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Critical Consciousness, Social-Emotional Learning, and Serving Diverse Students

Abstract

Ensuring that adolescents get the care and support they need to be successful both academically and socially is crucial as an educator. A major part of this process is examining your personal biases and beliefs in order to identify areas that may negatively impact the students in your classroom. This is especially true for students who are high needs, either in terms of learning differences or cultural differences. The following addresses how teachers can impact their students and what practices observable within the classroom have shown beneficial to students of diverse backgrounds, with a specific focus on Muslim students. This thesis will examine two questions, 1) to what extent do the conscious and unconscious beliefs regarding culture and learning of teachers impact lesson planning and delivery, and 2) how do these beliefs impact diverse students in the classroom, both in their academic and social-emotional learning and development?

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ABSTRACT

Ensuring that adolescents get the care and support they need to be successful both academically and socially is crucial as an educator. A major part of this process is examining your personal biases and beliefs in order to identify areas that may negatively impact the students in your classroom. This is especially true for students who are high needs, either in terms of learning differences or cultural differences. The following addresses how teachers can impact their students and what practices observable within the classroom have shown beneficial to students of diverse backgrounds, with a specific focus on Muslim students. This thesis will examine two questions, 1) to what extent do the conscious and unconscious beliefs regarding culture and learning of teachers impact lesson planning and delivery, and 2) how do these beliefs impact diverse students in the classroom, both in their academic and social-emotional learning and development?

DEDICATION

Without the support of my family, friends, and Dr. Amy Davis (my advisor), this project could not have been realized. So, this is dedicated to my grandmother, Caroline M. Poeschl, who worked tirelessly and without hesitation to raise three kids solo, one of whom raised me. I wish you could see me now, this one's for you. To my mother, Kim, who always taught me that education is crucial and could never be taken away... And that "a woman always needs to be able to take care of herself." To my son, Sebastian, you are my reason. Always and forever. To my partner, Gabe, who legitimately kept me sane. I love you, you're the best. To Dr. Amy D. Davis, thank you forever and times a billion for keeping me on track and talking me through some of the most random, off the wall things I have ever come up with. You are truly a Godsend. To Shauna, someone who cannot with my nonsense but who keeps my head on straight, thank you for reminding me that I can push to do the most, but even I am human and have limits. I hate that, but you're right. And to every single student who I have been blessed with teaching to date, especially my "essay checker" in 5th hour during the 2022-2023 school year, thank you for making sure I "do my homework." Without you all, I could never have accomplished this.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Ensuring that students feel welcome and safe in an environment is a key factor in establishing a quality learning environment. The primary way to establish a safe learning environment is to establish rapport with students and make intentional moves to address not only the academic learning needs of students but also their social-emotional learning needs. This practice of teaching not only academics but social and emotional well-being is considered to be a whole-child approach to education. Simply put, this means that the teaching is done during the school day “supports and nurtures all areas of children’s development and learning [...] and is a powerful strategy [that] encourages children’s learning and thinking by being responsive to children’s understandings, interests, and abilities [and allows] them to deepen their natural curiosity and their eagerness to want to discover and learn more” (TeachingStrategies, 2022). Building and maintaining rapport with students in the classroom environment provides students with the opportunity to examine their learning needs, learn to advocate for themselves, and provide the teacher with the opportunity to ensure that students are developing skills to express themselves effectively, all of which go beyond academics. In addition to this, teachers can establish a safe learning environment for students by addressing personal beliefs regarding diversity and the concept of multiculturalism, as well as identifying their feelings about their own culture and potential biases that they hold, using this reflection and information to establish rapport with their students. Building onto the initial suggestions on how to build rapport, the process of establishing rapport with students in the classroom begins with the classroom teacher examining their own personal and professional beliefs and biases regarding cultures other than their own. In turn, those beliefs form the expectations of students that teachers emphasize and

can act to increase student achievement or produce lower student achievement. This self-reflection allows teachers to look objectively at potential barriers that they may consciously or unconsciously set for students, making an environment conducive to identifying biases and allowing the teacher to address and correct potential behaviors based on those biases and beliefs. Along with this, teachers can utilize this reflection in terms of their own beliefs in terms of culturally responsive teaching practices, ensuring that they are allowing themselves room to grow and learn as students that they teach do. This study will examine the personal beliefs and biases of the teachers involved as well as their professional beliefs in terms of pedagogy/best practices, especially regarding culturally responsive teaching practices, and how these personal and professional beliefs impact classroom procedures and the interactions that the teacher has with their students.

Purpose

Students come from many diverse backgrounds. From race and ethnicity to religion and political beliefs, no two students share identical opinions, learning needs, or academic abilities. Because of this, I will conduct the study with the intention of identifying the potential learning needs of a specific group of students (in this case, students who are Muslim) and examining the classroom procedures and personal beliefs of their classroom teachers. Contributing factors to classroom procedures and lesson delivery include the personal beliefs and conscious biases of the teacher. Through these, I intend to illustrate the benefits of identifying one's own biases and pedagogical beliefs when teaching students of a marginalized group, especially in terms of creating a learning environment that is considered safe for all students, regardless of their background. In addition to this, I will also examine the role that social-emotional learning plays in facilitating a safe learning environment for marginalized students. Through examining these

beliefs, and observing how they impact the classroom specifically, discussion can be opened up and opportunities for professional development for the teachers within the context of this study can additionally be suggested, as well as professional development opportunities for many other teachers in the future.

Research Questions

The targeted research questions explored in this study are as follows:

1. To what extent do the conscious and unconscious beliefs regarding culture and learning of teachers impact lesson planning and delivery?
2. How do these beliefs impact diverse students in the classroom, both in their academic and social-emotional learning and development?

Significance

Teachers in the 21st century live and work in a society that requires a more open-minded, objective approach to teaching. Diversity in the classroom is nothing new, but has increased substantially over the last several years. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2022), “the racial/ethnic distributions of public school students across the country have shifted.” This does not account for the growth of the United States Muslim population, with the Pew Research Center (2017) estimating the population of U.S. Muslim individuals of all ages increased from 2.35 million in 2007 to 3.45 million in 2017. Because of a combination of ethnic shifts and the growing population of individuals who practice Islam in the United States, the need for teachers to further understand cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds to facilitate learning increases.

Limitations

Since only four teachers out of the total 100 employed at Danville High School are participating in this study, the findings may not be generalizable to all high schools, no matter how closely the demographics align. Additionally, the results of this study should not be interpreted as a representation of the entire population due to the limited sample size. Factors acting as limitations to the study include, but are not limited to, the tenure of the teacher, the location of the school, the demographics of the surrounding community, the demographics of the school itself, and the frequency and quality of exposure of the teachers to professional learning opportunities in regard to Social and Emotional Learning, Culturally Responsive Teaching, and educating various classifications of minority students. There are no delimitations due to the role that I play in the study; that is, I will not be immersing into the environment of study, but rather observing the classroom as it would function without the presence of myself.

Definitions of Terms

1. Social Emotional Learning: The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) defines social and emotional learning (SEL) as “an integral part of education and human development” and the “process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.” (CASEL, 2022)
2. Culturally Responsive Teaching: Culturally responsive teaching (CRT) is a “research-based approach to teaching [that] connects students’ cultures, languages, and life experiences with what they learn in school” which in turn helps students access a

curriculum that is rigorous in nature and which will develop higher-level academic skills (Understood, 2022).

3. Islam: According to the World History Encyclopedia (2022), Islam is an “Abrahamic-monotheistic religion based upon the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad ibn Abdullah.” The term “Islam” means “surrender [to the will of God]” (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2022).
4. Muslim: A follower of or believer in Islam. An individual who accepts and surrenders to the will of Allah, who is believed to be the sole “creator, sustainer, and restorer of the world,” or God, in the faith of Islam (Khan, Islam, 2019

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

This section will discuss considerations for school officials and staff as they relate to culturally responsive teaching practices, social-emotional learning methods, and the achievement of minority students with specific regard to students identifying as Muslim. The framework of culturally relevant/responsive teaching will be briefly discussed and lead to a more in-depth discussion unpacking the role of culturally responsive teaching in social-emotional learning and ensuring student success within the classroom environment. In addition, the role of self-reflection and identification of personal biases as they relate to student classroom performance will be discussed.

Culturally Responsive Teaching and Cultural Competence

The definition of culturally responsive teaching (CRT), which is sometimes referred to as culturally relevant teaching, is defined by Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994) as “a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (p. 469). Building on this, culturally relevant teaching is used to center the different cultures of students within your teaching practice through three primary approaches according to Christy Byrd (2016); these are holding high expectations for classroom practices, emphasizing cultural competence, and promoting critical consciousness. Additionally, a sense of critical consciousness can be heightened through culturally relevant teaching (Byrd., 2016).

