all people receiving support or services no matter the age or preconceived abilities placed on a person. The work of The Learning community and promoting person-centered approaches “sharing learning on methods of person-centered thinking, planning, and support across the lifespan for all people” (The Learning Community for Person-Centered Practices, 2023, Our Work). A person of any age or ability has the right and ability to be included in conversations that directly impact their journey in life (National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems, 2023).

### **Applications of Person-Centered Approaches**

According to Freiberg et al “the climate is warm and productive in a person-centered classroom, where students feel safe to express their ideas/opinions and make mistakes” (p. 104).

According to Fetting et. al (2021) As the number of young children entering EC/ECSE (early childhood/early childhood special education) increases each year, it is critical to consider effective and efficient ways to improve classroom quality and promote positive child outcomes. A person-centered approach to understanding classroom quality provides multiple dimensions to consider for quality improvement (p. 88).

The following research will focus on approaches to creating person-centered classroom models different from the PCP model as described by The Learning Community for Person-Centered Practices. All person-centered research reviewed provided different approaches to applying a person-centered approach. Research reviewed where person-centered/student-centered approaches have been applied with elementary, middle, and high school level young learners are noted within this literature review. Research notes that when conscious student-centered practices were applied, the findings showed that the environment had positive implications for all involved (Murdock et. al 2003, Freiberg et. al, 2009, Fetting et. al, 2021, Childre et. al, 2005, Pond et. al, 2017, Thompson et.al, 2021).

While reviewing research that included person-centered approaches applied in educational settings, the most applied practice to the approach was to cluster research subjects to like groupings based on tendencies and commonalities. For example, Pond & Chini (2017) described grouping based on person tendencies and commonalities, while Wormington et.al (2016), Brocato (2009), Thompson et. al, (2021), and Doyle, (2009), took a person-centered approach by analyzing data and then grouping based on data. For example, person-centered clustering- applied and variable centered approaches were used by Murdock et. al, (2003), while researching differences in motivational and achievement patterns in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade young learners.

Clustering based on person similarities with no clearly outlined path to understand young learner choices or source of motivation was the person-centered approach applied during Murdock study. According to Patall et. al, (2014) “A sense of competence may also foster interest and motivation, particularly when students are given the opportunity to make choices about their learning activities” (p. 112) an important factor to consider when applying a person-centered approach in a classroom setting.

Thompson et. al, (2021) used the GIMME (group iterative multiple model estimation) approach to collect their data, while also applying a variable-centered method. The GIMME was used “to model person level responses to negative teacher feedback regarding students’ next day motivational ratings” (p. 775). This study looked at how teachers' negative feedback impacted young learner motivation on the date of the occurrence as well as the day after the occurrence.

To better understand learning styles Pond & Chini (2017) gathered individual data and grouped subjects according to their responses. They took this approach to better understand learning styles of each category of subjects. Pond & Chini (2017) concluded by stating the person-centered profile approach presented here helps to characterize students and gives a basis to investigate what students themselves bring to the classroom. Identifying learning profiles and their adoptions among different types of students gives insight into students’ classroom motivations and study behaviors and allow us, as educators, to better understand and respond to their needs (p. 010119-15).

According to Freiberg et. al, 2009 “consistency management (CM) focuses on classroom and instructional organization and teacher planning” (p.104) and “Cooperative discipline (CD) expands the leadership roles and responsibilities of instructional management from solely the teacher’s to shared responsibility between students and teacher” (p.104). Freiberg et. al, (2009)

used the Consistency Management and Cooperative Discipline program (CMCD) in their person-centered classroom management model that created a shared responsibility between the teacher and young learners.

### **Self-Efficacy**

Understanding the importance of self-efficacy and how it relates to teaching and supporting young learners is pivotal in growth in this area. The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine *How People Learn II: Learners, Contexts, and Cultures (2018)* defines self-efficacy as:

Learning develops from multiple sources, including perceptions of one's past performance, vicarious experiences, performance feedback, affective/physiological states, and social influences. Research on how to improve self-efficacy for learning has shown the benefits of several strategies for strengthening students' sense of their competence for learning, including setting appropriate goals and breaking down difficult goals into subgoals (Bandura et. al, 1981) and providing students with information about their progress, which allows them to attribute success to their own effort (Schunk et. al, 1986).

According to Powell-Moman et. al, (2011) "teachers with lower levels of efficacy will be less motivated to put forth effort during instruction and will lower levels of persistence" (p.48). It is through the building of our own consciousness that we grow in our abilities to support growth within others.

### **Culturally Responsive Pedagogy**

Having a sense of what culturally responsive pedagogy is and the self-awareness to acknowledge the facets of how people have come to be who they are is the initial process to activate cultural responsiveness. Understanding the expectation of this approach and having a

tool to assist educators through the process will directly impact the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the attempted process. Culturally responsive pedagogy according to Lekshmi (2021) is as stated:

Culturally responsive pedagogy can be conceptualized in three main dimensions: institutional, personal, and instructional. The institutional dimension focuses on the role of cultural factors on the academic policies, organization, and procedures with or without the involvement of the community. The personal dimension is oriented towards the involvement of teachers in the curriculum transaction in such a way to get adapted to the cross-cultural milieu and become culturally responsive. The instructional dimension is more challenging which focuses on the pedagogic tendencies and practices that can be incorporated in a culturally responsive classroom. When a teacher attempts to handle classes in multi-cultural classrooms, he/she should be well aware of the nature of their own culture, the nature of other ones' (parents, colleagues) culture, and the nature of students' culture. The teacher should be able to overcome the inaccurate views about their own culture and to give up all kinds of cultural biases (p. 5501).

