Promising Practice: The Use of the *Assessment of Culturally and Contextually Relevant Supports*

(ACCReS) in High-need Public School Classrooms

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Author Note

Abstract

Educators' use of exclusionary discipline practices (e.g., our-of-school suspension) has been systematically applied to Black and brown youth, impacting opportunities for academic achievement. Federal policy calls for educators to refine their practice when racial discipline disparities are detected, yet there is little guidance in the law about how to do this exactly. The *Assessment of Culturally and Contextually Relevant Supports* (*ACCReS*) is a formative teacher self-assessment to promote educator reflection and change in practice. Use of the self-assessment is meant to reduce educators' reliance on reactionary and exclusionary discipline practices (e.g., sending students to the office) by supporting educators to reflect on their practice, build skills, and design educational environments that acknowledge students' complex, intrapersonal identities. As a result, teachers might support students' learning and behavior in the classroom more proactively and equitably. This chapter presents data collected from teachers in two high-need school districts in the northeast United States who participated in field testing the *ACCReS*. Preliminary results indicate evidence of the following relationship: When teachers agree with more items on the *ACCReS*, less student disruptive behavior is observed in the classroom. Implications include the use of *ACCReS* data to support professional development goals and identify training needs for educators. (200 words)

Promising Practice: The Use of the *Assessment of Culturally and Contextually Relevant Supports* (ACCReS) in High-need Public School Classrooms

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) requires state and local education agencies receiving federal funds to collect and analyze data to determine if any racial and ethnic groups are being disproportionately (a) identified to receive special education services, (b) placed in more restrictive educational settings, as well as (c) disciplined and excluded from the learning environment (e.g., suspended, expelled). IDEA (2004) also specifies that if significant disproportionality is determined, school practices and procedures must be reviewed and revised to focus on prevention and reverse noted trends. Yet, federal law provides little guidance about how to do this.

Often, inappropriate decisions about identification, placement, and discipline occur after a teacher requests support from a colleague (e.g., refers a student to the school principal for disciplinary action). Therefore, it may be critically important to build educators' capacity to support student behavior and learning within the classroom through a focus on prevention. This is particularly critical for educators of racially and ethnically minoritized (Proctor & Owens, 2019) youth, specifically Black or African American students with or at risk for disabilities, who are most often impacted by exclusionary discipline (Gage et al., 2019). Improving teacher training and professional development to be prevention-focused, data-analytical and incorporative of students' culture within school classrooms might change instructional pedagogy and build a more just and equitable classroom ecology. This, in turn, may ultimately reduce the number of inappropriate referrals for disciplinary action and address the vast inequities in the use of exclusionary discipline practices in the United States.

Theoretical Framework and Advancing Scholarship

Reliance on exclusionary discipline can be disrupted by framing the design and implementation of multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) frameworks in schools as culturally responsive (e.g., Bal et al., 2012; McCurdy et al., 2003). In such a framework, educators support students comprehensively by implementing empirically-validated practices with fidelity, scaling interventions to the appropriate intensity, and monitoring students' progress over time (Algozzine et al., 2011; Cook & Odom, 2013; Simonsen et al., 2008). In addition, staff are encouraged to engage in high-quality professional development that focuses on prevention (Gregory et al., 2014) and structuring the classroom ecology (Annamma & Morrison, 2018) to value students' culture (McIntosh et al., 2014) and intersecting identities (Annamma et al., 2018). Given that the use of exclusionary discipline has been systematically applied to Black and brown students with or at risk for disabilities (e.g., Whitford et al., 2019), this professional development should be rooted in a framework that acknowledges the interdependent constructs of race and dis/ability in education (Annamma et al., 2013). Without an understanding of individual, structural and systemic racism, as well as other forms of oppression, professional development and subsequent student interventions will not likely be successful toward affecting change in teacher practice (Proctor & Meyers, 2014).

DisCrit provides a critical lens in this work as race and ability are understood as socially-constructed, interdependent constructs (Annamma et al., 2013). That is, racism and ableism are seen as enmeshed in the fabric of American culture (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001) and are therefore deeply embedded within educational systems. This is critical to acknowledge when creating a classroom community as it is relevant to the design of the curriculum, instructional pedagogy used, and social/behavioral supports provided to students (Annamma & Morrison,

2018).

