

**Culturally Responsive Practice--It's not just for the kids: Exploring a CRT framework
for professional learning**

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Culturally diverse nations such as the US must provide educational contexts for students that allow them to maintain aspects of their community culture while also facilitating the development of a large social structure that fully includes and embraces all cultural groups (Banks, 2004). School, teachers and principals have a moral and ethical responsibility to successfully support the learning, achievement and socio-cultural development of all children and youth in our schools.

Unfortunately, like many states, Alaska has faced a persistent and seemingly intractable problem with respect to the continuing achievement disparities among ethnic/cultural minority groups within the state. Although this disparity exists for nearly all the ethnic minority groups represented in the state, Alaska Native students are by far the least well served by the educational system. As a group, they experience the highest drop-out rates in the state, and the lowest pass rates on the state-required graduation exam. These data hold regardless of whether the students reside in small, rural communities or one of the major urban centers in the state (Goldsmith & Howe, 2004). It is clear that schools in Alaska continue to search for more successful ways to support the learning and development of the majority of Alaska Native youth.

This was one of the challenges taken up by the Alaska Educational Innovations Network (AEIN) in 2006. AEIN's overarching goal has been to close the achievement gap in urban and rural schools by enhancing teacher quality and school leadership through a school-university partnership model. Specifically, the project partners have used a capacity-building model of school improvement by leveraging several core strategies, including the cultivation of culturally responsive practices within the P-12 partner schools and the university.

This paper presents a documentary account of how a school-university partnership has used a culturally responsive framework (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995) in designing and delivering professional development (PD) for P-18 educators in Alaska, and how this process has deepened our understanding of teaching and learning with regard to collaboration, engagement, examination of practice, and pedagogical change. |

Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning

Culturally responsive practice is fundamentally rooted in a multicultural theoretical perspective. As such, it is grounded in the assumption that there is a special knowledge base,

skills, processes, and experiences necessary to prepare teachers to work successfully with culturally and linguistically diverse students (Smith, 1998). A well-established body of knowledge on preparing culturally responsive teachers has been developed over the last thirty years (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Sleeter 2008).

These studies that have shown that effective teaching for culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students rests in pedagogical practices that reflect students' cultural communication patterns, group interaction style, and socio-historical knowledge and experiences (e.g. Cazden & Leggett, 1981; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Mohatt & Erickson, 1981; Villegas, 1988). This type of culturally responsive pedagogy, what Ladson-Billings (1995) calls culturally relevant teaching, rests on three pillars of practice: 1) teacher's conception of self and others; 2) social relations in the classroom, and; 3) teacher's conceptions of knowledge.

From this body of research, we know that teachers who respect, care about, and are open to their students' diverse backgrounds develop better relationships with them and typically see more successful academic outcomes (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Kleinfeld, 1979). Knowing the sociocultural context of their students allows teachers to better connect content and skills to students' lives (Gay, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Yet, in spite of this established knowledge base on CRT, we still face many of the same educational issues that gave impetus to this research (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). Most evident of these issues is the continuing achievement gap.

Continuing inquiry into the modes and processes that best support the development of culturally responsive practices among teachers and within schools remains of paramount concern. Professional development remains the most common context in which practicing teachers engage in learning to enhance and change their instructional repertoire. Moreover, a growing body of research on teacher professional development (PD) has established a consensus (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Guskey, 2003; Hawley & Valli, 1998; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Putnam & Borko, 2000) that suggests that PD is most effective when it is sustained, job-embedded, engages teachers in active learning, and is conducted as a collaborative, collective enterprise.

While this consensus endures, some have argued that the conceptual model is not yet sufficiently robust to guide practice (Wayne, Yoon, Zhu, Cronen, & Garet, 2008), arguing for more research that examines the specific features of PD that matter most to effecting changes in teacher instructional practice. Moreover, only minimal attention has been paid in the

literature to the effect of the learning context on the development of CRT knowledge and practice. Rather, most studies have focused on the content of CRT focused PD (i.e., the knowledge about culture, the socio-cultural knowledge of their students' communities, or the culturally-based learning preferences of students).

Alaska Educational Innovations Network: Project Description and Context

The Alaska Educational Innovations Network (AEIN) is one of a number of projects funded by the USDE's Title II Teacher Quality Enhancement (TQE) Partnership Programs. The partners in the project include 22 public schools in eight school districts, and the university's colleges of education and arts and sciences.