### **Review of instruments**

To measure the implication of PCT training effects on teacher self-efficacy as it relates to cultural responsiveness, the instruments used to measure culturally responsive teacher self-efficacy were Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale (CRTSE) and Culturally Responsive Teaching Outcome Expectancy Scale (CRTOE) (Siwatu, 2007, Chu & Garcia, 2014, Hachfeld et. al, 2015, Larson & Bradshaw, 2017).

According to Thomas et. al, (2020) "The Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale is a 40-item measure designed to assess preservice teachers' perceptions toward their

ability to implement culturally responsive teaching practices” (p.126). CRTSE utilized a Likert type scale of 0 (no confidence) - 100 (complete confidence). Thomas al et (2020) states that “quantitative methods were used to determine differences from the beginning and end of the semester between the group of students involved in the traditional teacher preparation program and the group participating in the community engaged teacher preparation program” (p.126).

The second instrument used was The Culturally Responsive Teaching Outcome Expectancy Scale according to Thomas al et (2020) it “is a 26-item scale designed to assess preservice teachers’ beliefs that engaging in culturally responsive teaching practices will result in positive outcomes for student learners” (p. 127). CRTOE utilized a Likert type scale of 0 (entirely uncertain) to 100 (completely certain). After an in-depth review of literature about how to measure self-efficacy, the research identified that there were downfalls to utilizing the traditional Likert scale and opted to use the 0 (entirely uncertain) to 100 (completely certain) (Siwatu, 2007) for both instruments used in this study.

While the instruments were originally created for preservice teachers Siwatu (2007) states that “Despite the changing demographics of today’s school children, little research has been done to examine preservice and inservice teachers’ culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy and outcome expectancy beliefs. The development of the CRTSE and CRTOE would allow for these needed inquiries” (p.1089). Thomas al et (2020) states “it is possible to design a teacher preparation program that can bolster candidates’ beliefs in their ability to bridge the disconnect between their own cultures and those of their students, which may lead to closing the achievement gap” (p. 130). According to Siwatu (2007) his study using the Culturally Responsive Teacher Self-Efficacy instrument reported the following:

The findings of this study were two-pronged: the quantitative phase that revealed the nature of preservice teachers' CRTSE beliefs and the qualitative phase that identified the types of culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy forming experiences that preservice teachers encountered during their teacher education program and the perceived influence that these experiences had on the development of their CRTSE beliefs. These findings have implications for the preparation of teachers who are both competent and confident in their abilities to execute the practice of culturally responsive teaching (p. 366).

### **Research gap**

There are limited articles about PCP being used in classroom settings to support the general education environment. However, person-centered approaches can be found in the areas of counseling and trauma informed care for all age groups. Fettig et.al, (2021) state that “a person-centered approach to understanding classroom quality provides multiple dimensions to consider for quality improvement” ...and “the early learning workforce has a documented need for professional development suited to different levels of education and program structure” (P. 75). Therefore, it is imperative that professional development approaches are considered to match the needs of individual teachers. In the effort to identify professional development to create a student-centered and culturally responsive learning environment, the researcher sought approval to explore these areas to fill a gap in this area of education research. Migliarini et. al, (2021) applied a PCP, as defined by TLCPCP, approach to redesigning the IEP process to support inclusivity of all students and reported the following:

the introduction of PCP and ecological assessments has helped reframe and relieve some of the challenges that Italian teachers face when including migrant students with disabilities in mainstream settings. We argued that existing inclusive practices in

mainstream schools can increase the exclusion of migrant students and their families” (p. 417).

While there is available research utilizing forms of person-centered practices in the classroom (Fettig et. al, (2021), Migliarini et. al, (2021), Pond & Chini, 2017) there is still much research that is needed. According to Fettig et. al, (2021) “Future research with a larger sample size is necessary to fully account for the range of teacher characteristics that contribute to a person-centered approach” (p. 87), additionally “a person-centered approach to understanding classroom quality is a promising direction for future research” (p. 88). By identifying and establishing a practical curriculum to implement person-centered skills such as the one developed by the Institute for person-centered practices, this research attempts to demonstrate a universal adaptable practical person-centered approach to improve the learning environment by attempting to support the improvement of teacher self-efficacy.



## **Chapter 3**

### **Method**

#### **Introduction**

This research aims to identify an adaptable approach to supporting young learners that will create an equitable, culturally responsive learning environment. By exploring a PCP strategy, this research seeks to uncover a practical approach to a universal person-centered application that can effectively support young learners while promoting an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment.

#### **Procedure**

To examine the Implications of Person-Centered Practices on Teacher Self-Efficacy: to Support a More Equitable Learning Environment a mixed method approach was taken to conduct this research. In this mixed methods study participants took pre- and post-surveys using the following instruments: 1.) Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale (CRTSE) (Siwatu, 2007, Chu, Garcia, 2014, Hachfeld, Hahn, Schroeder, Anders, & Kunter, 2015, Larson & Bradshaw, 2017) (see Appendix A). The second instrument used was the 2.) Culturally Responsive Teaching Outcome Expectations Scale (CRTOE) (Siwatu, 2007, Chu, Garcia, 2014, Hachfeld, Hahn, Schroeder, Anders, & Kunter, 2015, Larson & Bradshaw, 2017) (see Appendix B).

After completing CRTSE and CRTOE pre-surveys, participants received training in Person-Centered Practices (PCP) and then completed the post-surveys and participated in two rounds of interviews using pre-scripted open-ended interview questions. The prescription interview items can be found in Appendix C.

According to Creswell and Clark (2007) “mixed method research provides strengths that offset the weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative research” (p. 9). For this study a mixed methods design allowed for the analysis of quantitative changes between the pre- and post-survey data. The mixed method design also allowed for any qualitative findings not evident within the survey data to be revealed during the qualitative interview data collection. Furthermore, to investigate the PCT training treatment on teacher self-efficacy and cultural responsiveness a mixed methods embedded design was used to examine the findings of the experiment (Creswell & Clark, 2007).