Culturally Responsive Behavior Supports

MTSS frameworks can be culturally responsive and integrative of critical tenets of DisCrit by attending to students' intrapersonal identities, interpersonal experiences, and structural/systemic power in the environment to create transformative school spaces (Moradi & Grzanka, 2017). Vincent and colleagues (2011) conceptualized a culturally responsive school-wide positive behavioral interventions and support (PBIS) model, a framework aligned with the core principles of MTSS (Briesch et al., 2020). This model may be useful in designing such a learning environment, ultimately increasing equity in school disciplinary practices (Gregory et al., 2017). This model specifies four interconnected features: (a) *systems* to promote staff members' cultural knowledge and self-awareness and implementation fidelity, (b) *behavioral* and *academic practices* that are culturally relevant and empirically validated for racially and ethnically minoritized learners, (c) *data* that are culturally and contextually valid for decision making, and (d) student *outcomes* that are culturally equitable and enable maximum and meaningful academic and behavioral success in school.

Systems

Culturally responsive MTSS theory (Vincent et al., 2011) emphasizes systems to support staff including training educators to first build awareness of their own cultural identity (McAllister & Irvine, 2000). As the majority of educators in the U.S. are White (Hussar et al., 2020), this might involve learning about predominant White identity development models (Ponterotto & Park-Taylor, 2007) to lay the groundwork for understanding power, privilege and implicit bias. Most white educators have never had to think about their own identity development, which is part of white privilege. This work can then lead to professional

development related to understanding and valuing students' culture and designing educational

environments that promote stronger racial-ethnic identity. A strong racial-ethnic identity has

been linked to students' academic achievement and parent reports of fewer behavioral concerns

(Miller-Cotto & Byrnes, 2016), promoting student success in school. Systems include time and

resources for educators to engage in self-reflection, training, and coaching (individually or

collectively as a school staff) to promote educators' implementation of practices with adequate

levels of fidelity.

Practices

Culturally responsive MTSS theory also posits that academic and behavior support

practices (e.g., scaffolding instruction, collaboratively defining and explicitly teaching

classroom expectations) should be empirically supported and validate students' identities,

therefore increasing cultural relevance. When describing culturally responsive MTSS, Vincent

and colleagues (2011) reference Cartledge and Kleefeld's (2010) guidance to provide social and

behavioral support that: (a) reflect students' lived experiences, (b) are aligned with family

expectations, (c) are modeled by individuals sharing the students' background, and (d) are

delivered in students' language. Teachers should be self-reflective (especially those who are

White), and instruction should be rigorous and relevant to promote meaningful connection to the

curriculum and classroom environment, maximizing student engagement.

Data

Valid data for decision-making is also central to culturally responsive MTSS. As

discipline disproportionality permeates the rationale for school-based prevention and

intervention frameworks using a multi-tiered approach, many may not question the validity of

behavioral data collected in schools. Yet, researchers have called in to question the subjective

nature of many disciplinary incidents (Skiba et al., 2014), drawing attention to how problem behavior is defined in the first place and the possibility of implicit bias in decision-making (McIntosh et al., 2018). Vincent et al. (2011) describe that although "objective" operational definitions of problem behaviors are intended to minimize teacher judgment (Horner et al., 2001), it is important to involve educators, families and other community stakeholders from various backgrounds to cultivate these definitions and/or provide specific examples and non-examples to reduce the prospect of cultural bias.

Outcomes

Vincent and colleagues (2011) indicate that determining if outcomes are culturally equitable involves disaggregating academic and discipline data to see if biases are evident. Specifically, in a report from the National Education Policy Center (Losen, 2011) school administrators and staff were encouraged to regularly collect, review, reflect upon, and publicly report exclusionary discipline data disaggregated by race and ethnicity. These data can be used to conduct analyses to determine root causes of discipline disparities (see Osher et al., 2015 for a step-by-step guide) to guide discipline reform (Fenning et al., 2018). Cook and colleagues (2019) identified common root causes including historical racial oppression, teacher-student racial mismatch, teachers' implicit bias, teachers' use of reactive classroom management, lack of effective teacher professional development, lack of teachers' multicultural awareness, and poor discipline policy, among others. Identification of root causes could then inform administrator decision-making about revisions to discipline policies, teacher practices, as well as staff training needs (Fenning et al., 2018).

Teacher Self-Assessment Development

Results from research indicate in-service teachers (i.e., educators working in K-12 school environments) may not feel prepared to deliver culturally responsive instructional and behavioral supports based on the training they received in their preservice programs (Chu & Garcia, 2014) Many leave the field due to lack of perceived competency in supporting both student instruction and behavior (Gutentag et al., 2017). In addition, there is often limited training and professional development for in-service teachers to support minoritized students effectively (Polat, 2010). To offer opportunity for critical self-reflection and to provide data to support more effective training, validated assessment tools of teachers' culturally responsive practice are needed.