Culturally relevant teaching practices begin with the development of cultural competence by the educator. According to the National Education Association (NEA), the definition of cultural competence is “the ability to successfully teach students who come from cultures other

than our own” (Hawk et al., 2017, p. 1). In the classroom, cultural competence helps educators understand the different cultures of their students, as well as develop an understanding of how their own culture informs their teaching (Hawk et al., 2017). These practices allow teachers to develop crucial background information used within their classroom practices. Additionally, they may positively influence their classroom management strategies, curriculum, and how they encourage and pursue parental involvement in the classroom (Hawk et al., 2017). According to existing research, many characteristics describe culturally competent educators, including the development of the awareness of differences that exist between various cultures, the critical and creative application of their understanding of diverse cultures, the facilitation of open cultural exchanges in their classroom, and the adoption of curriculum and classroom activities so that they better relate to students (Hawk et al., 2017).

Additionally, culturally relevant educators can facilitate classroom climates that instill feelings of respect and inclusivity in students that help them to understand and value the cultures of their peers (Byrd, 2016). This interacts heavily with cultural competence in that the classroom teacher needs to develop their cultural competence by building an understanding of their students’ community and home life, first (Byrd, 2016).

Personal Beliefs of Teachers in Effectively Serving a Diverse Population

The Effects of Cultural Competence

A lack of awareness of cultural differences on the part of educators, especially in terms of their students, can lead to “unintentional clashes” in the classroom (Hawk et al., 2017, pp. 1-2). These classroom clashes occur when a member of one cultural or ethnic group fails to understand the symbolism, social conventions, or language of another group (Hawk et al., 2017). Some of the benefits of cultural competence include closing cultural gaps among teachers,

administrators, and school communities because it “recognizes that multicultural education and educational equity and excellence are deeply intertwined for students” (Hawk et al., 2017, p. 2). In addition, culturally competent educators can tailor instruction and classroom practices to the needs of individual students more specifically and promote overall student success (Hawk et al., 2017). Finally, cultural competence in teachers and school staff can assist in fostering an educational environment in which discrimination and intolerance are challenged and values that are critical to a democratic society are emphasized (Hawk et al., 2017).

The Impact of Cultural Competence on Classroom Management

Classroom management, a fundamental element of a classroom’s culture, is impacted heavily by the cultural competence of the teacher in charge. With cultural competence, the goal of classroom management shifts from the concepts of controlling student behavior and eliciting compliance to the provision of equal learning opportunities to all students (Hawk et al., 2017). To do this, educators need to realize that traditional classroom management practices and strategies are often not culturally neutral and are most often designed for predominately white, middle-class students (Hawk et al., 2017). Culturally competent classroom management strategies include the identification of personal biases and how they may impact teacher expectations of students and classroom behaviors, build on the personal knowledge of the cultural backgrounds of students, and apply a deeper level of understanding to their classroom management styles (Hawk et al., 2017).

Cultural Competence and Curriculum

It is important to note that a culturally responsive curriculum does not mean that the existing standards and curriculum should be replaced. Rather, it means that cultural information should be incorporated into the existing curriculum to allow for an emphasis on cultural

competency (Hawk et al., 2017). To do this, schools can: include perspectives from multiple cultures, use student-powered activities to incorporate students' cultural backgrounds into lessons organically, and confront and engage with topics that are considered controversial by certain groups in society (Hawk et al., 2017).

Promoting Parent and Family Involvement with Cultural Competence

Families possess the most intricate knowledge of students' cultural backgrounds, according to Hawk et al. (2017). Because of this, getting to know students' families helps teachers and administrators become familiar with and better understand the influence that student home environments have on their students' attitudes and behaviors, as well as the ways their students learn best (Hawk et al., 2017). Teachers can encourage family involvement by engaging families with classroom workings by making frequent family contacts and visiting local organizations that help them discover more about students' cultural activities and practices (Hawk et al., 2017).

Social-Emotional Learning Practices and Student Academic Achievement

What is Social-Emotional Learning?

In the classroom context, social-emotional learning (SEL) entails the development of skills in the areas of goal setting, management of emotions, responsible decision-making, and the formation and maintenance of positive relationships (McLeod & Boyes, 2021). As a result of this role, most SEL models focus on a set of five core competencies (CASEL, 2015). These are "self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making" (CASEL, 2015, para. 3). Based on these basic competencies, social and emotional learning skills enable students to be cognizant of and appropriately manage their emotions, begin to consider the emotions of others, make decisions more deliberately, be aware

of their behaviors and their effects, and learn that they are responsible for their behaviors (Ağırkan & Ergene, 2022). According to some researchers, the most impactful developmental period for student development of social-emotional skills, such as those listed, is during the period of early adolescence, which typically corresponds to the middle school years or ages 11 to 14 years. Due to this belief, many studies focus on efforts to support the development of social and emotional competencies in adolescents using SEL programs, which are of particular importance for this age group (Green et al., 2022).

How Social-Emotional Learning Impacts Student Learning

SEL interventions begin during the pre-service education of teachers and move into the classroom as these teachers begin working in the classroom environment. Based on this notion, researchers note that an emotionally supportive learning environment is a key predictor of student achievement in schools (Donahue-Keegan et al., 2019). The development of social-emotional skills on the part of the educator is critical, with Donahue-Keegan et al. (2019) citing that the development of social-emotional skills on the part of the teacher is crucial in fostering those of the student through academically rigorous learning. Additionally, it is noted that the development of skills associated with emotional agility can enable new teachers to enact more cognitively rigorous and creative instructional practices in the classroom to increase meaningful student learning. Teachers, both those in preparation programs and those who are newly established in their careers require time and support to develop resilience psychologically and emotionally in addition to learning specific strategies that help maintain health and efficacy in the face of an increasingly more demanding career field (Donahue-Keegan et al.). These skill sets are in high demand because they are conducive to both teacher success and the success of students under the care of these teachers. Furthermore, a consequence of a failure on the part of

teachers to learn the skills associated with SEL on their behalf often results in situations in which students have difficulty adapting. Because of this, researchers note that "when demands outpace skills, stress rises, and teachers may react to students in hostile and/or punitive ways (Jennings, Snowberg, Coccia, & Greenberg, 2011); when this is the case, and such teachers have not engaged in reflectively examining their own deficit view biases, this can be especially harming for historically marginalized students (Dray & Wisneski, 2011)" (Donahue-Keegan et al., 2019, p. 152).

The Relationship Between Culturally Responsive Teaching and Social-Emotional Learning

Positive Outcomes

Once personal social-emotional skills on the part of the educator are identified and established, and the ability to cope with high-stress situations and increased demands is developed, teachers are better able to model these skills to their students. According to a study conducted by Donahue-Keegan (2019), strong SEL skills and teaching practices start early in a teacher's career, during their pre-service education. They note specifically that, to avoid burnout later in their career, pre-service teachers should learn to maintain their health, well-being, and emotional resilience, which will lead to their ability to facilitate social-emotional skills for their students through the use of strength-based, rigorous learning activities and allow them to engage in authentic, culturally responsive teaching practices to equitably connect with and teach a diverse population of students (Donahue-Keegan et al., 2019). This cultivates learning environments that encourage SEL by recognizing student strengths and holding high learning expectations for all students, as well as modeling both effective communication skills and the ability to listen and empathize with others (Donahue-Keegan et al., 2019), all of these being pieces of a classroom that prioritizes a culturally responsive teaching approach. Additionally, it

has been noted that when a strong social-emotional climate is present, the teacher can better guide deep learning with students (Donahue-Keegan et al., 2019).

Building further upon the development of social-emotional skills in terms of educators, the school environment must support SEL for all individuals within the school. As Hamedani and Darling-Hammond (2015) explain in their study, “[...] traditional schools [insert programmatic interventions] into their ongoing activities and programs, they are rarely embedded into the life of schools in meaningful and sustained ways and, thus, may have limited potential to positively affect student outcomes and experiences” (p. 11). This universal emphasis on SEL for all parties allows for a school climate that prioritizes not only academic growth and achievement but also personal and social growth. According to a study by MarYam G. Hamedani and Linda Darling-Hammond (2015), schools that focus on social-emotional learning typically structure their environment with social-emotional learning as a priority and with strong relationships and a respectful community; they also equally prioritize the academic and psychological needs of students while they normalize and foster a safe school climate and an interdependent community that is made up of empathy, responsibility, and action. Additionally, practices within the school include curriculum and instruction that incorporate social-emotional learning along with the academic requirements; the culture encourages collaborative, project-based learning that teaches social-emotional skills and encourages social engagement and awareness with assessments that are performance-based and encourage reflection, resilience, responsibility, and a growth mindset; a disciplinary practice that preserves relationships and facilitates the development of responsibility and respect the dignity of students; and honors students while supporting their voice and agency through traditions, rituals, clubs, and activities throughout the school (Hamedani & Darling-Hammond, 2015). This focus on using SEL to

educate the whole child, therefore, requires an understanding of the social-emotional needs, challenges, and opportunities for growth that can and should be focused on throughout the students' educational and developmental journeys (Hamedani & Darling-Hammond, 2015).

Diversity in United States Classrooms

National Demographics of the United States

The United States (U.S.) is a country built upon and recognized for the great amount of diversity among the citizens in terms of many factors, but especially in terms of race and ethnicity. According to the 2020 United States Census, there are approximately 331,893,745 people residing in the U.S.; of this number, 75.8% are federally classified as white, 13.6% as Black or African American, 1.3 Native American/Alaskan Native, 0.3 Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 6.1% are Asian, and approximately 2.9% of the total U.S. population is a member of two or more races (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020).