Survey data was collected through Qualtrics. Post interviews were conducted via telephone and virtual conferencing. Participants had the option of completing the questions before the interview. If a participant opted to answer interview questions prior to the interview researcher asked confirming questions during the interview process regarding pre-filled responses and requested that the participant elaborate when further clarification was needed. There were seven base questions participants were asked with follow up questions based on responses.

### **Data Analysis**

A mixed methods explanatory design approach as described by Creswell & Plano Clark, (2007), was chosen for this study. Qualitative data was collected two times after participants received PCT training and prioritized to identify any implications of PCT identified by the participants to gain an understanding of the potentials areas where self-efficacy was developed due to the PCT training, to gain a perspective on participant choice to use or not use PCT when performing work related responsibilities, and to identify whether PCT training had any implications on creating a culturally responsive learning environment. Quantitative data was also

collected pre- and post PCT training to measure self-efficacy of cultural responsiveness as well as culturally responsive outcome expectancy. Analysis of the data in this mixed methods approach provides the necessary data to provide a comprehensive review of PCT implications on creating equitable learning environments.

To further analyze the collected qualitative data the researcher began utilizing the Initial Coding protocol according to Saldana (2009). The researcher broke “down the qualitative data into discrete parts, closely examining them, and comparing them for similarities and differences” (Saldana, 2009, p. 81). The researcher completed this process to reflect the grouping of participants and the individual data for each participant. This was done to reflect any differences in responses for each participant to see if any interpretations could be made based on demographic information provided. The Initial Coding protocol was followed by a second cycle of Focused Coding according to Saldana (2009) to identify “the most frequent or significant Initial Codes to develop “the most salient categories” in the data corpus and “requires decisions about which initial codes make the most analytic sense” (p.155). When Focused Coding cycle was completed the researcher then reviewed and categorized the coded data into three main themes that aligned with the main areas of the literature review: self-efficacy, person-centered practices, and cultural responsiveness.

The researcher separated survey questions into two categories: action and thought perception items. Action items were anything associated with completing a task and perception items were focused more on the teacher’s thought process in each scenario. This was done to identify any trends or correlations between thought perceptions after receiving the person-centered thinking training.

To compare pre and post data collected between participant A and B, the researcher categorized pre and post responses by identifying questions where both participants had an increase in response points on the same questions between the following ranges: small range 1 - 19 and large range of 20 or more.

### **Adaption of Person-Centered Thinking Training Curriculum**

The training participants received was the PCT curriculum adapted from the current two-day person-centered thinking curriculum into a 90-minute training session for teachers. Adaption of the curriculum was created to accommodate the time schedules of teachers and to provide relevant education setting references within the training. The adapted curriculum of the training focused on maintaining the PCT training curriculum's integrity by delivering the core concept values, skills, and curriculum activities of the training:

- *balance between important to and important for*
- *positive control: power with vs. power over*
- *content/process experts*
- *guess-ask-write, branching conversations*
- *communication log*
- *relationship map*
- *one page description*

I, the researcher, am certified by the Learning Community as a Person-Centered Thinking trainer and can make necessary adjustments to the curriculum delivery to ensure participants leave the training session with a solid understanding of the curriculum's core concept, values, and skills in PCT.

## **Participants**

Participants in this study were both in-service teachers, Participant A teaches high school young learners and Participant B is a former classroom teacher now an instructional specialist supporting classroom teachers. Both work in urban area public schools. Both teachers have seven years of experience teaching. Participant A has experience teaching grades 4-12 and Participant B has experience teaching grades Pre-K - 5. Both participants were female and in their 30's. One was of Mexican/Native American background and the other was of Caucasian/Non-Hispanic background.

## Chapter 4

### Findings

#### Quantitative Findings

Analysis of the means of both participants pre and post results of instruments was reviewed to identify any change in overall response. When reviewing the following results, it is important to note that Participant A had received prior training in culturally responsive classroom environments from Teach for America, but Participant B has indicated that she had never received any prior training in cultural responsiveness. The means of both participants showed an increase in both their self-efficacy and in their outcome expectancy responses. Table 1 data shows that Participant A had an average increase in self-efficacy (CRSTE) of 7.71 and an average increase in outcome expectancy (CROTE) of 13.34 points per survey question in each of the instruments. Participant B had an average increase in self-efficacy (CRSTE) of 26.22 and an average increase in outcome expectancy (CROTE) of 27.47 points per survey question in each of the instruments. It was expected that there would be no statistical significance due to the small sample size of two participants. Given the number of participants, an advanced statistical analysis was not possible for this study.

**Table 1**

*CRSTE & CROTE Summation of pre/post means*

	<i>CRSTE</i>		<i>CROTE</i>	
	<i>Pre-</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Pre-</i>	<i>Post-</i>
Participant A	79.51	87.22	85.62	98.96
Participant B	64.34	90.56	69.15	96.62

Note: Both the CRSTE and CROTE are scored on 100-point scales

In lieu of statistical analysis, a rudimentary item comparison of both participants' pre- and post- training survey responses was evaluated. This evaluation involved the grouping of change in respondents' scores on items between the pre- and post-surveys. These changes were

then grouped based on the ranges of pre- and post- item differences. Changes between one and 19 were classified as small pre/post difference and changes of more than 20 points were classified as large pre/post differences. The two ranges were chosen because of the point scale of the instruments.

There was a total of 33 action questions identified in the CRTSE instrument and eight identified action questions. Participants combined showed an increase in three action questions in the small range and one in the large range. For the thought perception questions participants combined showed an increase in five thought perception questions in the small range and three in the large range. Participant A showed an increase in 16 action questions in the small range and six in the large range. For the thought perception questions Participant A showed an increase in five thought perception questions in the small range and one in the large range. Participant B showed an increase in three action questions in the small range and 18 in the large range. For the thought perception questions Participant B showed an increase in one thought perception questions in the small range and five in the large range.