Rationale for the Current Study

Although there are validated measures which promote teacher self-reflection and assessment of practices, many are centered specifically on teaching or classroom management (*Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale* (CRTSES; Siwatu, 2007), *Culturally Responsive Classroom Management Self-Efficacy Scale* (CRCMSES; Siwatu et al., 2015)) rather than culturally responsive classroom supports more broadly. The *Assessment of Culturally and Contextually Relevant Supports* (*ACCReS*) was developed to include items pertaining to teachers' instruction, behavior supports, but also teachers' use of data for equitable decision-making and access to high-quality professional development and resources, aligning with critical features of culturally responsive MTSS (i.e., systems, practices, data, outcomes; Fallon et al., 2021; Vincent et al., 2011). The purpose and promise of the *ACCReS* is to address the lack of validated instruments and interventions available to support student learning and behavior within a culturally responsive MTSS framework.

About the ACCReS

    ACCReS items were derived from a systematic literature review of culturally and contextually relevant practices (Fallon et al., 2012) to align with Vincent and colleagues (2011) conceptualization of a culturally responsive MTSS model (Fallon et al., 2018), with a specific focus on universal supports to all youth. Specifically, items were derived to align with *systems* to promote staff members' cultural knowledge, (b) culturally relevant *practices* empirically validated for racially and ethnically minoritized learners, (c) culturally and contextually valid *data* that are for decision making, and (d) culturally equitable student *outcomes* to promote meaningful academic and behavioral success in school. Once items were developed, a panel of 20 experts (university researchers and Grade K – 12 educators) reviewed and provided qualitative feedback about the instrument (Fallon et al., 2018). Finally, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were conducted with data from a national sample of 500 and 400 teachers, respectively. Analyses indicated acceptable fit indices with items loading on to three factors: *Equitable Classroom Practices* (ω^1 = .87)*, Accessing Information and Support* (ω = .86)*,* and *Consideration of Culture and Context* (ω = .77). See Appendix A for a copy of the *ACCReS*.

    Items within the *Equitable Classroom Practices* factor target teacher practices to promote students' equitable access to high-quality instruction and a safe and supportive classroom environment. Items within the *Consideration of Culture and Context* factor more explicitly target teachers' consideration of students' culture as it pertains to the design and delivery of teaching and behavioral supports provided in the classroom. Items on the *Accessing Information and Support* factor target data and systems of support that teachers may access to engage in culturally responsive practices in the classroom. When completing the *ACCReS*, teachers rate the degree to

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[1] We calculated McDonald's omega to evaluate internal consistency due to its superiority to Cronbach's alpha when factor loadings are unequal (Trizano-Hermosilla & Alvarado, 2016). Coefficients > .75 were interpreted to indicate acceptable internal consistency (Reise et al., 2013).

which they agree with items (*strongly disagree* (0), *disagree* (1), *somewhat disagree* (2), *somewhat agree* (3), *agree* (4), and *strongly agree* (5)) on a 6-point Likert-type scale.

Purpose of Study

The current study reports results from a field test of the *ACCReS* with teachers in two high-need districts in the Northeast U.S. Specifically, participating teachers completed the *ACCReS* and allowed researchers to conduct three classroom visits. Classroom visits involved assessing teachers' implementation of *ACCReS* items on the *Equitable Classroom Practices* subscale as well as systematic observation of students' academic engagement and disruptive behavior. Data were collected to answer the following primary research questions:

1. Is there evidence of a relationship between *teachers'* responses on the *ACCReS* and student behavior as determined via direct observation? It was hypothesized that teachers with high self-ratings on the self-assessment would also have high rates of student academic engagement and low rates of disruptive behavior.

2. Is there evidence of a relationship between *observers'* ratings of teachers' implementation of *ACCReS* items (specifically *Equitable Classroom Practices*) and student behavior as determined via direct observation? It was hypothesized that students with classroom teachers who were observed to implement items on the *Equitable Classroom Practices* subscale at high rates would display *high* rates academic engagement and low rates of disruptive behavior.

In addition, data collection targeted the following secondary research question:

3. Is there evidence of a relationship between teachers' responses and observers' ratings of *ACCReS* items (specifically *Equitable Classroom Practices*)? We hypothesized that observers' and teachers' ratings on *Equitable Classroom Practices* subscale would be similar.