Additionally, the diversity of the U.S. is also present in the religious beliefs of its citizens. Of the U.S. population, including immigrants who are counted in formal census records, 70.6% identified as Christian, 1.9% as Jewish, 0.9% as Muslim, 0.7% as Buddhist, 0.7% as Hindu, 1.5 said they follow another unnamed faith, 7.1% considered themselves atheist or agnostic, 15.8% did not identify with any specific belief, and 0.6% of individuals preferred not to identify their religious beliefs according to Pew Research in their 2014 study. Focusing on one specific faith, the Muslim community in the U.S. consists of 64% new immigrants, 22% second-generation citizens, and 52% third or later-generation citizens (Pew Research, 2014). The study by Pew Research (2014) further illustrates that the Muslim population of the U.S., regardless of their immigrant status, consists of all races with 38% being federally classified as white, 28% of each Black/African American, and Asian, 4% Latinx, and 3% as some other race or a mixture of

multiple races.

Classroom Demographics in the United States

The average makeup of the American classroom and school reflects the diversity seen at the national level in the U.S. According to Maya Riser-Kositsky's 2019 article in Education Week, the demographics of schools vary with the student population of public schools in the U.S. with the breakdown of race and ethnicity of students federally classified as the following: 45.8% white, 28% Hispanic/Latinx, 15% Black/African American, 5.4% Asian, 4.5% 2+ races, 0.9% Native American/Alaskan Native, and 0.4% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (2022). Unfortunately, though, most teachers and principals tend to be federally classified as white with 79.3% of all teachers and 77.7% of all principals in the U.S. Because of the Separation of Church and State in the U.S., there is no way to identify the exact number of each religious group within schools. The following section will discuss the specific needs of students who follow Islam.

Islam In the Classroom: Religion, Culture, and What Teachers Should Know

Islam and its Followers. According to the Oxford English Dictionary (2022), Islam is a “religion based on belief in one God, Allah, and in the prophet[,] Muhammad as the messenger of God [...]” (para. 2). Islam's followers are referred to as Muslim, a term that refers not only to followers of the faith but to cultural practices and the faith itself (Oxford English Dictionary, 2022).

Honoring the Beliefs and Cultural Practices of Islam in the Classroom. When looking at the script of the Quran, the emphasis placed on education can be inferred with some experts noting that the first word of the Qur'an as it was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (610)–*Iqra*–means to read or recite and that, in turn, Muslims are encouraged to acquire knowledge so that they may better understand God's word as it was revealed (Mitchell, 2016).

According to the Islamic Networks Group (ING) in their August 2022 article, multiple factors in the Islamic faith will potentially impact the classroom interactions of Muslim students. These include daily prayers, fasting, Islamic holidays and their associated festivities, dietary restrictions, the modesty of dress, and social interactions with the opposite sex.

Prayer. According to Islam, the act of prayer is performed five times per day and is done to fulfill an obligation that was passed to followers of the religion from Allah by the Prophet Moses (Economic Times, 2022). While prayer is frequent in Islam, and often treated as mandatory, the average school day is set up in a way that minimizes how much impact prayer times have on classroom instruction. According to the Islamic Networks Group, the main prayer that would be observed during school hours would be the one occurring at noon (Islamic Networks Group, 2022). The start time of the noon prayer will vary throughout the year, but it will generally begin between 12:15 pm and 1:15 pm and end two to three hours later (Islamic Networks Group, 2022). Because of this, the main situation where prayer would be most likely to impact the school day would be the former prayer during the winter months (Islamic Networks Group, 2022). When it comes to prayer at school, students who follow Islam may request a private place to pray due to feeling self-conscious or a general desire for privacy (Islamic Networks Group, 2022). During this time, students also are not supposed to respond to being addressed, giving another reason for providing the student with a private place to pray (Islamic Networks Group, 2022).

Fasting. In Islam, fasting (or Sawm in Arabic) is practiced showing devotion to Allah (Islamic Relief UK, 2021). This practice consists of “abstaining from food, drink, sexual relations and displeasing speech and [behavior] from sunrise until sunset” (Islamic Relief UK, 2021, para. 1). According to Islamic law, individuals who are past the age of puberty are

obligated to practice Sawm during the month of Ramadan (Islamic Networks Group, 2022), which is the ninth month of the year according to the Islamic lunar calendar and, due to it being based a lunar month, the date of the start of Ramadan moves eleven days earlier every year on the Gregorian calendar (Islamic Networks Group, 2022). Its beginning and end are decided based on the sighting of the new moon. Because of the nature of Sawm, students who are participating should be excused to alternative locations such as the library during lunch periods, and excused from strenuous activities, such as running, during this time if they ask for these accommodations (Islamic Networks Group, 2022). Additionally, younger students who are participating may request to take home in-class treats to consume later in the day during this time (Islamic Networks Group, 2022).

Islamic Holidays. Two major holidays are observed in Islam. These are Eid ul-Fitr, or the Festival of Breaking the Fast, which is observed following Ramadan, and Eid ul-Adha, or the Festival of Sacrifice, which is observed during the time of the pilgrimage (or Hajj) to Mecca by Muslims who did not go on the pilgrimage (Islamic Networks Group, 2022). Each of these festivals (or Eid) is celebrated for three-to-four days, with many Muslim students taking off the first day of these festivals (Islamic Networks Group, 2022). According to Islamic Networks Group (2022), making Muslim students feel accepted and welcome in the classroom includes ensuring that holidays such as Eid ul-Fitr and Eid ul-Adha are noted on classroom calendars and that school staff is informed of their occurrence.

Dietary Restrictions. With being a classroom teacher, especially at the lower grade levels, it is important to recognize potential dietary restrictions that are prescribed to followers of Islam. For example, "Islam prohibits the consumption of alcohol and pork or pork by-products" (Islamic Networks Group, 2022, para. 9). Food items that can potentially contain pork

by-products can include such things as marshmallows and gummy candies, both of which are made from gelatin that is pork derived (Islamic Networks Group, 2022); typically, vegan versions of these snacks do exist and could potentially be used in the place of the more traditional versions found widely in stores.

Modesty and Socializing. In Islam, there is a code of modesty that is based on the conceptions of honor, privacy, and dignity (SoundVision, 2022, para. 2). According to the Islamic Networks Group (2022), "both males and females are encouraged to dress modestly [...] [with] girls generally [beginning to wear] hijab around puberty" which can often result in teasing, bullying, and ostracism by peers toward young ladies who choose to wear this religious garment (para. 10). Therefore, it is crucial that school staff members be aware of such issues and make efforts to prevent and remedy them (Islamic Networks Group, 2022). Because of the importance of modesty in Islam, some Muslim students "may avoid touching the opposite gender, dating, or attending [extracurricular] events" (Islamic Networks Group, 2022, para. 10). Though there is no restriction placed on students in terms of classroom interactions, some students who practice Islam may not feel comfortable being assigned to work with another student of the opposite gender in class; the remedy for this situation is relatively simple in that the teacher can assign the student to work with a same-gender partner (Islamic Networks Group, 2022).

In addition to the element of socializing with peers are students' interactions with authority figures in the classroom. In a study by Afshan Amjad (2018), a young lady who was newly arrived at a Canadian school struggled with the change in classroom norms that were observed in comparison to those that she had experienced while in her country of origin. Specifically, the teacher struggled to understand why the student interacted with adults

differently from her peers (Amjad, 2018). When she contacted home, the teacher expressed concerns about the student being withdrawn and seemingly asocial—or, in short, shy because she would not speak as often in front of adults as her peers and would avoid making eye contact with adults (Amjad, 2018). The parent, upon hearing this, was confused; she knew her daughter to be respectful and confident (Amjad, 2018). This, and similar situations, create difficulties for newly arrived students—especially Muslim students—in terms of adjusting to their lives in a new cultural environment.

Using Culturally Responsive Teaching to Empower Diverse Students

Empowering Diverse Students through Culturally Responsive Teaching Methods

Empowering students is a cornerstone of education. Teachers everywhere work to fill in knowledge gaps, provide students with skills that they need to be successful, and generally teach them what it means to set and achieve goals. In addition to content-based learning, more and more educators are employing methods of diversifying content and classroom practices to allow students to flourish not only academically, but socially and emotionally. Because of this shift in the world of education, researchers like Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) set out to provide educators with a framework for culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), a sister concept to CRT. They state that CRP is a conceptual framework consisting of five key themes (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011); these are identity and achievement, equity and excellence, developmental appropriateness, teaching the whole child, and student-teacher relationships (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011).

In addition to being constructed of these five key themes, CRP shares a commitment to and a centralized emphasis on the promotion of social and educational equity and justice through models that incorporate critical literacy (Murray-Orr & Mitton, 2021, 252). This notion of

critical literacy plays a major role in CRP because it increases the awareness of how knowledge is socially constructed and its role in the need to evaluate texts in their various forms to inform the choices of the student in contextually responsive ways (Murray-Orr & Mitton, 2021, 252). The concept of critical literacy as defined in the study by Murray-Orr & Mitton (2021) includes the ability to transfer the use from the classroom into the wider community, specifically in terms of how teachers engaged their students with issues that were important within the community. Teachers who focus on increasing student critical literacy skills were shown to “[incorporate] a multimodal approach both to [the] selection of resources and to options for students to represent their learning” (Murray-Orr & Mitton, 2021, 260).