Alaska's educators are culturally and geographically diverse. They emerge from varying cultures, including many Alaska Native communities; most arrive in Alaska from other U. S. locations, bringing expectations that may not apply to the Alaska context; some work in large schools in urban or suburban settings, while others live and work in remote areas of the state. The AEIN partnership adds another dimension to the diversity by including the university culture, one founded on rewarding individual work. The goal of the partnership has been to create a network of Alaskan educators who would improve teaching quality around our vast state, in order to enhance academic achievement for students, with a particular focus on Alaska Native youth. Core to the project's original design was our collective belief that leadership development was vital and that establishing a professional learning community among the partners would help us to reach this goal.

With this goal in mind, AEIN's work has centered around building collective responsibility for student learning (Stoll & Louis, 2007) and reaching both within educators for wisdom and extending beyond school walls using both in-person and technology-supported collaboration tools for engaging together with extant knowledge from research, theory, and best practice; sharing expertise among university faculty and school-based colleagues; conducting practitioner-initiated research; and creating opportunities to challenge our individual and collective assumptions (Jackson & Temperley, 2007; Hargreaves, 2003). Specifically, the partners in the project have developed a capacity-building model of school improvement that has focused on a set of core strategies: networked learning, distributed leadership, data informed processes, collaborative decision-making, and the development of culturally responsive practices within both the schools and the university.

Initially, the grant project focused on classroom instructional practice in the culturally

responsive practice strand of the work. Of major concern to the P-12 educators was a perception of lack of motivation and engagement by students. We therefore selected to use Wlodkowski and Ginsberg's (1995) "motivational framework for culturally responsive teaching" grounded in the work of Barbara McCombs (1998), because of its specific attention to these issues, and because it had been developed for use with both adults and youth. It provided a common conceptual framework around which to center the learning and dialogue envisioned in the PD sessions. The framework includes four components:

- establishing inclusion: respect and connectedness;
- developing positive attitudes: choice and personal relevance;
- enhancing meaning: challenge and engagement; and
- engendering competence: authenticity and effectiveness.

The framework's theory of action is that together, these components create the conditions for the development of learning communities in which each member has positive learning experiences and achievements.

Inquiring into our Practice: Theoretical perspectives and methodological approach

This documentary account of the development of culturally responsive professional development practices arises from six years of project evaluation, as well as collaborative critical inquiry into our own practice as university educators. The four authors of this paper have each been central figures in the project since its inception in 2006. The lead author was the principal investigator for the grant, initially leading the grant's project conceptualization and design team, and subsequently provided oversight on all aspects of the implementation. For the initial two and a half years, she also was a co-designer and facilitator of the professional development examined in this study. The second author was the co-author of the grant and has served as the Network Director since the awarding of the grant. She has led the day-to-day development and implementation of all facets of the project, taking the lead role in the design and implementation of the professional development addressed here. Initially, the third author began her engagement with the project as a partnership member from one of the school districts, where she served as a professional development specialist. In the third year of the project the school-district agreed to a buy-out of her contract to work full-time on the grant, and she accepted the position of Assistant Network Director. As the external evaluator for the grant, the fourth author has provided essential expertise, formative feedback, and critical friend insights that have informed the project throughout.

The project evaluation was designed and implemented based on theoretical frameworks of the

utilization-focused approach (Patton, 2008) as well as improvement-oriented participatory, collaborative and empowerment models (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2005) of program evaluation. The goal has been to build a long-term commitment to weaving an improvement oriented evaluation logic into the fabric of learning communities. These evaluation models complement critical self-study based on a rigorous analysis of data to improve one's practice (Riel, 2010). Evaluation supports ongoing learning and capacity building of learning organizations and in the case of empowerment evaluation creates a culture of evidence evolved from dialog and self-assessments.

Given Cousins et al (2004) empirical studies of the relationship between evaluation capacity and organizational learning in schools, the project leadership team has focused on two principles: 1) the use of data to guide and enhance the project's theory of action, conceptual model, and activities toward meeting established outcomes, and 2) co-constructing understanding and knowledge with participants in ways that build both individual and shared capacity for inquiry, evaluation, critique, and data analysis. We also consciously addressed a common criticism that many projects labeled as using empowerment evaluation do not actually embody its core principles (Miller & Campbell 2006).