Method

Participants and Setting

Twenty teachers from two school districts participated in the study. District 1 was large

and suburban (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). Over 75% of students identify as

African American or Hispanic, 25% are English learners, and 50% were considered

economically disadvantaged. Out of school suspensions exceeded the state average, specifically

for students who identified as male, African American, Hispanic, Multi-racial, English learners,

as well as students with disabilities and those designated as economically disadvantaged. District

2 was smaller and suburban (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020), however, the

majority of students identified as a race or ethnicity other than White and demonstrated similar

trends with regard to out of school suspensions as District 1.

Participating teachers ranged in years of professional teaching experience and the average

class size was 23 students (see Table 1). In addition, two doctoral students in their first year of a

school psychology Ph.D. program conducted classroom observations. For the purpose of

calculating inter-observer agreement (IOA), one-third of observations were conducted by both

students. Students were trained by the first author to engage in data collection procedures by first

receiving explicit instruction on data collection protocols before practicing ratings with video

examples until acceptable agreement was met (>90%).

Procedures

Once a teacher provided informed consent and parents were notified of the study, data

collectors scheduled classroom observations. At the end of each of three 30-min observation,

data collectors calculated the percentage of intervals during which all students were academically

engaged and disruptive. They also completed a checklist of *Equitable Classroom Practices*

derived from *ACCReS* items. (All observation tools are available from the first author upon request.) As data collectors visited teachers' classrooms three times, a grand mean was generated for students' academic engagement and disruptive behavior, as well as teacher practice. After the final observation, teachers were asked to complete the *ACCReS* and a teacher and student demographic questionnaire.

Results

Average scores calculated across measures for each participant are presented in Table 2. In the current study, teachers rated items on the *Equitable Classroom Practices* subscale (mean = 92.74%; SD = 0.05) the highest, followed by the *Consideration of Culture and Context* subscale (mean = 78.40%, SD = 0.09) and the *Accessing Information and Support* (mean = 58.79%, SD = 0.13). Overall, average self-ratings across teachers on the *ACCReS* was 77.5% (SD = 0.07).

A non-parametric procedure (Spearman's rho) was used to examine the relationships between *ACCReS* score and classroom behavior. To address the second research question, there was not a statistically significant relationship between teachers' self-reported *ACCReS* score and classwide student academic engagement observed (r(19) = 0.36, *p* = 0.12). There was however a significant negative association between teachers' self-reported *ACCReS* scores and classwide student disruptive behavior (r(19) = -0.38, *p* = 0.096). In reference to the second research question, Spearman's rho was again calculated. Results revealed no significant correlation between observers' rating of teachers' *Equitable Classroom Practices* and rates of student academic engagement (r(19) = 0.093, *p* = 0.70) or disruptive behavior (r(19) = -0.078, *p* = 0.74). In response to the final research question, there was also not a significant correlation observed between observers' and teachers' ratings on the *Equitable Classroom Practices* items (r(19) = -0.025, *p* = 0.92).

Discussion

Data from the current study support the use of the *ACCReS* as a promising practice in schools. The purpose of the instrument is to proactively promote teachers' use of empirically supported classroom and instructional management procedures that are considerate of student culture and classroom context. The *ACCReS* was constructed through a lens of intersectionality as items encourage teachers to consider students' intrapersonal identities, interpersonal experiences, and how power are privilege is distributed in community spaces like school (Crenshaw, 2017; Moradi & Grzanka, 2017). Furthermore, items and subscales align with Annamma and Morrison's (2018) description of a DisCrit Classroom Ecology, where curriculum, student behavior, and classroom pedagogy are intentionally constructed with consideration of the intersection of systematic inequities that impact students. If efforts are made to strengthen teachers' skills and promote positive, equitable learning environments, fewer minoritized students may be subject to exclusionary discipline practices or removal from inclusive learning settings through placement in restricted special education settings.

DisCrit theorists have called for targeted research-based practices that approach the problem of over-identification of Black and brown youth in special education and disciplinary systems from a centered and collaborative perspective (Cavendish et al., 2020). The *ACCReS* specifically focuses on teachers' beliefs and actions with the distal goal of reducing misidentification and misplacement of students in disciplinary systems and special education. Data from the *ACCReS* can support educators and school leaders to develop measurable goals to implement culturally relevant practices, and monitor progress toward change. As such, this instrument may be useful for local education agencies adhering to IDEA (2004) guidelines to

revise practices upon determining discipline disproportionality is evidenced in school or district data.