Summary

As the United States becomes increasingly more diverse, student needs continue to shift to encompass more diversity in terms of not only race and ethnicity, but culture and religious practices as well. Using self-reflection and engaging with critical literacy in their practices, teachers can facilitate social-emotional growth, critical consciousness, and overall respect and understanding of the different contributions they and their peers make to the learning environment and society in their students. This need for self-reflection is reinforced by the presence of biases that should be identified prior to the entry of the teacher into the classroom, thus promoting cultural competence.

Chapter III

Methodology

To date, there is very little research reflecting the possible long-term effects of adequate social-emotional learning on Muslim students. However, there is existing research in terms of Muslim cultural beliefs, as well as that which addresses the benefits of teacher reflection and cultural competency and the overall effects of appropriately informed and executed social-emotional interventions, especially in terms of adolescents. Combined, these begin to form the picture of what culturally responsive teaching practices look like and how they reinforce the social-emotional growth of diverse students, especially those identified as Muslim.

Theoretical Framework

Muslim Students

According to cultural research, such as that performed by Jegastheesan et al. (2010), “Muslims have strong intergenerational family ties and values of collectivism, preservation of their cultural and religious identity, and minimal acculturation to Western ideologies” (p. 98). This emphasis placed on collectivism by Muslims, as well as cultures such as those rooted in Buddhism, are juxtaposed to those of most Western, Christian-based cultures that place more emphasis on individualistic ideals. This can, and often does, cause issues for students of these collectivist cultures within the classroom environment as they enter countries such as the United States. As noted by Afhsan Amjad (2018), many teachers coming from the dominant culture of the host country tend to misread the cultural norms of others through the lens that they are most familiar with, seeing things such as a lack of eye contact as an asocial action on the part of the student. This is further distressing, and potentially ostracizing, for newly arrived Muslim students who are also learning to navigate a new language and culture.

Cultural Competency, Critical Literacy, and Teacher Biases

The foundation of providing meaningful educational experiences to diverse students is the level of cultural awareness and, as a result, the use of culturally responsive practices in the classroom. In educating diverse students, Ladson-Billings (1994) stipulates that one of the areas of heightened importance is the beliefs that teachers have about their students. Ladson-Billings (1995) expresses that studies by anthropologists have been taking place surrounding the use of the home culture of students in the classroom and the effects of this classroom use on the successes of diverse students. She also notes that the studies that she is referencing have common features amongst them, focusing specifically on student failure and the speech and language interactions between students and teachers (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Because of the differences in the cultural beliefs and the speech and communication patterns of students and teachers, much of the research that has been conducted has resulted in the conception of “cultural synchronization,” which refers to the mutual exchange and acceptance of cultural and communication patterns between teachers and diverse students in order to maximize student learning (Ladson-Billings, 1995). The results of lack of cultural synchronization can result in teacher expectations that are different between those that they hold for white students and those held for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Attitudes like this, according to Ladson-Billings (1994), result in lower expectations for these students, causing decreased academic achievement. In the pursuit of minimizing these kinds of biases in the classroom, Christy M. Byrd (2016) explains that critical consciousness and literacy is key to establishing rapport with all students. Further, she asserts that these connections made by teachers lead to improved student learning and are key in reducing prejudices and improving relations within groups (Byrd, 2016).

Research Questions

The targeted research questions explored in this study are as follows:

1. To what extent do the conscious and unconscious beliefs regarding culture and learning of teachers impact lesson planning and delivery?
2. How do these beliefs impact diverse students in the classroom, both in their academic and social-emotional learning and development?

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to identify the role that teachers' cultural practices, beliefs, and conscious or unconscious biases play in their classroom practices, especially with regard to their ability to provide culturally relevant social-emotional learning opportunities and interventions to diverse students. This study focused further on the teachers' personal beliefs, practices, and biases regarding their classroom practices for social-emotional learning opportunities and interventions for students identified as Muslim.

Design

The design of this study was mixed in nature, consisting of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Methods utilized to collect data included a survey, observations of active teachers in the classroom environment, post-observation reflections, and post-observation interviews with each teacher.

Participants

For this study, I focused on four certified classroom teachers. Each of these teachers had taught a minimum of five years and had taught at least one student who identifies as Muslim or a follower of Islam. Each of these teachers was a certified educator for the state of Illinois as certified by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), teaching grades 9 through 12. The

teachers within this school had also attended, or have had access to, professional development opportunities with professionals certified in the areas of social-emotional learning and inclusive teaching practices.

1. Letter of Intent and Confidentiality
2. Pre-Obso. Survey
3. Observations
4. Post-Obso. Reflection
5. Post-Observation Debriefing/Interview

Site

The school of focus, Danville High School, is an urban secondary school that caters to the Danville and Tilton, Illinois areas and provides services to grades 9 through 12, with ages 14 through 20 represented by the population. Services are provided for general education, accelerated, Advanced Placement, Special Education (both inclusionary and contained courses), dual enrollment coursework with the local community college, and English as a Second Language support. Additional, non-academic supports provided by the school include social services such as cognitive therapy provided by community outreach programs and school-provided psychiatric and social health supports.

Instruments

For this study, the focus was on interviews with the teacher participants and classroom observations over the course of several weeks, as well as a pre-observation survey.

Data Collection

For this study, it was determined that the best means of acquiring and analyzing data would be through a mixed methods design, with qualitative elements including observations

within the participants' classrooms, post-observation reflections completed by the participants, and pre-and post-observation interviews being conducted with each participant. The interview consisted of open-ended questions that allowed for meaningful discussion on the observation feedback and the reflections done by the participants. In terms of the quantitative element, a pre-observation survey was administered to all participants that consisted of close-ended questions regarding the demographics of the participants (such as ethnic background, gender, experience level, etc.) and a Likert scale-based section that requested information about the frequency of practices within their classrooms.

Confidentiality Procedures

Anonymity is critical in many studies, this study being no exception to this. Because of the importance placed on providing the teacher-subjects with anonymity, teacher-subjects were provided with identifiers that are not associated with their subject or subjects taught, their first or last name, or any other identifiable information; instead, each teacher-subject was provided with a code which identifies them, specifically. All data collected, including but not limited to transcriptions of interviews, videos of interviews or observations, and pre-and post-observation responses both written and verbal, are being retained by myself alone, with identifying information censored in the event of its use for direct reference, appendices, etc. within this study and all associated writings, presentations, etc.

Organization of Data Collection

The organization of the data collected was categorical. That is, with pre-observation surveys, the goal was to provide the teachers with the opportunity to reflect on their past experiences with teaching Muslim/Islamic students, especially in terms of their culturally relevant pedagogy/teaching practices (CRT) and the extent to which they each incorporate

social-emotional learning (SEL) skills into their day-to-day lessons. In terms of the method of collecting data for the teacher observations, the goal was to obtain data on the teachers' general classroom practices with students, noting especially in terms of their CRT and the extent to which they each incorporate SE skills into their day-to-day lessons. My goal for observations was to be able to observe at least two clock hours per teacher, as well as obtain a copy of materials and written plans for the time observed for records purposes. Finally, during the interviews, I sought out background information on each teacher ranging from personal experiences with Muslim/Islamic students and personal conceptions of Islamic/Muslim culture to their opinions and practices regarding CRT and SEL.

Data Analysis

Procedure

Because this study utilized a mixed methods design, data analysis procedures was tailored to the specific needs and goals of each method of collection used. The method of analysis for each step was as follows.

The initial round of data collection focused on acquiring baseline information including participant demographics and a Likert scale-based section that will request information about the frequency of practices within their classrooms via a pre-observation survey. Because of the nature of the pre-observation survey, data collected were analyzed through descriptive statistics which separated the data set into useful groups based on various data points with the objective of identifying a potential trend in methods and background demographics of the subjects. Such groups included frequency of experience with students of the focus population, frequency of reflective practices specifically related to the use of culturally responsive teaching, etc.

Following this, data that was collected through observations was unpacked and categorized to identify trends in in-classroom procedures, behaviors, etc. to be able to identify the potential correlation between the previous self-disclosed data set and observed behaviors of the teacher. The goal of this comparison was to identify the extent to which teacher demographics and consciously and unconsciously held beliefs inform day-to-day classroom procedures for the subjects.

Finally, the subjects were asked to complete a post-observation reflection and interview to debrief the observations completed and identify which behaviors that were noted are informed intentionally by the subject. The interview that took place with individual subjects consisted of open-ended questions that allowed for meaningful discussion on the observation feedback and the reflections done by the participants in the post-observation survey.

Once all stages of data collection were complete, the data were categorized in relation to various categories such as “Pedagogical Beliefs” and “Classroom Practices,” and a descriptive analysis was conducted in order to identify potential correlations in behaviors and participant responses.