**Table 2**  
*CRTSE Summation of pre/post gains in participant rating*

	Small Range	Large Range
Participants Combined Action	3	1
Participants Combined Thought Perception	5	3
Participant A Action	16	6
Participant A Thought Perception	5	1
Participant B Action	3	18
Participant B Thought Perception	1	5

Total number of Action Questions 33 of 41

Total number of Thought Perception Questions 8 of 41

<sup>a</sup> Gain < 20 points (on 100 point scale)

<sup>b</sup> Gain > 20 points (on 100 point scale)

All instrument questions in the CRTOE were identified as thought perception questions. Participants combined showed an increase in six thought perception questions in the small range and five in the large range. Participant A showed an increase in nine thought perception questions in the small range and seven in the large range. Participant B showed an increase in two thought perception questions in the small range and sixteen in the large range.

**Table 3**  
*CRTOE Summation of pre/post gains in participant rating*

	Small Range <sup>a</sup>	Large Range <sup>b</sup>
Participants Combined Action	-	-
Participants Combined Thinking	6	5
Participant A Action	-	-
Participant A Thinking	9	7
Participant B Action	-	-
Participant B Thinking	2	16

Total number of Action Questions 0 of 26

Total number of Thought Perception Questions 26 of 26

<sup>a</sup> Gain < 20 points (on 100 point scale)

<sup>b</sup> Gain > 20 points (on 100 point scale)

In the CRTSE instrument, on twelve instrument questions both participants had an increase in response point in the small range, and on three instrument questions both participants had an increase in response points in the large range. Participant A showed an increase in response points in the CRTSE instrument, 22 questions had an increase in the small range and six questions had an increase in response points in the large range. Participant A showed an increase in their self-efficacy with 28 of the 41 instrument questions after receiving the PCT training. Participant B showed an increase in response points in the following ranges, four questions in the small range and twenty-three questions had an increase in response points in the large range



Participant B showed an increase in their self-efficacy with 27 of the 41 instrument questions after receiving the PCT training.

**Table 4**  
*CRSTE Summation of pre/post gains in participant rating*

	Small Range <sup>a</sup>	Large Range <sup>b</sup>
Participants Combined	12	3
Participant A	22	6
Participant B	4	23

<sup>a</sup> Gain < 20 points (on 100 point scale)

<sup>b</sup> Gain > 20 points (on 100 point scale)

In the CRTOE instrument there were six instrument questions. Both participants had an increase in response points in the following ranges: six instrument questions in the small range and five instrument questions in the large range. Participant A responses for CRTOE instrument showed an increase in response point in nine instrument questions in the small range and seven instrument questions had an increase in response points in the large range. Participant A showed an increase in their outcome expectancy with 16 of the 26 instrument questions after receiving the PCT training. Participant B responses showed an increase in instrument response points for two questions in the small range and sixteen questions had an increase in response points in the large range. Participant B showed an increase in their outcome expectancy with 18 of the 26 instrument questions after receiving the PCT training.

**Table 5***CRSTE Summation of pre/post gains in participant rating*

	Small Range <sup>a</sup>	Large Range <sup>b</sup>
Participants Combined	6	5
Participant A	9	7
Participant B	2	16

<sup>a</sup> Gain < 20 points (on 100 point scale)<sup>b</sup> Gain > 20 points (on 100 point scale)**Qualitative Findings**

The emergent themes that best fit the data were ideas associated with person-centered practices discussed in the introduction and in the literature review: Person-centered practices, self-efficacy, and cultural responsiveness.

***Initial Coded Data***

The first cycle yielded 14 codes that were later Focused Coded. The following 14 codes were identified during the first cycle: perspective change, action to ask questions rather than assume, used PCP core concept/skill terminology, relationships, communication, support, implementation of PCP core concept/skill, understanding, sharing PCP core concept/skill with others, suggestion to adapt to different grade levels, equity, power, empathy, and culture.

***Focused Coded Data***

The initial coded codes were paired with the ideas discussed in the introduction and literature review according to the researcher's interpretation of data collected. Presented are the codes paired with the appropriate theme: person-centered practices: perspective change, action to ask questions rather than assume, used PCP core concept/skill terminology, relationships, communication, support, and implementation of PCP core concept/skill, self-efficacy: understanding, sharing PCP core concept/skill with others, suggestion to adapt to different grade levels, and cultural responsiveness: equity, power, empathy, and culture.

**Table 6**

Initial Codes	Focused Themes
1. Perspective Change 2. Action to ask questions rather than assume 3. Used PCP core concept/skill terminology 4. Relationships 5. Communication 6. Support 7. Implementation of PCP core concept/skill	A. Person-Centered Practices
8. Understanding 9. Sharing PCP core concept/skill with others 10. Suggestion to adapt to different grade levels	B. Self-Efficacy
11. Equity 12. Power 13. Empathy 14. Culture	C. Cultural Responsiveness

**Themes**

PCT core concepts and skills were discussed with participants during the interview process as it related to their experiences in the classroom, interactions with others, or reflection of past interactions. The following themes could best be defined as the underlying principles of PCP as discussed in the literature review: Person-Centered Practices, self-efficacy, and cultural responsiveness. Many examples could have been placed in multiple themes because of the information provided within the example by the participant. However, the decision to place them within the identified theme was based on the action taken by the participant not the effects of the action within the example. Participants provided responses mostly in an example format to explain how they chose to implement aspects of the PCT training. The following are direct quotes from participants as they relate to each theme: person-centered practices, self-efficacy, and cultural responsiveness.