The dataset in the current study suggests that there may be a connection between teachers' perceptions of their own cultural responsiveness and levels of disruptive behavior in their classrooms. In this study's sample, teachers tended to provide higher self-ratings for items on the *Equitable Classroom Practices* subscale than items on the *Consideration of Culture and Climate* subscale. For example, teachers' responses indicated their relative comfort with providing explicit instruction and differentiating instruction for learners in their classroom but indicated less confidence in their ability to provide culturally and contextually relevant instruction. Likewise, educators tended to indicate that they teach behavioral expectations explicitly, but do not necessarily consider that students' behavior may be context-specific or gather information from families before defining and teaching the behavior expected in school. Therefore, staff professional development and coaching might specifically target items on the *Consideration of Culture and Climate* subscale to support educators to reflect and work toward creating more just and equitable classroom spaces considerate of students' culture.

In addition, teachers rated items on the *Accessing Information and Support* lowest overall. These items inquire about access to the data, resources and supports needed to engage in culturally and contextually relevant practices. Based on the sample's responses on this subscale, it may be particularly important for school administrators and leadership teams to consider how to build systems to support educators' access to the financial resources, training and time needed to fully engage in professional development. This may be critical to promoting change in their practice.

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Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting results of this study. First, this is an exploratory study with a small sample from two school districts. As such, there may be state level indicators and other contextual variables that may impact teachers' responses on the measure. It is important that the *ACCReS* us used in additional and varied settings to continue its validation. Additionally, as teachers volunteered to participate in this study, it is possible that the sample does not reflect the broader teacher population. For instance, it is possible that participants may implement more *Equitable Classroom Practices* than teachers who did not volunteer for the study. Second, teachers' self-reported practices may not accurately reflect their daily practices in classrooms. Teachers may believe they are engaging in equitable practices but lack the training, resources, and support to actually implement those practices in their classrooms with fidelity. Third, it is possible that teachers were influenced by social desirability bias when completing the *ACCReS*, overestimating their overall use of *Equitable Classroom Practices* in particular.

Furthermore, the study involved three classroom observations, yet this may have provided only a limited view into teachers' practices and students' behavior. It is possible that observers simply did not see the implementation of certain practices due to the timing of observations. In addition, student academic engagement and disruptive behavior may not be the best or only possible dependent variable to measure when considering issues that justify creation of the *ACCReS*. Future research might target other relevant variables (e.g., classroom climate, student sense of school belongingness, teacher/student relationships, teachers' rates of office discipline referrals, etc.). Finally, teachers participated in this project to assist the researcher in developing the instrument for broader use, and therefore did not receive coaching to improve

practice in areas rated lower on the *ACCReS*. Future research studies and work in the field might include this component to increase the promise of the *ACCReS* and its impact.

Implications

Despite these limitations, the study's preliminary findings indicate a need for further examination of the intersection of teachers' perceptions of their own culturally responsive practice, their actual practice, and the lived experience and outcomes of the students within their classrooms. Ultimately, the purpose of the *ACCReS* is to build teachers' capacity to serve students equitably and dismantle oppressive systems grounded in ableism and racism. Use of the *ACCReS* can promote critical self-reflection, development of clear action steps to improve practice, and support consultation and professional development efforts mediated by school support personnel. In this way, the *ACCReS* has the potential to be a critical part of broader efforts to examine how the systems and individuals within schools are serving students, disrupting existing structures that may harm students with intrapersonal minoritized identities.

Implications for Research

Future research might examine why some hypotheses in the current study were not supported. As the *ACCReS* involves self-ratings, it may be necessary to provide teachers with more instruction, feedback and professional development to engage in authentic self-reflection. It could be that as teachers become more aware of the tenets of culturally responsive practice, they may adjust their responses to items on the tool to be a bit lower to reflect their need for continued professional growth and better understanding of culturally responsive practices. Therefore, initial ratings might be more elevated (and perhaps lack validity) because teachers may not yet have a nuanced understanding of culturally responsive practice prior to ongoing professional development, coaching and support. This is a hypothesis in need of exploration with additional

research that would involve further validation of the tool and use of it in additional educational contexts beyond those reported here.

In addition, future research should explore how *ACCReS* scores predict student behavior and teachers' perceptions of students' social-emotional, behavior, and academic risk as these data (e.g., from office discipline referrals, universal screeners) are often used to make decisions about which students will receive additional support (e.g., Tier 2 intervention) in an MTSS context. It is problematic if data indicate minoritized students are most in need of additional support and they receive low-quality services, perceived to be non-responsive to intervention, and subsequently referred to special education. Indeed, this could perpetuate existing disparities. Instead, researchers might explore using *ACCReS* data to support interventions for educators. These might include changes to empowering teachers to work toward discipline policy reform, offer high-quality professional development to alter classroom practice, and provide the resources to assess and promote teachers' cultural responsiveness in the classroom so that students are supported proactively and comprehensively.