Rationale

The results of these surveys, observations, and interviews were then used as a means of exploring the best practices surrounding CRT and SEL when applied to Muslim/Islamic students in the secondary classroom through the use of written responses to surveys, audio or visually recorded lessons and transcriptions of these lessons, and transcriptions and/or audio recordings of interviews. I looked for patterns within the classroom practices and in the interviews. Specifically, I looked at the presence of SEL practices in the lessons and the viewpoints that each teacher has in regard to CRT and SEL practices in the classroom, looking for commonalities

between the teachers and, in turn, potential discrepancies between the teacher's in-class performance and their follow-up interview. These records were then reflected upon by myself and compared to existing information surrounding CRT and SEL best practices.

Data Analysis

Over the course of several weeks, data was gathered through various means. The findings of the study included the demographics of the participants, their personal beliefs and professional reflections relating to their classroom practices, and general background information regarding the participants' classroom rapport with students of diverse backgrounds. Interviews were conducted with the participants in order to identify commonalities and discrepancies in practices within the beliefs and actual practices of the participant and between participants, respectively. This study aimed to explore what qualities teachers have that are more conducive to the academic, social, and emotional successes of their diverse students. The teachers provided baseline readings through a Likert Scale element in the Pre-Observation Survey in which they were asked to rate various elements of common classroom practice, such as the utilization of diverse materials, ensuring student engagement, etc. These results were then compared to Post-Observation Surveys and interviews that were conducted in a more open-ended manner and which required the teacher to fully reflect on the lesson/s in question in order to provide insight into the planning and delivery elements from the point of view of the teacher participant. Ensuring that your personal prejudices and biases are identified and countered is a critical component of being an effective teacher in the twenty-first century.

Subjectivities

I have worked with adolescents from varying backgrounds (including religious, racial/ethnic, gender identity, etc.) for the last four and a half years. I have observed classroom

and ESL teachers' practices over the course of the last three years, in addition to my preservice teaching experiences. My ability to objectively analyze data and identify themes was based on these experiences of interacting, observing, and working with students in the classroom.

CHAPTER IV

Results and Findings

Over the course of several weeks, data was gathered through various means. The findings of the study included the demographics of the participants, their personal beliefs and professional reflections relating to their classroom practices, and general background information regarding the participants' classroom rapport with students of diverse backgrounds. Interviews were conducted with the participants in order to identify commonalities and discrepancies in practices within the beliefs and actual practices of the participant and between participants, respectively. This study aimed to explore what qualities teachers have that are more conducive to the academic, social, and emotional successes of their diverse students. The teachers provided baseline readings through a Likert Scale element in the Pre-Observation Survey in which they were asked to rate various elements of common classroom practice, such as the utilization of diverse materials, ensuring student engagement, etc. These results were then compared to Post-Observation Surveys and interviews that were conducted in a more open-ended manner and which required the teacher to fully reflect on the lesson/s in question in order to provide insight to me, as an outsider. Ensuring that your personal prejudices and biases are identified and countered is a critical component of being an effective teacher in the twenty-first century.

This chapter will present and discuss the findings of the study. The results of the overarching research question, are teacher biases impacting classroom instruction, will be addressed, as well as research sub-questions one and two. The results of the research question, "What are the ways in which veteran teachers can familiarize themselves with culturally responsive teaching practices in order to meet the social-emotional learning needs of Muslim students?" are discussed through the lens of reflective interviews with the participants and

classroom observations of their instructional practices. The results of research question two, “How can established teachers best effectively utilize culturally responsive teaching practices and social-emotional learning practices with a specific focus on Muslim culture?” are presented according to the combination of self-reports from the teacher participants and the observations made of their in-class practices. The remaining sections will outline further results and findings from the study through the lens of the research question.

Research Questions

Two research questions provided focus throughout the observation period in each of the five classrooms. The first question targeted the identification of the extent to which the conscious and unconscious beliefs of the teacher about culture and learning impact lesson planning and delivery. The second addressed was in terms of the capacity to which, and ways that, these beliefs on the part of the teacher impact diverse students within the classroom environment, both in terms of their academic progress and their social-emotional learning and development. A case study analysis from the collection of qualitative data, which included participant surveys and classroom observations of the teacher, is outlined for each of the participants. Teacher beliefs were captured through Pre-Observation Surveys, classroom observations, and Post-Observation surveys and interviews with the participants, individually.

An analysis of the target population is provided to evaluate the capacity to which conscious and unconscious beliefs influence the lessons and environment that the teacher participant provides to diverse students. The following is a breakdown by format, purpose, and or results of each element of the study in order to provide proper context for subsequent discussions and conclusions about the study. All data is addressed through the lens of the research questions as noted previously. All personally identifiable traits, including names, have

been redacted and each participant was given a number for the purpose of identification in the context of the study.

Pre-Observation Survey Analysis

Of the teacher participants, all individuals were classified as white, with two individuals being between 25 and 34 years of age and two being over 35 years of age. Of the group, two have between 5 and 9 years of teaching experience and two have over 10 years of teaching experience. All four have had a student who is identified as Muslim, or a follower of Islam, at least once in their teaching career. For the pre-observation survey, participants were provided with Likert-scale rated questions that asked for the frequency of behaviors and actions on their part, within the classroom. The measurement was noted as one of the following: “always,” “most of the time,” “about half of the time,” and “never.”

When surveyed, all participants self-reported that their practices were based on up-to-date research, that they meaningfully incorporate learning materials that are engaging to diverse learners, and that they differentiate instruction based on needs—including cultural needs “most of the time.” Further, all participants self-reported that they make an effort to establish and maintain a positive learning environment for diverse learners, they establish and maintain meaningful rapport with diverse learners, they maintain a classroom culture of acceptance of diversity, and they establish and maintain a classroom environment that is respectful of a variety of personal differences “always.”

Where things got more varied with promptings asking for student-specific behavioral management and expectations, as well as the use of diverse learning materials. When asked how often they ensured that all students in their classroom help to establish and maintain a classroom culture that is respectful and accepting of cultural, educational, and personal differences, three

participants responded with “always” and one with “most of the time. When asked how often they ensure that their own biases toward personal differences do not inform/impact their instructional practices, three participants noted they do this “always” and one participant noted they do this “most of the time.” In relation to the classroom environment, participants were also asked how often they make an effort to establish and maintain a classroom environment that places high value on both academic achievement and social-emotional learning; with regard to this, specifically, half of the participants noted they do this “always” and the other half noted they do this “most of the time.”

When asked about the frequency of self-reflection on teaching practices to ensure students make meaningful progress toward skill mastery, two participants noted they do this “always” and two noted they do this “most of the time.” But, when asked frequency of reflection on student performance to check for progress toward mastery, three participants noted they do this “always” and one noted they do this “most of the time.” Building off of this concept, participants were asked how often they make adjustments to instruction or materials based on student needs; three participants noted that they adjust their instruction or materials based on student learning needs “most of the time,” with one participant noting they do this “always.”

All of this data acted as a really great starting point for observations and comparison to post-observation surveys, especially in terms of observed behaviors, reflections, and self-reported frequency. It is critical to note that the amount of time spent in observations does not represent the daily practices of the participant and only notes what occurred at the time of observation. That being said, there were a number of discrepancies in the various forms of data collected.

Observations and Post-Observation Survey Case Studies

Participant #1

Participant #1 is a licensed educator who was observed mid-day during period 6. The course observed was Advanced Placement (AP) Literature and consists of Juniors (grade 11). Throughout the study, this participant has disclosed responses that reflect a teacher who makes legitimate and meaningful attempts to improve their practices, including in terms of personal beliefs and procedures in terms of the teaching profession.

Instructional Practices. The typical class period began with check-ins and students having time to complete work from the previous class period. Throughout the time observed, the teacher always made the point to circulate throughout the room and meet with students in small groups or individually in order to address specific questions and learning needs. All students were treated equally, with respect and care. When comparing the data points from observations to those collected from the reflection and interview, the practices observed and discussed matched fairly well.

When asked whether they felt that students were supported adequately in terms of both academic and social-emotional learning needs, the participant noted to the observer that “students could have been provided more support at the beginning of class by reviewing the previous lesson [...] students [sic] could have been provided time at the beginning of class for personal reflection and opportunities to share and discuss their ideas [with the instructor].” This was corroborated with pre-observation data collected for this participant, who disclosed that they try to support academic and social-emotional learning needs “most of the time,” though they noted throughout that their learning environment strives to be supportive of students of all backgrounds and abilities equally.

Classroom Climate and Management. According to what the participant noted, they strive to ensure that the classroom environment is respectful of all students regardless of who they are and that students have agency and can advocate for their needs, stating that the class is “structured to be [task-oriented] and specific,” noting further that this “[help] mitigate behavioral issues” that can arise as a result of students who are not on task. Additionally, the participant noted that they make a point to check in with students and groups, as well as move throughout the room during the period, in order to “observe student behavior and needs as [they] relate to the assigned tasks.” This correlated with the observed behaviors of the participant within the classroom environment.

Grading Practices. According to the self-reflective prompting and discussion with the participant, this individual does not factor student background into grading practices, generally. There are instances where students may require adjustments of standards due to things such as specific learning disabilities, according to the accommodations listed on their Individualized Education Plan (IEP), but these circumstances are based on legitimate, legal standards. The participant specifically noted that, of the examples listed, “none of [these] influences the way in which [sic] student work is scored in this class.” Additionally, the participant noted that all student work is graded via the same, standardized rubric.