## **Person-Centered Practices (PCP)**

Examples of participant responses that were associated with the theme of PCP were:

Participant B “This has led me to realize to question more and all students to share rather than assume. Instead of me making assumptions based off of what background knowledge I think they would have, it would be more of providing those opportunities for them to share and them to make those connections, or me having to do extra research or extend things further and me having to learn whether it's their culture or practice or whatever it is, so that way, I can help support them in making the connections for them to understand like a discipline”.

Participant B described her self-awareness of bias she had prior to receiving PCT training related to assumptions about a person without first-hand knowledge of the person. She described the value in providing opportunities to allow young learners to share information about themselves first-hand to identify the best approaches to supporting young learners.

Participant A “it made me realize how power can be leveraged so that both student and teacher have equity in the classroom as to how decisions are made”.

Participant A described a moment of self-reflection detailing contributions from all people involved in the situation are necessary to creating equity in the classroom.

## **Self-Efficacy**

An example of a participant response that was associated with the theme of self-efficacy:

...it goes back to what PCP does for people. I think that it gives you a better understanding of how to build relationships, how to react and to listen, and to be open to other perspectives other than your own” and “I think that some of these practices would be something that I could definitely share with a teacher, who has a bilingual classroom

or who doesn't, or maybe they are dual language or they're a newcomer, I think it would be based on when those situations are approached and happening and then I'm like, Oh, let me dig into my PCP toolbox in my head -Participant B.

### **Cultural Responsiveness**

Example of a participant response that was associated with the theme of cultural responsiveness:

I feel it lends itself to understand that we all have different values. Sometimes our values can be the same. Regardless if they're the same or they're different, we are going to appreciate each other's priorities. If they don't tend to be in line at that moment, we'll find a way to work it out. I think culturally, when you have person-centered thinking, it leads to an environment of dignity and compassion. I think that's the best way to put it. It's different than kindness. I feel kindness is forced. I'm doing this so the parent doesn't get mad at me or I'm doing this because my teacher's going to get mad at me. When you have person-centered thinking, I feel it's more compassion. It impacts the culture that way because now you all understand when we're all well and healthy, we're going to all feel that way. When someone is not and perhaps they're uncomfortable, then we're all gonna feel uncomfortable for that student. I feel person-centered thinking-- that's not necessarily a bad thing if that means it gives us compassion for one another -Participant A.

Participant A described her reflection on the use of PCT and its relation to culture. Her response reflected thoughts about respecting the values of others, whether they matched your own values or not. By respecting the values of others creates an environment that is responsive to the needs of those who are present. She also reflects on the implications for creating a healthy environment using PCT skills.

## **Mixed Methods Analysis**

Analysis of qualitative and quantitative findings combined showed that the intervention of person-centered thinking training had a positive impact on teacher self-efficacy and outcome expectancy. Additionally, the qualitative data demonstrated that the use of a person-centered approach supported a culturally responsive environment for both Participant A, classroom teacher and Participant B, Instructional Specialist. Both participants reported applying the person-centered thinking skills learned from the training and reported positive implications with use of intervention.

Participants reported using the skills learned from PCT training with students and classroom teachers. Qualitative data reported by participants of the interactions where PCT skills were used supported the participant outcome expectancy data collected through their quantitative data. Additionally, participants qualitative data showed the confidence of teacher self-efficacy of the skills learned through PCT in how they were able to adapt the skills to best fit their needs in and out of the classroom to support a culturally responsive learning environment.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

Of the person-centered approaches reviewed and noted in the literature review, it was not clear whether any of the current person-centered methods being used by researchers included responsive adaptable interventions that support young learners based on their lived experiences that impact daily change of behavior, thought process, values, beliefs, or interests. A person-centered or student-centered approach as they are currently used only support specific situations that may or may not be present in the next round of cohorts teachers receive. This is important to note because people change daily; therefore having an adaptable tool is key to maintaining the desired environment homeostasis. Tools and skills that are easily adaptable and applicable from one situation to the next are valuable to the overall sustainability of the desired outcome.

### Classroom Environment

It was mentioned within the introduction of the research that an equitable classroom environment is essential to the learning process and the path for defining the culture of the classroom will be different for everyone. However, using an adaptable universal model to establish that classroom culture can be attempted using the skills and tools learned from PCT training. Educators can adapt the tools learned through PCT training to establish their classroom environments with the PCT tools that best fits their classroom needs. The following examples from each participant support this claim. Each participant identified a tool taken from PCT training and shared how they established their culture of building rapport with the people they support. For example, in the following responses provided by participants it can be noted that Participant A utilized a core concept of PCT *Important To* reach her young learners during

instruction to establish rapport and Participant B utilized the *Relationship Map* to build rapport with the teachers she supports. For example, here is a quote Participant A shared:

I definitely find myself saying it's important to me a lot more. I think the way that's changed is I guess the language that I would use before would be more like, 'Put that away now', 'Or you need to do this', or 'You're going to have this on your end-of-course exam. If you don't learn it now, you're not going to do well'. Even though at that time I thought I was speaking from a point of view of caring for them because I want them to do well on their test and graduate from high school. When I just flipped it as something as it's important to me that you learn how to find theme and how theme is developed through characterization. It just says a lot more. I don't know. That simple twist of words really makes a difference. I think it creates a power with.

Participant A demonstrated her ability to establish rapport through thoughtful choice of words and minimal effort outside of what she typically does to perform her duties as a teacher. She describes through her example, meaningful choice of words learned from PCT training that made a positive impact in her ability to connect with her students to support them in meeting the desired academic requirements.