In addition, future research might use a qualitative approach to focus on students' perspective about their experiences in the classroom among teachers who are implementing *ACCReS* items more consistently. Student voice may be particularly impactful when reflecting on effective and ineffective teacher practices. Students could be empowered to co-lead this process of data collection and use it to co-facilitate discipline policy and practice reform.

Future studies might also explore comparing *ACCReS* responses of teachers with different racial identities. For instance, White teachers might benefit from using the tool in the context of exploring their identity and their privilege in the classroom. This could be

foundational to understanding their implicit bias in disciplinary interactions with students and making change to reduce bias and promote equity in classroom interactions.

Implications for Practice

Based on results of the *ACCReS,* teachers might work independently or in the context of teacher professional learning communities to generate goals and work toward expanding their practice accordingly. If a teacher notices certain items are rated lower, the teacher may work to target those items to strengthen their overall classroom practice. An example of this might be if Item 35 on the *Accessing Information and Support* domain is an area of relative weakness, the teacher might seek the resources needed to partner with families effectively. This could involve asking for support from community outreach personnel or family liaisons to support meaningful family-school partnership efforts.

The *ACCReS* might also be used in individual consultation in schools (e.g., multicultural consultation; Ingraham, 2000). For instance, support personnel serving as consultants might observe teachers (consultees) to collect *ACCReS* data and provide a summary with suggested feedback. The consultant and consultee could then work together toward setting goals toward a change in practice to promote desired student outcomes in the classroom. Specifically, if the consultant targets collecting data to track the equity of interactions and disciplinary actions between the teacher and students (referencing Item 27), the consultant might then guide the teacher to set a goal to increase the equity of these interactions and help to monitor the teacher's progress over time.

Relatedly, support personnel engaged in systems-level consultation may encourage staff to complete the *ACCReS* anonymously and use the data produced to determine professional development needs. Specifically, if many staff in the school disagree with items within a certain

domain (e.g., *Consideration of Culture and Context*), training might specifically target these practices with opportunity for direct strategy instruction, opportunity for practice and feedback. As school psychologists and social workers can act as consultants to lead school- and district-based efforts, leaders might think strategically about investing in additional personnel for the school community. These individuals may have relevant training in systems change and implementation science to drive the work of altering structures in which marginalization, racism, ableism, and other forms of oppression have been maintained.

Finally, the *ACCReS* may be a beneficial tool to integrate into preparation programs for general and special education teachers, support personnel (e.g., school psychologists) and administrators. It may guide school stakeholders in conceptualizing the types of classroom supports relevant to creating a culturally responsive environment. It may also help to shift the culture of how we prepare educators and staff to support behavior in schools from being more reactionary and centered in Whiteness to more proactive, integrative of students' culture and considerate of the school and community context.

Implications for Policy

It is imperative that action to address disproportionality in discipline (e.g., out-of-school suspensions) is centered in local, state and federal efforts. This might include prioritizing root cases analyses in policy guidelines. Policymakers might also work toward aligning law and guidance related to MTSS and special education identification to be consistent across local education agencies and states (as it is currently not consistent; Briesch et al., 2020). Alignment might also occur in how state and local level policymakers guide administrators and educators to weave initiatives intended to address culture, race, behavior and special education. That is, the *ACCReS* could provide data to support monitoring progress toward a strategic goal to integrate

teacher practices (which are often fragmented across initiatives in schools). This could guide

state and/or district level support and technical assistance to improve teacher practices.

In addition, individuals in policy positions might also encourage adequate allocation of

resources to ensure policy is subsequently linked to practice, and that schools have adequate

funding, resources, and training to engage in high-quality implementation. This is critical as

teachers in the current study indicated a lack of access to supportive and ongoing professional

development to promote culturally responsive practices in their schools. This may be indicative

of a lack of funding for, availability of programming/trainers for, or focus on such professional

development. Disrupting this trend might require support and resources from local or state

governments, state level or national technical assistance, or external grant funding agencies to

increase access to professional development and reduce barriers that may prevent teachers from

taking advantage of such opportunities.

Conclusion

This chapter describes how a recently developed teacher self-assessment may be a

promising practice for use in schools. Specifically, results presented from a field test with the

ACCReS endeavored to strengthen the tool's technical properties for use more broadly.

Preliminary results show initial evidence of a relationship between teachers' perceptions of their

own culturally responsive practice and students' disruptive behavior in the classroom.