Moreover, our inquiry into our own practice is grounded in socio-cultural and constructivist theories of learning and knowledge. Project designers and management assume that "human beings do not find or discover knowledge so much as we construct or make it" (Schwandt, 2000, p. 197). The construction of knowledge and understandings takes place within a social context where new learning is shaped by prior knowledge and cultural perspectives and learning, motivation and personal identity are inextricably intertwined (Shepard, 2000). Knowledge, therefore, can be understood as co-constructed and distributed among individuals as they "interact with one another and with cultural artifacts, such as pictures, texts, discourse, and gestures" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 90). This interaction results not in a personal form of learning and sense making, but rather, a shared, public understanding of the object, problem, or event.

Research undertaken from this perspective, therefore, focuses our attention on the concepts, discourses, practices and other socio-cultural artifacts that operate in and through the social world and which provide the contexts in which individuals and groups construct knowledge and make meaning together. Therefore, in conducting our inquiry we have focused on examining the socially constructed artifacts—materials, discourse patterns, and learning activities—that constitute both the context and the processes of the culturally responsive professional development focus of the project. The unit of analysis focuses on our behavior

and attitudes as PD designers and implementers and evaluators over the course of the initial six-years of the project.

The data sources used for this study are drawn from project documents and materials, as well as evaluation specific documents that have been developed and archived across the six-years of the project. Program documents include: planning notes of PD facilitators; PD agendas, learning activities, and session materials; facilitator debriefings; communications with participants; and project workplans. Evaluation documents include: PD benchmarks, surveys of participants, observations of PD sessions and online sessions of the PLCs, evaluator's interviews with PD facilitators and project leadership team, annual project logic models, and partner school logic models, improvement plans, and action-research/inquiry projects.

In inquiring into our professional development practices, we have been guided by the question: How does the culturally responsive framework support our development of a professional learning community within and among the network partners? Therefore, we have used the culturally responsive framework as the basis for our data analysis. Across the data set we have applied the four components (establishing inclusion; developing positive attitudes; enhancing meaning; and engendering competence) in order to examine how our decisions and actions reflect a culturally responsive practice that gave shaped to the design and implementation of this professional development project.

Developing a Culturally Responsive Practice for Professional Development

"There is overwhelming agreement that professional learning, though not a magic bullet, is directly and persistently linked to educational improvement and school development" (Mitchell & Sackney, 2001). As our project was focused on enhancing teacher quality, the school-university partnership was founded on this premise. We envisioned professional learning communities at schools and at the university that connected into a statewide network of support for school improvement efforts. A major strategy included culturally responsive teaching, assisting teachers to incorporate local knowledge and ways of knowing into their practice with students.

To accomplish this, we assembled leadership teams from schools that intentionally combined the expertise of a principal, teacher, and culture bearer. In the case of rural schools, these culture bearers were often Alaska Native paraprofessionals. In addition, teams of Alaska Native teachers and a principal were rural network members from the grant's beginning. We designed activities that would bring partners together from around Alaska at least twice each

year. During the meetings, we facilitated activities intended to build relationships among partners and worked to create the conditions for interaction. Further, we talked about the qualities of learning communities, and instructed our colleagues in data literacy. However, though committed to the National Staff Development Council Standards (NSDC, 2001) that call for ongoing, job-embedded professional learning, the early relationship between grant staff and schools inadvertently designed a series of professional development events that resembled a professor-student culture rather than the fluid, transparent, expertise-driven network (Anklam, 2007) we had envisioned.

Individuals reported that they enjoyed the events and that they gained knowledge and skill, yet when the teams returned months later, they reported that little had changed at their schools. Learning was not translating into action. Mitchell and Sackney (2010) argue that the development of professional learning community requires specific skills and capacities in the personal, interpersonal, and organizational domains. Unfortunately, our early efforts did not intentionally strengthen all three capacities, but rather served to further only the development of personal capacity, which in turn became a cause of further isolation for our partners. They returned to their sites with new knowledge and great hope, only to be met with weak interpersonal relationships and organizational roadblocks in their schools or districts. Further, the separation of schools from each other and from their higher education colleagues remained.