Participant #2

This individual is a licensed educator who was observed during period 2. The course observed was Freshman English Foundations and consisted of Freshmen (grade 9). Throughout the study, this participant has disclosed responses that reflect a teacher who makes legitimate and meaningful attempts to improve their practices, including in terms of personal beliefs and procedures in terms of the teaching profession.

Instructional Practices. The typical class period began with a bellringer, which varied in purposes ranging from review of materials to social-emotional learning prompts. Throughout the time observed, the teacher always made the point to circulate throughout the room and meet with students in small groups or individually in order to address specific questions and learning needs, especially during independent work time. All students were treated equally, with respect and care. When comparing the data points from observations to those collected from the reflection and interview, the practices observed and discussed matched fairly well.

When asked whether they felt that students were supported adequately in terms of both academic and social-emotional learning needs, the participant noted to the observer that they “do believe that students were supported academically,” but noted that they feel that not every social-emotional need was met during every lesson. This was corroborated with pre-observation data collected for this participant, who disclosed that they try to support academic and social-emotional learning needs “most of the time,” though they noted throughout that their learning environment strives to be supportive of students of all backgrounds and abilities equally.

Classroom Climate and Management. As with the previous participant, this participant noted that they strive to ensure that the classroom environment is respectful of all students regardless of who they are and that students have agency and can advocate for their needs, stating that there weren’t necessarily instances where there needed to be behavioral interventions, noting that the stand out tended to be redirecting students who were off task back to the activity on their classwork as assigned on Google Classroom.

Grading Practices. According to the self-reflective prompting and discussion with the participant, of the examples listed, “the backgrounds of the students in [this] classroom did not impact the scoring of their work.” This participant did note that some work hadn’t been

submitted on time, at the time of the reflection and interview, though the work which had been completed did illustrate that the students who were working and engaged were successfully acquiring the skillsets being practiced.

Participant #3

This participant is a licensed educator who was observed during period 2. The course observed was Bilingual Support and Resource and consisted of Sophomores and Juniors (grades 10 and 11). Throughout the study, this participant has disclosed responses that reflect a teacher who makes legitimate and meaningful attempts to improve their practices, including in terms of personal beliefs and procedures in terms of the teaching profession.

Instructional Practices. The typical class period began with either silent sustained reading or a journal prompt, which varied in purposes ranging from a review of materials to the use of new terminology for an upcoming unit. Throughout the time observed, the teacher monitored from their desk for the majority of the time. All students were treated equally, with respect and care. When comparing the data points from observations to those collected from the reflection and interview, the practices observed and discussed aligned relatively well.

When asked whether they felt that students were supported adequately in terms of both academic and social-emotional learning needs, the participant noted to the observer that they are given “the opportunity to practice and demonstrate their understanding of the concepts targeted in the lesson through discussion and interaction with film clips.” They additionally noted that they feel that student participation “demonstrates that students felt comfortable expressing their thoughts and engaging within the classroom environment.” This was corroborated with pre-observation data collected for this participant, who disclosed that they try to support academic and social-emotional learning needs “most of the time,” though they noted throughout

that their learning environment strives to be supportive of students of all backgrounds and abilities equally.

Classroom Climate and Management. As with the previous participant, this participant noted that they strive to ensure that the classroom environment is respectful of all students regardless of who they are and that students have agency and can advocate for their needs, stating that the students in this class have selected their own seating and have “demonstrated through their choices, actions, and behaviors that they are able to maintain this system and function at a high level.” The participant also notes that this method of management deters student misbehavior because students can “feel comfortable knowing that they are sitting next to peers that they have strong relationships with [which results in] a relatively consistent level of engagement and on-task behavior.”

Grading Practices. According to the self-reflective prompting and discussion with the participant, of the examples listed, “student backgrounds definitely impacted how they answered [some questions] [...] but [did not have] any influence [on] how students [were] scored.” This participant noted that the lessons observed will build to a culmination of various skills being mastered and that, at this point, skill mastery was demonstrated through engagement and meaningful discussion.

Participant #4

This individual is a licensed educator who was observed during period 2. The course observed was Sophomore English Structures and consisted of Freshmen (grade 10). Throughout the study, this participant has disclosed responses that reflect a teacher who makes legitimate and meaningful attempts to improve their practices, including in terms of personal beliefs and procedures in terms of the teaching profession.

Instructional Practices. The typical class period began with a themed journal prompt, which varied in purposes ranging from a review of materials to the use of new terminology for an upcoming unit to social-emotional reflections. Throughout the time observed, the teacher circulated the room regularly, engaging with students in small groups and one-on-one to ensure that student needs were met appropriately. All students were treated equally, with respect and care. When comparing the data points from observations to those collected from the reflection and interview, the practices observed and discussed aligned relatively well.

When asked whether they felt that students were supported adequately in terms of both academic and social-emotional learning needs, the participant noted “I do believe students were supported academically and emotionally. Students were able to get one-on-one help as needed and support from [the teacher]. Students who were quieter had [the teacher] coming to them and checking in as needed or redirected as [the] teacher saw needed. Students who were better at self-advocating easily got help and reinforcement from [the adult] in the room and all seemed comfortable with the process.” This was corroborated with pre-observation data collected for this participant, who disclosed that they try to support academic and social-emotional learning needs “most of the time,” though they noted throughout that their learning environment strives to be supportive of students of all backgrounds and abilities equally.

Classroom Climate and Management. As with the previous participant, this participant noted that they strive to ensure that the classroom environment is respectful of all students regardless of who they are and that students have agency and can advocate for their needs, stating “[as] students [were witnessed to be] disengaging by [engaging in undesired behaviors] [...] [I] quietly told students to put their phones away, pay attention to the student teacher, or cease whatever other off-task behavior [was the concern].” The participant also notes that this method

of management deters student misbehavior because students are redirected discreetly and in a manner that they respond best to as individuals.

Grading Practices. According to the self-reflective prompting and discussion with the participant, of the examples listed, grading does not reflect upon anything but the work that is presented, though the participant noted that responses are often indicative of the background of the student to some capacity. This participant further noted that feedback given to students is tailored to the academic needs of the student and is phrased in a way that is appropriate to their individual needs, which is “[determined] based on what I know about their academic levels (less sophisticated, more direct language for students who are lower levels, more academic language for stronger students).”

Conclusion

From all collected data, it was clear that the majority of the participant-synthesized responses and Likert Scale responses aligned with the observed behaviors within the classroom environment. The participants each demonstrated the capacity to compartmentalize their personal beliefs when necessary for the benefit of their students, as well as promoting an environment to their students that encouraged them to grow both academically and social-emotionally.

CHAPTER V

Discussion

Ensuring that students' needs, both academic and social-emotional, are met and that personal biases are addressed and do not impact your ability to be an effective teacher are critical in today's climate. Three main concepts including instructional practices, classroom climate and management, and grading practices were all examined in an effort to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent do the conscious and unconscious beliefs regarding culture and learning of teachers impact lesson planning and delivery?
2. How do these beliefs impact diverse students in the classroom, both in their academic and social-emotional learning and development?

The purpose of this study was to investigate how teacher beliefs impact student achievement in all forms and help or hinder their educational journey. The conscious beliefs of teachers were addressed in self-reported survey responses and unconscious behaviors were noted during classroom observations.

Social-emotional learning, in this context, is the process that young people and adults utilize to obtain and use the knowledge, skills, and beliefs to develop healthy self-identities, manage their emotions, achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy, establish and maintain appropriate social relationships, and make informed decisions. Students engage with social-emotional learning on a daily basis, whether intentionally or unintentionally on the part of the educational process. Following the recent pandemic and resulting social strains that may have occurred in society, now more than ever is intentional social-emotional learning

opportunities critical for our students. This, in turn, facilitates increased academic achievement and success for the student.

Instructional Practices

All participants in this study made an effort to ensure that their students felt respected and able to advocate for their needs within the classroom environment. While some issues were observed with classroom procedures, these issues were minor and did not hold much bearing on the academic or social-emotional well-being of the students in their care.

Classroom Climate and Management

For all participants, classroom management seemed to be relatively stable by very different means for each individual. All participants noted that they believe students should feel safe to be individuals, while also being held to high standards of learning that reflect knowledge about the student as a unique individual.

Grading Practices

As should be expected, no teacher participant graded student work, formally or otherwise, with biases that negatively or positively impacted the student. Student work was graded with respect and with unique expectations for the individual based on a standardized set of skills needing to be mastered. Feedback was provided that was meaningful and insightful to each student, with information phrased in ways that the individual student would benefit from.

Conclusion

Limitations. The first limitation to be noted is the size of the sample for this study. The sample size of this study was originally five individuals, though one dropped out of the study. Therefore, the results discussed in this study cannot be generalized to all classrooms. Only one researcher was responsible for all data collection and observations within the classroom

environment, so all observations and interpretations from the setting could not be confirmed via additional witnesses. An interrater reliability check was not conducted. Since I did not intervene within the classroom environment or influence participants in any way, there were no delimitations to be noted.