Ultimately, the *ACCReS* is intended to be used as method for producing data to guide teachers to

set professional goals and support educational leaders to make relevant decisions about resources

and supports may be beneficial to educators' efforts to create change. The *ACCReS* may be used

as a self-reflection exercise with individual preservice or in-service teachers, in the context of

one-on-one coaching or consultation, or as part of large-scale systems-level change efforts to

address classroom instruction and behavior supports schoolwide. These efforts are needed to

create more equitable, supportive, productive learning environments to disrupt discipline

disproportionality that has impacted Black and brown youth with and without disabilities for

decades (Gage et al., 2019).

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Table 1
Demographics for Participating Teacher and Student Sample

Teacher	Setting	District	Years of Teaching	Current Grade Taught	Number of Students (Female Students)	Percentage Students of Color	Percentage of English Learners	Percentage of Students with Disability
1	Elementary	1	16	1	20 (15)	100%	25%	0%
2	Elementary	1	6	4	18 (N/R)	72%	17%	44%
3	Elementary	1	8	3	18 (7)	70%	N/R	56%
4	Elementary	1	10	2	27 (11)	100%	100%	4%
5	Elementary	1	13	2	20 (8)	70%	5%	45%
6	Elementary	1	25	5	25 (11)	68%	0%	12%
7	Elementary	1	22	5	24 (N/R)	N/R	75%	25%
8	Elementary	1	21	5	27 (N/R)	74%	4%	0%
9	Elementary	1	14	5	28 (8)	100%	100%	14%
10	Elementary	1	7	4	24 (12)	100%	24%	39%
11	Elementary	1	17	3-5	13 (6)	85%	38%	100%
12	Elementary	1	14	3	22 (10)	91%	14%	0%
13	Secondary	2	17	7	27 (13)	37%%	0%	14%
14	Secondary	2	15	8	25 (14)	20%	8%	17%
15	Secondary	2	2	8	22 (12)	30%	6%	0%
16	Secondary	2	6	7	18 (10)	60%	25%	4%
17	Secondary	2	17	9	20 (4)	40%	0%	14%
18	Secondary	2	23	10	24 (11)	N/R	N/R	39%
19	Secondary	2	9	9-12	28 (15)	69%	N/R	100%
20	Secondary	2	23	10	24 (11)	N/R	N/R	0%

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Table 2

Mean and Range of Classroom Observation Data and Mean of Self-Report ACCReS Scores

Teacher	Mean (%) and Range of Observation Scores			Mean (%) Self-report Scores			
	Academic Engagement	Disruptive Behavior	Equitable Classroom Practices	*Equitable Classroom Practices*	*Consideration of Culture and Context*	*Accessing Information and Support*	Total
1	67.5 (61.3-73.8)	12.5 (7.5 – 17.5)	95.5 (90.9 – 100)	93.1	81.8	65.3	80.1
2	70.4 (68.8 – 71.3)	18.3 (12.5 – 23.8)	53.4 (30.0 – 66.7)	91.7	69.4	56.9	73.3
3	85.4 (77.5 – 92.5)	2.1 (1.3 – 2.5)	74.6 (68.2 – 77.8)	94.4	77.8	62.5	80.0
4	92.5 (90.0 – 93.8)	9.6 (7.5 – 11.3)	95.3 (90.0 – 100)	94.4	81.9	73.6	83.8
5	80.0 (76.3 – 85.0)	11.7 (8.8 – 17.5)	58.5 (44.4 – 72.7)	93.1	68.1	59.7	75.7
6	95.4 (95.0 – 96.3)	5.8 (3.8 – 7.5)	73.0 (55.6 – 83.3)	86.1	75.0	30.1	65.2
7	93.3 (87.5 – 97.5)	13.3 (3.8 – 21.3)	61.1 (55.6 – 66.7)	93.1	68.5	72.2	79.0

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8	86.7 (78.8 – 91.3)	7.1 (3.8 – 11.3)	79.4 (66.7 – 93.8)	94.4	73.6	34.7	70.0
9	94.2 (83.8 – 100)	8.8 (3.8 – 10)	27.3 (10.0 – 40.0)	97.4	95.4	66.6	87.1
10	91.7 (85 – 95)	9.2 (8.8 – 10)	93.1 (90.0 – 95.0)	93.6	71.2	62.1	76.6
11	85.0 (78 – 91)	12.0 (8 – 16)	97.2 (91.7 – 100.0)	92.3	77.2	40.9	71.4
12	88.0 (81 – 90)	5.0 (5 – 6)	94.4 (91.7 – 95.8)	100.0	71.2	48.4	74.7
13	78.0 (70 – 86)	16.0 (11 – 20)	77.1 (62.5 – 93.8)	94.9	80.3	57.5	78.5
14	94.0 (91 – 98)	4.0 (1 – 8)	100.0 100.0	97.4	83.3	72.7	85.2
15	81.0	15.0	76.4	87.2	75.7	66.6	77.1