The following narrative by the project director sets the contexts of the first two years of PD work:

The initial focus of the PD sessions designed by staff for the P-12 educators introduced the model, reflecting “best practices” as characterized in the literature. Considering ourselves “trainers,” we taught what we determined our school district partners should know about and do with the CRT framework and knowledge base. By generating reams of paper, following strict time frames, and working ourselves to a frazzle, we demonstrated teaching prowess with organized, engaging activities. And participants were engaged.

Despite the high ratings on PD evaluation measures, there was little change in instructional practices in classrooms or schools between the sessions. Though partners indicated they had gained knowledge and had a generally positive attitude toward the CRT framework, there was clear evidence of a knowing-doing gap (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000). This pattern created cognitive dissonance for us as the project leadership team, resulting in a change in our working assumptions about professional development and our resulting practice. In the fall of 2008, we realized that our CRT efforts had been more an “add on” than integral to our work.

It often occupied a place on the agenda, but as a knowledge base, something to “teach about”, and had not become intentionally embedded in our practice. Further, CRT instruction was focused on our school partners’ work with their students. The question our evaluators posed to us was, “How are we going to evaluate CRT?”

At the Network School event that fall, our faculty colleague posed the question, “What did you experience here at the academy that was evidence of the four parts of the CRT framework?” Participants’ examples were connected to the structures around the activities as well as the approach to facilitation. This incident caused us to consider the link between CRT and professional learning. Though we had not intentionally inserted CRT into our planning for the academy we realized now that the framework could be as powerful for adult development as well as for children.

Beginning in the spring 2009 Celebration & Symposium, we intentionally asked partners to identify examples of the four components of their motivational frameworks in the posters each school prepared to share the outcomes from their school inquiry projects, which highlighted their efforts at school improvement efforts during the previous year. Though initially lacking in operational definitions of the four components of the framework we worked together to develop shared meaning and used a probing protocol (i.e., Palmer, 1998), to dig into the school-based experiences. This was done in alignment with a second protocol, an 8-stage Datawise model (Boudett, City, & Murnane, 2006) for collecting data around the questions we identified via the probing protocol. We became convinced that CRT was not an item on the agenda, but a way of approaching our shared learning.

In an AEIN staff retreat in August, 2009, we noticed some trends in our evaluation data. Logic models showed promise, but our network had not consistently linked mandated school improvement plans to the process-- a few partners did this but not the majority. Many of our colleagues were still seeking ways to get “buy in” from their school-based colleagues. Only the teams who attended the network events accomplished much of the AEIN work; self-sustaining professional learning communities had not taken hold in most schools. In response to his data, the project team began to intentionally design the learning activities around the four components of the CRT framework, as well as use it explicitly with the participants as the reflective lens for assessing their own learning and evaluating the PD session. In this way, participants came to know how the framework looked and sounded in practice and how it felt as a learner. By using the CRT framework to guide PD practice, we were able to cultivate site-based and project-wide learning communities that engaged educators in examining their classroom and school practices.

Further, our discourse changed as we sought ways to ensure that our own practice reflected the framework. No longer was CRT an agenda item, it was a way to create and intentionally refine the conditions for strengthening the network, supporting professional community, and deepening learning for all of us. This shift from knowledge and skills to behavior was not stress-free. We often slid back into the more traditional teacher-student structures and had to remind ourselves to have the patience to trust that the process would result in learning and improved practice for all.

Establishing inclusion: respect and connectedness

Including all voices and perspectives in any collaborative effort connects educators and provides an environment of respect for their professional expertise, essential for the development of collective action (Fielding, 1999). Miller and Hafner (2008) describe an initiative to create a university-school-community partnership. The university facilitators made strong efforts to invite participants from all groups. However, power inequities continued to exist. The researchers note, "...it is the responsibility of leadership to create collaborative conditions in which mutual participation is maximized" (105). While this is easy to recognize conceptually, it is difficult to implement in practice--both by the grant staff and the partners. A history of project "deliverers" and "receivers" needed to shift to a culture of "co-creators."

AEIN staff intended to dispel the notion that educators from the university are experts. Therefore, we adopted a stance of "radical collegiality": connectedness-based, focused on respect for professional expertise, committed to similar goals, and including a disposition to support and cooperate with colleagues (Fielding, 1999). In order to change the implicit hierarchical relationship between schools and university, the grant staff and evaluators reconceptualized our roles. We moved from behaving as outside experts or consultants to becoming colleagues, brokers, and facilitators. We followed Friere's admonition (as cited in Miller & Hafner, 2008) that trust is established by aligning intentions with actions. The network welcomed all voices, developed facilitation strategies to make this possible, and honored the wisdom of practice. Events were organized to create spaces for personal and interpersonal development. We gave up controlling the agendas, instead giving trust to our colleagues by negotiating agendas on a daily basis. We talked less and listened more, adopting an appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005) stance to focus on success rather than perceived or prescribed failure. Our work focused on our colleagues, thereby honoring the diverse perspectives and cultural traditions brought to the dialogue.