Further limitations occurred during the gathering of quantitative data via classroom observations. Because of circumstances outside of the control of myself or participants, the classroom observations could not be conducted to the extent that was initially outlined in the procedures section of Chapter III: Methodology. Specifically, the study was conducted following approval from the Institutional Review Board and ended up constricting the amount of time that remained for the data collection process, as well as several schedule conflicts between Eastern Illinois University and the observation site, Danville High School; this left me with approximately two and a half weeks to complete both the data collection and the data analysis. In addition to the time constraint placed on the study, one of the five participants was non-compliant and ended up retracting his consent to participate in the study on April 14, 2023, which triggered all of the data that had been gathered for this participant to be discarded. Both of these culminated in a lack of quantitative data through observations within the classroom setting, which was intended to be utilized in the full data analysis. As a result of this, the quantitative analysis for this study was negatively impacted.

Future research. In the effort to continue this research and further expand upon it in a way that encompasses more generalizable data collection and interpretation, further research needs to be conducted. The objective of studies should be to investigate teachers' practices and how their biases impact these practices. Suggestions for areas of exploration include different grade levels, especially in terms of the primary grades, as well as different religious backgrounds

of focus. Expanding the sample size by investigating additional classrooms and acquiring more participants could also be suggestions for further research performed on this topic.

Summary. Teacher beliefs, whether conscious or unconscious, have a profound effect on student achievement within the classroom environment, both in the short and long term. It is critical for teachers to lead their classes with understanding and respect, regardless of the backgrounds of the students within their classroom. In addition, this respect being modeled by the teacher allows students to see the skills required of the learning environment in action and to feel their impact while learning to apply these same skills, personally.

Appendix A: Informed Consent Form**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

“Critical Consciousness, Social-Emotional Learning, and Serving Diverse Students.”

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by *Brooke L. Poeschl and Dr. Amy D. Davis*, from the *Department of Teaching and Learning Foundations* at Eastern Illinois University.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Please ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate.

You have been asked to participate in this study because you have worked as a certified educator in a public school district that serves a diverse population and/or you have taught a student who has been identified as Muslim or having come from a primarily Muslim country.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to identify the role that teachers’ cultural practices, beliefs, and conscious or unconscious biases play in their classroom practices, especially about their ability to provide culturally relevant social-emotional learning opportunities and interventions to diverse students. This study will focus further on the teachers’ personal beliefs, practices, and biases regarding their classroom practices for social-emotional learning opportunities and interventions for students identified as Muslim.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

1. Complete a pre-observation survey that will ask for basic background information, including but not limited to, your general demographic information (such as ethnicity, years of experience in the field of teaching, and sex) and the frequency of various practices (such as the use of reflection and keeping up-to-date with current best practices within the field of teaching). This survey will be provided to you through a data-collection platform called *Qualatrics*, where your responses will be gathered and stored securely. Your responses will only be accessible to the principal investigator (Brooke L. Poeschl) and Dr. Amy D. Davis (faculty advisor) and will be stored on a password protected personal computer, drive, or platform for the duration of the study, plus a period following its completion of three (3) years. All personal identifiers (names, titles, etc.) will not be utilized in the final product of the study and you will be given a moniker for the data to represent any unique responses that are used which you provided.

2. Engage in in-classroom observations in which the researcher enters your classroom to observe your instructional practices, including rapport with students and materials that are utilized during lesson instruction. These observations will be partial or whole class periods and will serve as behavioral observation to compliment written responses that you provide to the researcher through the pre- and post-observation surveys. You will be observed teaching *at least* twice. During this time, audio recordings will be made of instruction for the purpose of transcription and evidence. These audio recordings and their transcripts will only be accessible to the principal investigator (Brooke L. Poeschl) and Dr. Amy D. Davis

(faculty advisor) and will be stored on a password protected personal computer, drive, or platform for the duration of the study, plus a period following its completion of three (3) years. All personal identifiers (names, titles, etc.) will not be utilized in the final product of the study and you will be given a moniker for the data to represent any unique responses that are used which you provided.

3. Complete a post-observation survey in which you reflect on the lesson which was observed by the researcher, focusing specifically on your instructional choices, grading outcomes, and classroom management choices for that specific lesson delivery. Like the pre-observation survey, this survey will be provided to you through a data-collection platform called *Qualtrics*, where your responses will be gathered and stored securely. Your responses will only be accessible to the principal investigator (Brooke L. Poeschl) and Dr. Amy D. Davis (faculty advisor) and will be stored on a password protected personal computer, drive, or platform for the duration of the study, plus a period following its completion of three (3) years. All personal identifiers (names, titles, etc.) will not be utilized in the final product of the study and you will be given a moniker for the data to represent any unique responses that are used which you provided.

4. Engage in an one-on-one interview with the researcher which will act as a debrief for the observation(s) of your classroom procedures and instructional delivery, focusing on expanding upon rationale for various instructional choices that were observed as well as building off of your pre- and post-observation survey responses. During this time, audio recordings will be made of instruction for the purpose of transcription and evidence. These audio recordings and their transcripts will only be accessible to the principal investigator (Brooke L. Poeschl) and Dr. Amy D. Davis (faculty advisor) and will be stored on a password protected personal computer, drive, or platform for the duration of the study, plus a period following its completion of three (3) years. All personal identifiers (names, titles, etc.) will not be utilized in the final product of the study and you will be given a moniker for the data to represent any unique responses that are used which you provided.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Because this study is completely voluntary and focuses on reflection, observation, and interview, there is very minimal risk or predicted discomforts to you as a participant (including, but not limited to, physical, psychological, social, legal, or other).

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Benefits of this study may include, but are not limited to, increased value placed on reflection on practices, the identification of areas of personal biases, improved relationships with students, and improved academic success of diverse students in your classes.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of password protected personal devices and drives, as well as protected digital platforms (i.e. Qualtrics).

All data collected will only be accessible to the principal investigator (Brooke L. Poeschl) and Dr. Amy D. Davis (faculty advisor) for the duration of the study, plus an additional three (3) years following its completion. All data will be utilized for the completion of this study and its corresponding written publication for the purpose of the completion of a master's degree for the researcher (Brooke L. Poeschl).

All data will be identifiable by letter monikers following analysis and categorization, with personal identifiers being removed for use in the written product of this study.* All data will be recorded and amended to reflect this change, with all personal identifiers being redacted where necessary to uphold confidentiality for published/shared elements. All data collected and stored will be maintained in the state it was provided to the researcher (Brooke L. Poeschl) in during collection and will be protected in the manner and for the duration of time, and accessible under the conditions, named above.

*For example, you will be referred to as "*Participant (#)*."

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Participation in this research study is voluntary and not a requirement or a condition for being the recipient of benefits or services from Eastern Illinois University or any other organization sponsoring the research project. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind or loss of benefits or services to which you are otherwise entitled.

There is no penalty if you withdraw from the study and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

**You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer.*

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact:

Brooke L. Poeschl - Principal Investigator

(217) 259-3565

blpoeschl@eiu.edu

Dr. Amy D. Davis - Faculty Sponsor

(217) 581-5000

addavis7@eiu.edu

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

If you have any questions or concerns about the treatment of human participants in this study, you may call or write:

Institutional Review Board
Eastern Illinois University
600 Lincoln Ave.
Charleston, IL 61920
Telephone: (217) 581-8576
E-mail: eiuirb@eiu.edu

You will be given the opportunity to discuss any questions about your rights as a research subject with a member of the IRB. The IRB is an independent committee composed of members of the University community, as well as lay members of the community not connected with EIU. The IRB has reviewed and approved this study.

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at any time. I have been given a copy of this form.

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant Date

Appendix B: *Pre-Observation Survey*

Participant Demographics and Practices

Start of Block: Basic Background Information

Q1 What is your age range?

- 18-24 (1)
- 25-34 (2)
- 35+ (3)

Q2 What is your sex assigned at birth?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Non-binary / third gender (3)
- Prefer not to say (4)

Q3 What gender identity do you identify with most at this time?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Non-binary / third gender (3)
- Prefer not to say (4)

End of Block: Basic Background Information

Start of Block: Racial-Ethnic Background

Q5 Select the race that best represents you.

- White (1)
- Black or African American (2)
- American Indian or Alaska Native (3)
- Asian (4)
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (5)
- Other/Prefer not to say (6)

Q7 Are you considered Hispanic?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

End of Block: Racial-Ethnic Background

Start of Block: Educational Background

Q8 What is your highest level of education?

- Bachelor's Degree (1)
- Master's Degree (2)
- Doctorate Degree (3)
- Some post-graduate coursework (4)
- Enrolled in post-graduate coursework (either Master's or Doctorate level) (5)

Q9 How long have you been a licensed educator?

- 0-3 years (1)
- 4-9 years (2)
- 10+ years (3)

Q10 How many years of experience in teaching do you have, not including your experience in the classroom prior to becoming a licensed professional educator (PEL)?

- 0-3 years (1)
- 4-9 years (2)
- 10+ years (3)

End of Block: Educational Background

Start of Block: Professional Practices and Development

Q11 How often are your teaching practices based on up-to-date research in the field of teaching and learning?

- Always (1)
- Most of the time (2)
- About half the time (3)

- Sometimes (4)
- Never (5)

Q12 How often do you reflect on your teaching to ensure that students are making meaningful progress toward skill mastery?