Where Participant B utilized the *relationship map* to accomplish building rapport with teachers that she supports as an Instructional Specialist:

Like those support circles, even though personally, one of those pre identified categories don't fit their career world maybe their worrying about a personal work circle. But I think about their circles with work and who they have to support or who they've received support from. And I think about sometimes, you know what? I'm working with a teacher. They may be new to FAISD (pseudonym) or like I was just working with the teacher the



other day. Who is a retiree hire and technology has, like, just changed so much for her. And so, sitting there, listening to her vent, and then asking her like, you know, have you reached out to your admin about the way you're feeling? Have you talked to your team or people who similarly like teach you know what you teach? And I found that she really didn't have anybody. So that like allowed me to, you know, to try to, like, enter myself into her circle and her knowing that, like, I'm here to support. And so now, like I have regularly like scheduled meetings with her, and then I also like, you know, even if I don't have a meeting with her and I'm on campus, like, I'll just check in just to build that relationship and that report with her. PCT training is designed to support people, so taking the tools learned from this training by anyone can be applied to help anyone in any environment that impacts the classroom.

Participant B demonstrated her use of PCT tools and skills learned from the PCT training to develop both the big picture as well as the details of the desired outcomes to support a teacher. While these examples specifically revolve around building rapport, building rapport and trust is the first step to establishing a strong supportive environment.

### **Classroom Power Structure**

It was my hope that through this research participants would find that it is possible to establish a balance between roles, supporting young learners, and holding themselves accountable to the same standards they hold for their young learners. While the following example doesn't take place specifically in a classroom, the teacher's reflection and actions are important to note as incidents like this between teachers and young learners transpire at any point during the day and have the power to impact the classroom environment positively or negatively. Participant A shared the following experience that modeled the person-centered approach *Power*

*With vs. Power Over.* This example takes place during a presentation at school with a young learner that isn't one of her students, followed by teacher reflection, and finally an interaction the teacher had with the young learner after the initial incident:

The other day we had National Hispanic Institute come and talk to all the 8th graders, all of the 9th graders, and the 10th graders, I think the juniors too.

I was walking up and down the aisle to make sure that students were not on their phones because at the time of presentation, and you should be listening. I wanted them to learn how you're supposed to behave in front of a presenter. Whether you like it or not, whether it's engaging or not, this is the typical protocol. There is this one young man, I would tell him, 'Can you please put your phone away?' I'd come back around and he's playing soccer again on his phone. 'Can you please put your phone away?' Come back again and he's playing soccer on his phone. Finally, on the fourth time, I asked him to step outside. Instantly, I'm thinking, 'I want him to give me his phone' He clearly can't disconnect from it. I did tell him, 'This is my fourth time me telling you this. How do you expect me to respond?' I think even that question took him back, like, 'She's not telling me how I should think.' He almost looked at me like I was kind of being sarcastic with him. I said, 'I'm not being sarcastic with you. There's no right or wrong answer. I'm very curious on how you expect me to respond to this.' Then he said, 'I expect you to take my phone away.' I said, 'I'm thinking that too.' I said, 'Well, how long do you think I should keep your phone?' He said, 'To the end of the presentation.' I said, 'Well, technically the presentation ends in five minutes so to me, that's really nothing.' He goes, 'Okay, how about until lunch?' I said, 'Well, I know you're just going to use it during lunch because you're allowed to.' Lunch is directly after the next period. He says, 'Okay, well, if you

keep it, then can you at least charge it for me?' I gave him a look like, 'Are you serious? You're asking me to charge your phone while it's taken away.' It just blew my mind but that's his perspective, right? That's what's important to him, so I tell him no. I'm like, 'No, I'm not going to charge your phone. You're crazy.' He goes and he sits down and then when I had time to think about it, I was like, 'Here is this young man. I don't teach him. He's a new freshman. I have no relationship with him. He came from the Smith M.S. (pseudonym) and maybe at the Smith M.S., it was okay to use your phone during presentations. I don't know. We didn't give an announcement to them like, 'Okay, boys, during the presentation, everybody should be off their phones.' The more I thought about it, I was like, 'You know what? I know this is important to him. Even if it's just playing soccer. I don't know what type of day he's had. Maybe he's playing soccer because he had such a crappy morning at home.' I don't know. I didn't ask him those things. I thought about it and on the way to class, I passed the class that he's in, which was Latin. I asked the teacher, 'Can I just talk to him, please?' She said, 'Yes.' I gave him his phone. I said, 'For whatever reason, I know this is very important to you. I don't want to keep it from you because I'm sure maybe you need it. But just please, next time can you put it away when I ask you.' I felt like he appreciated that more. Yes. Thinking about the person rather than the role. My initial lens is, no, the role is you don't have your phone out during presenters. Then after he gave me his phone I thought, that's not very person-centered of me. I'm just following the rules. Yes, that would be an example of how I don't instantly think with it. My immediate reaction was just to seek control. Do what I tell you to do. Then after I had some time to reflect, I realized, wait a minute, why am I

keeping this phone? What am I going to do with it? Is this just to give him a consequence.

This example is how PCT can support a more culturally responsive approach to establishing a positive power structure within the education system between teachers and young learners. PCT takes into consideration all variables even the ones we don't even know exist to create the best environment possible. Through thoughtful reflection and respectful listening empathy is established to support positive power structures. Participant A demonstrated cultural responsiveness by recognizing something that was important to a young learner that wasn't even on her cohort roster. She was able to do this using the skills learned through PCT training. It isn't necessary to know a person's entire back story to create an equitable responsive environment. Participant A demonstrated that it is possible to build trust through respectful listening, compassion, while implementing a person-first culture through the lens of PCT.

### **Limitations**

This study has limitations due to the small sample size and consisting of participants who have different roles within the school system. Additionally, there may have been larger gains had they received the full two-day training versus the 90 minutes version. Data was only comparable based on similar examples provided with no comparison of a group of teachers or instructional specialists. However, it does offer a glimpse into the potential of utilizing PCT training as a tool that is both universal and adaptable to establish equitable learning environments. According to Freiberg & Lamb (2009) "the decades of person-centered research shows significant benefits to teacher and students-all persons in the classroom" (p.104). Person-Centered Thinking skills and tools have the potential to establish a positive foundation of support that can relieve some of the

stressors that are prevalent when compassion, empathy, and effective communication skills are absent in learning environments.