Developing positive attitudes: choice and personal relevance

Certainly this respectful culture fosters positive attitudes. However, to transcend rhetoric, the processes of giving educators voice and choice required providing dependable structures for action to further support the embedding of necessary values and beliefs for collaborative work. One strategy we adopted and which schools responded to well was to support the development of logic models (adapted from Killion, 2008), local school improvement plans devised by schools themselves. Schools were encouraged to consider their own questions, informed by their student data, within a culturally responsive frame.

But the question remained, what did the CRT framework look like in practice? The answer to that question is temporal--there were many shifts along the way. At the point of our first transformation, we decided to show the framework in action, rather than instructing about that framework. As previously noted, in the fourth year of the grant, we focused intentionally on embedding learning strategies that solicited all voices, strengthened positive attitudes, enhanced shared meaning, and engendered competence. Then we talked about our efforts and asked participants for feedback around whether we had accomplished our goal, as well as asking them to look for evidence of the four aspects of the framework within their own work. Essentially, this changed the focus of our CRT work to examining its impact on professional learning.

An interesting impact of this revised focus was the deepening in understanding about and strategies to create the conditions for building professional communities, both at individual sites and network-wide. Facilitators for mini-networks (our term for ‘communities of practice’ (Wenger, 1998) which are sub-groups of partners who collaborate around a shared interest/topic) found greater engagement and deeper conversation when the group determined the direction and the facilitator *mediated* the dialogue, that is to “occupy an intermediate position or *form a connecting link or stage between two others*” (*Visual Thesaurus 2/21/11*). The facilitator must serve as colleague, connector, and frame-maker to keep the conversation fresh.

Enhancing meaning: challenge and engagement

Meaning results from negotiated, contextualized questions that emerge from local data. To facilitate and enhance meaning-making within the network, we have used generalized protocols and structures. A logic model process (adapted from Killion, 2008) was selected as

a support for organizational capacity-building, and has been used as a planning tool to pursue site-based initiatives. Developed and guided by ongoing data collection and analysis, the logic models are organized around issues that partners care about. They hypothesize the actions that will enhance student learning and undertake those actions logically. Within the process, school leaders facilitate a design that moves from the development of knowledge, attitudes, and skills to the organizational scaffolds and structures that will help practitioners move from knowing to doing. The network colleagues serve as critical friends to each other through the use of probing questions at the AEIN face to face events as well as in electronic communication.

It is one thing to have a logic model that structures “big picture” perceptions of the process and impacts. It is another to actively collect data to document the status of the model and support decisions for improvement. We adapted the “data-wise” model (Boudett, City, Murnane, 2006) to help schools improve their decision-making regarding instructional strategies, resource management, systemic support mechanisms, professional development, and ultimately K-12 student performance. Originally we understood the data-wise process as a series of eight steps, each building sequentially on the prior one (<http://www.hepg.org/document/1/>). However, collectively the AEIN network members have now moved to a deeper understanding of “datawise” application, steps, and process over time. Our experience has revealed that the work evolves in both iterative and organic ways in the eight-step cycle toward preparing, inquiring and acting on data. The developments in one step influence and enrich development in other steps, both those ahead as well as behind any given step.

In order to facilitate these processes, teachers, principals, and grant staff has needed to focus together how to create positive collaborative cultures. At AEIN events, school leaders practiced ways to invite their site-based colleagues in the substantive conversations around logic models. Regular meetings, coursework, use of professional development days, and released time were used in various ways by the partner schools to strengthen their internal collaboration. For example, one school scheduled interclassroom visits, providing feedback through conversation or just a videotaped copy of the lesson. In this way, schools were building trust to enhance their local professional learning community.