- Always (1)
- Most of the time (2)
- About half the time (3)
- Sometimes (4)
- Never (5)

Q13 How often do you reflect on student performance to ensure that students are making meaningful progress toward skill mastery?

- Always (1)
- Most of the time (2)
- About half the time (3)

- Sometimes (4)
- Never (5)

Q14 How often do you adjust instruction and materials based on student learning needs?

- Always (1)
- Most of the time (2)
- About half the time (3)
- Sometimes (4)
- Never (5)

Q16 How often do you meaningfully incorporate learning materials, such as written texts, into your lessons that are relevant to students of diverse backgrounds?

- Always (1)
- Most of the time (2)
- About half the time (3)

- Sometimes (4)
- Never (5)

Q25 How often do you meaningfully incorporate learning materials, such as written texts, into your lessons that are engaging to students of diverse backgrounds?

- Always (1)
- Most of the time (2)
- About half the time (3)
- Sometimes (4)
- Never (5)

Q17 How often do you ensure that your lessons are differentiated according to the variety of needs in the classroom, including needs related to cultural diversity?

- Always (1)
- Most of the time (2)
- About half the time (3)

- Sometimes (4)
- Never (5)

End of Block: Professional Practices and Development

Start of Block: Classroom Culture and Environment

Q18 How often do you make an effort to establish and maintain meaningful rapport with all students, regardless of their background (ex: religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, learning disability)?

- Always (1)
- Most of the time (2)
- About half the time (3)
- Sometimes (4)
- Never (5)

Q19 How often do you make an effort to establish and maintain a classroom culture that is accepting of diverse students (ex: religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, learning disability)?

- Always (1)

- Most of the time (2)
- Prefer not to say About half the time (3)
- Sometimes (4)
- Never (5)

Q20 How often do you make an effort to establish and maintain a classroom environment that is respectful of a variety of personal differences (ex: religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, learning disability)?

- Always (1)
- Most of the time (2)
- About half the time (3)
- Sometimes (4)
- Never (5)

Q21 How often do you make an effort to establish and maintain a classroom environment that places high value on both academic achievement and social-emotional development?

- Always (1)
- Most of the time (2)
- About half the time (3)
- Sometimes (4)
- Never (5)

Q22 How often do you make an effort to establish and maintain a positive classroom environment for all students, regardless of their background (ex: religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, learning disability)?

- Always (1)
- Most of the time (2)
- About half the time (3)
- Sometimes (4)
- Never (5)

Q23 How often do you ensure all students help to establish and maintain a classroom culture that is respectful and accepting of cultural, educational, and personal differences (ex: religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, learning disability)?

- Always (1)
- Most of the time (2)
- About half the time (3)
- Sometimes (4)
- Never (5)

Q24 How often do you ensure that your own biases toward personal differences (ex: religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, learning disability) do not inform and/or impact your instruction, treatment, and grading practices?

- Always (1)
- Most of the time (2)
- About half the time (3)
- Sometimes (4)
- Never (5)

End of Block: Classroom Culture and Environment

Appendix C: *Post-Observation Survey*

Instructional Practices

1. Focusing specifically on the lesson delivered on (DATE) during (PERIOD), reflect on your instructional delivery. Were materials and examples utilized in the lesson relevant and engaging to all students in your classroom? In what ways?
2. Focusing specifically on the lesson delivered on (DATE) during (PERIOD), reflect on your classroom management practices. Were your choices in terms of behavioral interventions and monitoring informed by the cultural needs of the students? To what extent was this the case?
3. Focusing specifically on the lesson delivered on (DATE) during (PERIOD), reflect on your instructional delivery. Was the lesson differentiated according to the needs of your students? In what ways?
4. Focusing specifically on the lesson delivered on (DATE) during (PERIOD), reflect on your instructional delivery. Do you believe that students were supported both academically and in terms of their social-emotional learning (SEL) needs? To what extent?

Grading Practices

1. Focusing specifically on the lesson delivered on (DATE) during (PERIOD), reflect on student work. While grading, was it clear that all students made progress toward skill mastery? To what extent is this the case?
2. Focusing specifically on the lesson delivered on (DATE) during (PERIOD), reflect on student work. While grading, to what extent did the background of the student (ex: religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, learning disability) impact the way in which work was scored?
3. Focusing specifically on the lesson delivered on (DATE) during (PERIOD), reflect on student work. While grading, to what extent did the background of the student (ex:

religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, learning disability) impact the way in which feedback for work was given?

4. Focusing specifically on the lesson delivered on (DATE) during (PERIOD), reflect on student work. Based on the products that students produced following lesson delivery, do you feel that the lesson observed was effective for student learning? To what extent?

General Reflection

1. Do you believe that this lesson was successful for student learning, both academically and social-emotionally? To what extent?
2. If you were to alter this lesson for a similar classroom group in the future, in what ways would you do this so that it is more effective for diverse learners (ex: religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, learning disability)?
3. Is there anything that the researcher should know about this group?
4. Is there anything that the researcher should know about this lesson?

Appendix D: Post-Observation Debrief/Interview Prompts

Post-Observation Debrief/Interview Prompts

As a reminder, all responses that you provide, whether written or spoken, are confidential and will not be shared in a manner which identifies their origin. There will be no legal or professional consequences to honest responses except in cases in which there is a legitimate concern for the safety or health of the participant or another individual. No response is mandatory. All responses, whether written or spoken, will be recorded and retained by the researcher for the purpose of the study without the use of personal identifiers such as your name.

Topic 1: Personal Beliefs

1. How much exposure to diverse students (ex: religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, learning disability) do you have at your stage of experience?
2. What is your background in terms of exposure to religions, philosophies, etc. which are different to your own?
 - a. Do you have a history of positive or negative experiences with various groups of people who are different to your own beliefs and experiences?
3. Do you feel that you have a worldview that would be considered to be open and accepting of other cultures, religions, and beliefs?
4. What is your personal association with the Islamic faith?
 - a. What, if any, background knowledge do you have regarding Islamic practices, Muslim individuals, etc.

Topic 2: Instruction

1. What went into planning this lesson?
2. What prior knowledge and experiences were necessary for the success of this lesson?
3. How did you monitor student needs throughout lesson delivery?
4. To what extent do you feel that your personal beliefs and experiences have influenced your instructional delivery and/or planning?

Topic 3: Grading

1. Can you explain your typical process of grading and providing feedback on student work?
2. What contributes to your evaluation of student learning and skill mastery?
3. When there is a sudden, negative change in student scores (i.e., a sudden increase in student failing scores), what process do you use to remedy the situation and ensure all students are successfully learning/mastering the skill in question?
4. What is the process that you use for summative assessment retakes in your classroom?

Topic 4: Classroom Culture/Environment

1. Do you feel like the classroom environment that students walk into is conducive to learning in all ways, including in terms of social-emotional learning needs, academic needs, and personal interests and needs?
2. What element of your classroom culture are you *most proud of*?
 - a. How did you establish this element of your classroom culture?
3. What element of your classroom culture are you *least proud of*?
 - a. Do you have a plan to improve or change this element for the better?
 - b. What is that plan?

Topic 5: Educating Muslim Students

1. Have you felt the need to alter the way in which you deliver instruction in order to provide appropriate levels of rigor to diverse students (especially those who identify as Muslim) while also maintaining awareness of cultural differences and needs?
 - a. What alterations have you made?
 - b. How effective or ineffective were these alterations?
2. What modifications and/or accommodations did you make for this lesson for diverse students (specifically, those who identify as Muslim)?
 - a. Were these changes made in the moment (spontaneously) based on what was seen during instruction delivery, planned based on previous experiences with this group of students, or a combination of both of these methods?
 - b. What contributed to the changes that you made?
 - c. Were these changes effective? In what ways were they effective/ineffective?

3. With regard to diverse students (especially those who identify as Muslim), do you feel that your classroom environment welcomes, respects, and values the backgrounds, experiences, and contributions of these students?
 - a. Do you personally feel that your environment and interactions with students cultivate a welcoming, respectful learning environment that values diversity (ex: religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, learning disability)?
 - b. Do you feel that students in your classroom interact with one another in a welcoming, respectful way that shows a high level of value for individual differences?
4. Have you had to make accommodations in terms of cultural expectations and norms for your classroom in order to ensure that diverse students (specifically, those who identify as Muslim) feel valued, welcomed, and respected?
 - a. What kinds of accommodations have you made?
 - b. How effective are these accommodations?
5. How would you describe your interactions with the students scheduled to attend your classes who identify as Muslim, openly or otherwise?
 - a. Did you have previous interactions with these students outside of your own classroom (for example, in passing, at extra curricular activities, etc.)?
6. How much experience do you have with Muslim students in the classroom?
7. What have you learned from your diverse students (specifically, those who are Muslim)?

Topic 6: Communication with Parents

1. In terms of parental involvement and interaction, how has communication with the families of Muslim students been?
 - a. Have you found the need to make alterations/accommodations to how you communicate with these families?
 - b. What effect, if any, has interacting with Muslim students and their families had on your personal belief system?
 - c. What about your professional beliefs?

Topic 7: General Questions and Observations

1. How often do you incorporate SEL into your instruction?
 - a. How do you incorporate SEL into your instruction?

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