### **Potential for Future Research**

There is potential for future research to expand on the use of the model presented in this study to support culturally responsive classroom environments with a larger sample size of a group of teachers and groups of instructional specialists. Other aspects of this model could include adapting this training to include all campus staff (front-facing, instructional assistants, nurse, food service, etc.) to promote cultural responsiveness beyond the classroom to support young learners campuswide. Participants shared the following about how person-centered thinking training can support interactions campuswide:

Participant B shared:

I think that overall, the concept of PCP being used as an individual in the workplace, I think allows for us to take into consideration, umm where people come from. Possibly. You know, supporting in the classroom with behavior, with connecting with parents, with connecting with staff members, I think it just really opens a lens for you to understand that, maybe if something that's said or response that you're not quite understanding, or it came off wrong to you and you're not understanding why that's happening. I think it just like gives you more insight instead of going straight to blaming.

Participant A shared:

I feel like it lends itself to understand that we all have different values. Sometimes our values can be the same. Regardless of if they're the same or they're different, we are going to appreciate each other's priorities. If they don't tend to be in line at that moment, we'll find a way to work it out. I think culturally, when you have person-centered

thinking, it leads to an environment of dignity and compassion. I think that's the best way to put it. It's different than kindness.

## **Discussion**

In a time where more people than ever are fleeing the campus environment, the time is now to explore what has not been explored to seek the solutions that will create the environments educators seek and desire.

We know that equity is not about providing the same support for all but providing what is needed for each person to attain the overall desired result. While there are many tools within PCT, it is not essential to use all the tools in unison. People can adapt the skills to meet the needs of their desired outcome, by using one or multiple skills. PCT recognizes that there may be some tools more useful than others depending on the scenario. However, what all the skills have in common is that they all aim to ensure the dignity of a person is maintained. Dignity is achieved through supported self-directed identification of individual needs.

My interpretation of the findings is that: Person-Centered Thinking training provided a practical approach to supporting the efforts of educators to create an equitable learning environment, regardless of their role or audience. The training equipped educators with skills that were adaptable based on their need in various scenarios. The adaptability gave them the needed flexibility to consider the whole person, rather than just relying on their perceived roles (teacher, young learner, instructional specialist, etc.). Additionally, the training resulted in areas of growth in self-efficacy, outcome expectancy related to cultural responsiveness for both participants. Even though Participant A had previously received training in cultural responsiveness and reported high levels of both self-efficacy and outcome expectancy, the post data showed growth in both areas after having received the PCT training. Identifying the potential value in PCT

training even with teachers who have received training in cultural responsiveness. Based on the findings, it is conceivable that training provided was effective with respect to development of practices associated with cultural responsiveness that support positive implications on teacher self-efficacy to create an equitable learning environment for young learners and beyond.

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## Appendix A

Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale Rate how confident you are in your ability to successfully accomplish each of the tasks listed below. Each task is related to teaching. Please rate your degree of confidence by recording a number from 0 (no confidence at all) to 100 (completely confident). Remember that you may use any number between 0 and 100.

I am able to: 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 No Confidence At All Moderately Confident Completely Confident

1. adapt instruction to meet the needs of my students.
2. obtain information about my students' academic strengths.
3. determine whether my students like to work alone or in a group.
4. determine whether my students feel comfortable competing with other students.
5. identify ways that the school culture (e.g., values, norms, and practices) is different from my students' home culture.
6. implement strategies to minimize the effects of the mismatch between my students' home culture and the school culture.
7. assess student learning using various types of assessments.
8. obtain information about my students' home life.
9. build a sense of trust in my students.
10. establish positive home-school relations.
11. use a variety of teaching methods.
12. develop a community of learners when my class consists of students from diverse backgrounds.
13. use my students' cultural background to help make learning meaningful.

14. use my students' prior knowledge to help them make sense of new information.
15. identify ways how students communicate at home may differ from the school norms.
16. obtain information about my students' cultural background.
17. teach students about their cultures' contributions to science.
18. greet English Language Learners with a phrase in their native language.
19. design a classroom environment using displays that reflects a variety of cultures.
20. develop a personal relationship with my students.
21. obtain information about my students' academic weaknesses.
22. praise English Language Learners for their accomplishments using a phrase in their native language.
23. identify ways that standardized tests may be biased towards linguistically diverse students.
24. communicate with parents regarding their child's educational progress.
25. structure parent-teacher conferences so that the meeting is not intimidating for parents.
26. help students to develop positive relationships with their classmates.
27. revise instructional material to include a better representation of cultural groups.
28. critically examine the curriculum to determine whether it reinforces negative cultural stereotypes.
29. design a lesson that shows how other cultural groups have made use of mathematics.
30. model classroom tasks to enhance English Language Learner's understanding.
31. communicate with the parents of English Language Learners regarding their child's achievement.
32. help students feel like important members of the classroom.
33. identify ways that standardized tests may be biased towards culturally diverse students.

34. use a learning preference inventory to gather data about how my students like to learn.
35. use examples that are familiar to students from diverse cultural backgrounds.
36. explain new concepts using examples that are taken from my students' everyday lives.
37. obtain information regarding my students' academic interests.
38. use the interests of my students to make learning meaningful for them.
39. implement cooperative learning activities for those students who like to work in groups.
40. design instruction that matches my students' developmental needs.
41. teach students about their cultures' contributions to society.

## Appendix B

Culturally Responsive Teaching Outcome Expectancy Scale Read each statement below and rate your degree of certainty that the behavior will lead to the specified outcome. You may indicate your certainty by rating each statement on a scale of 0 (entirely uncertain) to 100 (completely certain). The scale below is for reference only: you do not need to use only the given values. You may assign ANY number between 0 and 100 as your degree of certainty.