Engendering competency: authenticity and effectiveness

Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) assert that competence is engendered through authentic assessment of action, both through data and critical self-reflection. For AEIN, we interpreted

this as intentionally modeling and building capacity for program evaluation at school, district, university and project levels. In alignment with the project and site-based logic models, the project has adapted the datawise model (Boudett et al) to support participant capacity to collect and reflect on school improvement using cycles of data. But data without being embedded in an understanding of systems theory is insufficient. By harnessing the datawise process with logic modeling into an improvement-oriented program evaluation framework, the collective values of the project have been gradually enabled rather than creating a collection of site-based logic models.

Our efforts have served to support the development of learning community among the network partners by developing our collective capacity for creating the necessary conditions. The process by which the agenda for the fall 2009 Network Academy was developed best illustrates this shift. Rather than being established by us---the AEIN project team--the agenda was established through a jointly identified, and co-constructed set of questions initiated by the school-site participants:

- How can we get to trust—how will we define it?
- Should next phase of our work be directed by 4 quadrants?
- How do 4 quadrant questions change over time?
- How does one observe “enhanced meaning”?
- How will we get staff buy in?

The remainder of our work together since 2009 has been guided by these questions that emerged from our collegial learning.

Progress toward our goal: Enhanced professional learning community and changes in practice

The intentional use of the CRT framework has created the conditions necessary for school personnel to improve their data-enhanced practice and to build the capacity for collective action. The most successful implementers have been able to strategically apply four protocols: 1) community of practice trust building strategies, 2) probing protocols, 3) logic modeling and 4) data wise cycles. However, this has not come without transitions on the part of individual participants, school-wide teams, project management, and evaluators. Impacts of the CRT framework at each site have been influenced by a variety of preconditions: individual and communal contexts, continuity of trust, knowledge and skill base of participants, facilitation skills at the project and local levels, collaborative decision-making

infrastructure, as well as foundation of holistic data and evaluation.

Reflexive use of the CRT framework by partners has required more than a linear process of staff development, scheduling of sessions, “finding the time,” and structuring the release of test and analysis results. Perceptual and procedural shifts lie within individuals as well as school systems and university preparation programs (Senge, 1991; Schein, 1993). Even when data supports a shift, “different” ways of thinking can threaten the organization’s long established ways of operating. When this takes place an organization’s response is often to marginalize and isolate the source of change (Noonan, 2007).

Our situation was compounded by the need to understand the CRT framework within the context of three theories of action: a) School Improvement Cycle as described by Boudett, Murnane, City, & Moody (2005), b) Deming’s Continuous Improvement (1986); c) the power of Organizational Learning (Senge, 1990). Nevertheless, results from the AEIN survey of partners in 2010 reveal that our explicit attention to embedding the CRT framework in our professional development has had positive effects on the learning of the partners, as well as enhancing their practice and professional learning community within their local sites.