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	(68 – 89)	(8 – 24)	(66.7 – 87.5)				
16	89.0 (85 – 95)	13.0 (1 – 20)	91.7 (87.5 – 93.8)	88.5	80.3	53.0	74.7
17	88.3 (80 – 96.3)	12.9 (7.5 – 20)	94.8 (94.4 – 95.5)	93.1	69.6	40.9	69.0
18	97.1 (93.8 – 98.3)	1.3 (1.3 – 1.3)	85.9 (81.3 – 90.0)	92.3	100.0	77.2	90.0
19	88.3 (81.3 – 97.5)	6.3 (0.0 – 12.5)	45.9 (38.9 – 60.0)	100.0	87.8	68.1	86.1
20	87.5 (83.8 – 90)	7.9 (6.3 – 10)	81.9 (79.2 – 83.3)	77.8	75.7	60.6	71.9

Appendix A

Assessment of Culturally and Contextually Relevant Supports (ACCReS)

Directions: Below, please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements. Also, consider the following definitions of culture and culturally and contextually relevant supports.

- **Culture**: A shared history and experience, differentiating a group from other groups. Culture may pertain to an individual's race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, exceptionality/disability, socioeconomic status/class, religion, geographic context (e.g., rural, suburban, urban), immigration status, language, and/or nationality.

- **Culturally and contextually relevant**: Upon considering students' culture, the action taken to promote students' success (in learning, behavior and development).

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Somewhat Disagree 3	Somewhat Agree 4	Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
Equitable Classroom Practices						
1. I use explicit instruction when I teach (e.g., clearly describe, model, and practice content with students).						
2. I differentiate instruction to support the different learners I teach.						
3. I provide additional (or more intensive) academic support when a student needs it						
4. I plan lessons that are designed to actively engage all learners when I teach.						
5. I listen actively to students when they express concerns.						
6. I engage in more positive interactions with students than negative interactions.						
7. I am consistent and fair when it comes to discipline.						
8. I explicitly teach social skills (e.g., ways to ask for help appropriately).						
9. I explicitly teach students about my expectations for classroom behavior.						

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10. Each day, I personally greet all of my students.						
11. I work to build a positive relationship with each student I teach.						
12. I deliver praise equitably in my classroom.						
13. I actively monitor all parts of the classroom.						
Consideration of Culture and Context						
14. Culturally and contextually relevant instruction is important to how I teach.						
15. I know how to provide culturally and contextually relevant instruction.						
16. I modify the curriculum to be culturally and contextually relevant, when appropriate.						
17. I consider students' culture when I decide on the type of instructional support I will provide.						
18. I understand that behavior may be context-specific (e.g., different behaviors may be more appropriate at home or school).						
19. I consider a student's culture when selecting a research-based intervention strategy.						
20. I self-assess my cultural biases regularly.						
21. I understand that some students are at risk for being disproportionally excluded from the learning environment (e.g., sent to the office, suspended, expelled).						
22. I gather information about my students' families (e.g., customs, languages spoken, cultural traditions).						
23. I consider students' culture and language when I select assessment tools.						
24. I know where to find information about culturally and contextually relevant behavior management practices.						
Accessing Information and Support						
25. I ask families to help define my classroom expectations.						

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26. I collect classroom data to inform the equity of my interactions across students (e.g., frequency and distribution of positive interactions).					
27. I collect classroom data to inform the equity of my disciplinary actions across students (e.g., evidence of consistent consequences administered).					
28. I review academic data for trends that reflect disproportionality (e.g., students of a certain race not achieving in mathematics versus students from other groups).					
29. I seek professional development opportunities (e.g., attend conferences, workshops, trainings) to learn about how to engage in culturally and contextually relevant practice.					
30. I request the resources (e.g., time, staff, training) I need to implement culturally and contextually relevant instruction.					
31. I request the resources (e.g., time, staff, training) I need to implement culturally and contextually relevant behavior support					
32. I request to meet with support personnel (e.g., instructional coaches, lead teachers, consultants) to help me consider cultural and contextual factors that might affect how I support students' behavior.					
33. I meet with support personnel (e.g., instructional coaches, lead teachers, consultants) to help me to find evidence of disproportionality (e.g., racial, gender) in my classroom data.					
34. I talk to administrators in my building about accessing the resources I need to provide culturally and contextually relevant academic supports.					
35. I seek the resources (e.g., time, access, translators) I need to partner with families to support students.					