1. A positive teacher-student relationship can be established by building a sense of trust in my students.
2. Incorporating a variety of teaching methods will help my students to be successful.
3. Students will be successful when instruction is adapted to meet their needs.
4. Developing a community of learners when my class consists of students from diverse cultural backgrounds will promote positive interactions between students.
5. Acknowledging the ways that the school culture is different from my students' home culture will minimize the likelihood of discipline problems.
6. Understanding the communication preferences (e.g., the value of eye-contact; protocol for participating in a conversation) of my students will decrease the likelihood of student-teacher communication problems.
7. Connecting my students' prior knowledge with new incoming information will lead to deeper learning.
8. Matching instruction to the students' learning preferences will enhance their learning.
9. Revising instructional material to include a better representation of the students' cultural group will foster positive self-images.



10. Providing English Language Learners with visual aids will enhance their understanding of assignments.
11. Students will develop an appreciation for their culture when they are taught about the contributions their culture has made over time.
12. Conveying the message that parents are an important part of the classroom will increase parent participation.
13. The likelihood of student-teacher misunderstandings decreases when my students' cultural background is understood.
14. Changing the structure of the classroom so that it is compatible with my students' home culture will increase their motivation to come to class.
15. Establishing positive home-school relations will increase parental involvement.
16. Student attendance will increase when a personal relationship between the teacher and students has been developed.
17. Assessing student learning using a variety of assessment procedures will provide a better picture of what they have learned.
18. Using my students' interests when designing instruction will increase their motivation to learn.
19. Simplifying the language used during the presentation will enhance English Language Learners comprehension of the lesson.
20. The frequency that students' abilities are misdiagnosed will decrease when their standardized test scores are interpreted with caution.
21. Encouraging students to use their native language will help them to maintain their cultural identity.

22. Students' self-esteem can be enhanced when their cultural background is valued by the teacher.
23. Helping students from diverse cultural backgrounds succeed in school will increase their confidence in their academic ability.
24. Students' academic achievement will increase when they are provided with unbiased access to the necessary learning resources.
25. Using culturally familiar examples will make learning new concepts easier.
26. When students see themselves in the pictures (e.g., posters of notable African Americans, etc.) that are displayed in the classroom they develop a positive self-identity.

## Appendix C

### Interview One Questions

Did PCP alter your thoughts on how you think about supporting students in your classroom? If so, can you tell me more about this?

Did PCP alter your perceptions of others in any way?

If so, can you tell me more about this?

Can you tell me about how you think you could use PCP in the classroom

Do you feel PCP can be useful to your approach in the classroom

Did you find any skill particularly useful?

What about this skill makes it useful?

Was there anything about PCP that you felt wasn't applicable for classroom use to support students?

### Interview Two Questions

Can you tell me about after going through the person-centered thinking training, can you tell me about your choices to use or not use person-centered practices in your classroom?

Can you tell me about what the experience of applying person-centered thinking skills in your classroom has done to the environment?

Can you name any specific benefits or setbacks that you've experienced while applying person-centered practices?

Is there something specifically that you've noticed-- and this question's a little bit similar. Any specific changes that have occurred in your classroom after having started applying it?

Is there anything else that you want to share with me that maybe I didn't ask you about in regard to applying it in your classroom?

Specifically, how it relates to being culturally responsive, what is your experience applying person-centered practices in creating a more culturally responsive environment?

Is there anything else you want to share about your experience using person-centered practices in the classroom?



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY  
**SAN ANTONIO**

**Office of Research and Health Sciences**

Central Academic Building, Suite 411  
One University Way, San Antonio, Texas 78224  
Phone: (210) 784-2317 | [irb@tamusa.edu](mailto:irb@tamusa.edu)

To: Dr. Michael Mary  
From: Dr. Dawn Weatherford  
Date: July 5, 2023  
Re: Exempt Determination: Protocol 2023-50

The IRB protocol application submitted by you titled, **“Implications of Person-Centered Practices on Teacher Self-Efficacy: to Support a More Equitable Learning Environment”** has been reviewed. This application falls under the Exempt Review, Category 3, as listed under the Code of Federal Regulations, title 45 part 46. Any changes to the Exempt research must be reviewed by the IRB in advance of implementation.

The determination for this Exempt research expires July 4, 2028.

Before the determination expires, the research will be due for renewal if it is still ongoing. Please notify the IRB Office by June 4, 2028, to avoid a pause in data collection.

Upon completion of the research, a completion report must be submitted to [irb@tamusa.edu](mailto:irb@tamusa.edu).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dawn Weatherford".

Dawn Weatherford, PhD  
IRB Chair

**PLEASE NOTE:** It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to amend their IRB protocol to add any future investigators or research team members who will be collecting or handling research data before they join the research. These individuals must be added to the approved protocol via a protocol amendment and must complete the CITI online training before they can collect and handle research data or interact with human subjects. If new individuals are added to the protocol and not trained **PRIOR TO ANY HUMAN SUBJECTS CONTACT**, the IRB may revoke the Principal Investigator’s approval to conduct the research.

## VITA

Angela Menchaca

338 Simon St. San Antonio, TX 78204

menchacaA56@gmail.com

Texas A&M San Antonio San Antonio, 2014

Bachelor of Applied Arts and Science, Psychology

San Antonio Independent School District

Campus Support Trainer, Sept. 2020 – Present

The Institute for Person-Centered Practices

Certified Person-Centered Thinking Trainer, 2019

Alamo Area Council of Governments

Ombudsman Outreach Specialist, for The State of Texas, June 2019 – 2020

Service Coordination Specialist, Aug 2016 – June 2019

Edgewood Independent School District

Parent Liaison, Aug 2014 – Aug 2016