Figure 1. Participants Ratings of Comfort with AEIN Activities

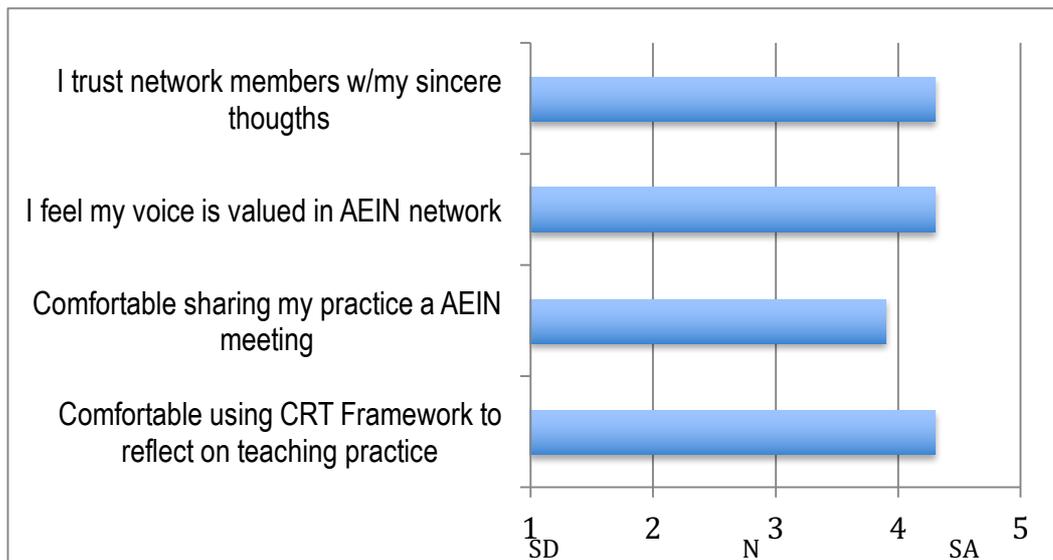
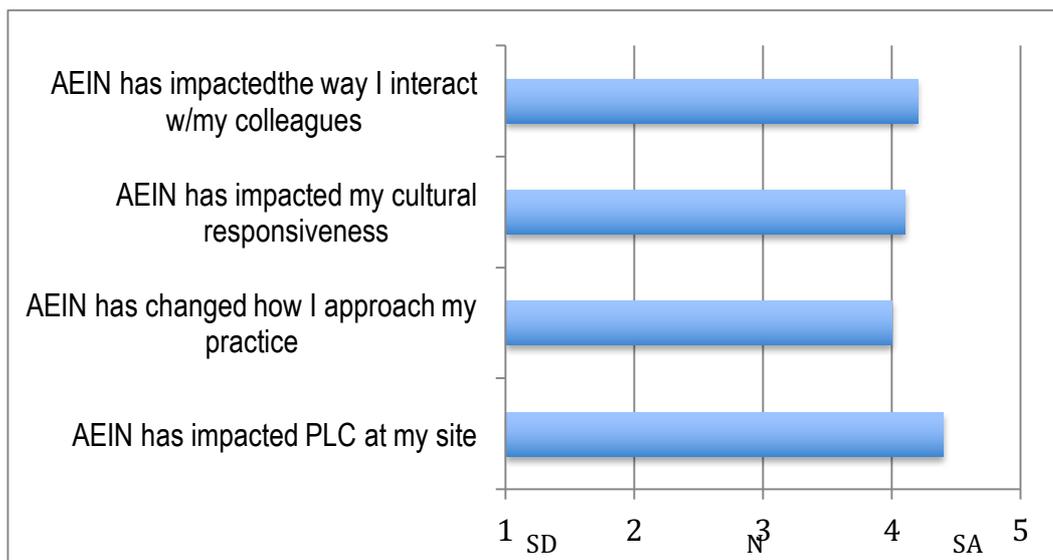


Figure 2. Impact of AEIN on participants' practice in their schools/departments



Extending our Conceptualization of Culturally Responsive Learning: It's not just for the kids

We have learned that culturally responsive practice is not just valuable for P12 students. In fact, until we examined our practice as PD designers/facilitators/evaluators in light of the CRT framework, our professional development activities were discrete events rather than sustained, job embedded learning. Part of the renewed practice was to step back from the role of expert to become a facilitator whose challenge is to create the conditions for collective action. As a result of our inquiry into our practice, we have identified the following key learnings:

- changing practice, or even the perspective towards one's practice, requires ongoing awareness and critical reflection; explicit use of the CRT framework as a reflective tool facilitated meaning making of core CRT concepts;
- by making strategies and the reasons for those strategies explicit, PD agendas can be increasingly negotiated and co-created with participants as PD evolves; and participants can more intentionally link their own learning with their roles as school leaders and teachers; developing positive attitudes towards change;
- our interactive role with program evaluation has become empowerment-oriented, engendering competence among participants that builds organizational capacity;
- the CRT framework provides space for including voices, sharing meaning, and engendering competence in university communities of practice; the voices can include COE and CAS students as well as non-project faculty;
- applying a CRT framework helps to realize Miller and Hafner's (2002) indicators of successful school-university partnerships, specifically mutuality and assets-based action;
- collective inquiry leads to further inquiry and deeper learning for all partners.

Using this framework we have been able to create the conditions for the development of professional learning community among the school and university educators, as well as supported the members to in turn create those same conditions for professional community within their organizational context. The development of these conditions continues to permeate the partner organizations.

Conclusion

Though much has been written about the importance of culturally responsive teaching in classrooms of P-12 students, there is little that extends the dialogue to using a similar orientation for the learning of P-18 educators. Further, though much research describes the characteristics of potentially valuable structures such as professional learning communities, there is little guidance for leaders to develop the aspirations and behaviors necessary to create the conditions for making such structures useful. Further investigation into the broader uses of culturally responsive practice among learners and educators throughout the system may provide important understandings and implications for action.

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