

PUTTING EQUITY TO WORK: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY EXPLORING
TEACHER CANDIDATES' PERSPECTIVES ON EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
PEDAGOGY IN A TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM

by

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ABSTRACT

STEPHANIE JONES-FOSU. Putting equity to work: A qualitative case study exploring teacher candidates perspectives on equity and social justice pedagogy in a teacher preparation program (Under the direction of DR. CHANCE W. LEWIS)

For decades, White supremacy and Whitewashed teacher preparation curriculum have been used to prepare a majority White female teacher workforce. This same workforce has had limited exposure to diversity and a lack of cultural competence and critical consciousness yet is expected to teach diverse student populations. Furthermore, this curriculum is being taught by a majority of White teacher-educators, who also have limited exposure to diversity and a lack of cultural competence and critical consciousness. Additionally, teacher education programs have been under scrutiny for being ineffective when preparing teachers for the classroom because much of what a teacher candidate learns before entering the classroom is not enacted when faced with the pressures of teaching in a new environment. To combat the lack of critical consciousness, cultural competence, and effective teaching, teacher education programs have implemented equity and social justice concepts in the curriculum. Yet, teacher preparation programs have experienced tension with focusing on equity and social justice or focusing on pedagogical practices. This study seeks to explore equity and social justice in a teacher preparation program through the lived experiences of teacher candidates who are attempting to enact equity and social justice pedagogy in their teaching. Based on this study, it suggests that for a university-based teacher education program to support teacher-candidates enactment, while addressing the tension between focusing on equity and social justice or pedagogy, they must: a) identify the teacher candidates perceptions

of the curriculum that addresses equity and social justice, b) identify how teacher candidates are attempting to enact equity and social justice in the classroom, and c) identify what the teacher candidates gained from the curriculum that helped them incorporate equity and social justice in the classroom. To meet this task, this study employed a constructivist approach, investigating teacher candidates' understanding and knowledge before their teacher preparation program in addition to experiences gained during their program.

Through a qualitative research design, this study applied a case study approach to reveal the teacher candidates' experiences within a teacher preparation program (TPP), who are student teaching in diverse urban schools during their last year. Through semi-structured, open-ended virtual interviews, the lived experiences of teacher candidates were gathered and analyzed using Merriam and Tisdell's (2015) method of analysis to describe the teachers' practices and understandings as they attempt to teach diverse students inequitable ways. The teacher candidates' perceptions of equity and social justice within their TPP were revealed as they share insights on their experiences engaging with the TPP curriculum. The purpose of this study was to explore how equity is enacted within a teacher preparation program through the perspectives of the teacher candidates.

Findings suggested three themes that aligned correspondingly with each research question. When incorporating social justice and equity, teacher preparation programs need to thread equity and social justice in the curriculum in a way that is fluid and integral, treating equity and social justice like oxygen. When addressing teacher candidates, they need multiple exposures to equity, and social justice over some time, including beyond their program to grow in their identity development to enact equity and

social justice, *treating teacher candidates like sponges*. When reflecting on teacher preparation programs supporting teachers' enactment of equity and social justice, bold and courageous decisions must be made to dismantle the racist systems in education to work toward programs immersed with an anti-racist and social justice approach to developing teachers for diverse students, *treating teacher preparation programs with boldness*.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedication to my brother, Joseph Thomas, who decided to leave this world while I was deciding to enter this Ph.D. program. In his death, he inspired me to keep an open mind to new experiences that would ultimately challenge me in a variety of ways. To his sons, my precious nephews, I want them to know that life is worth living, no matter how hard it gets, and you have an auntie Steph who loves you and want you go further than me. It is my brother's legacy through children, that has fueled me during this process.

To my life's work and vocation in teacher education, I dedicate this dissertation to the children who will have a fully prepared teacher who is anti-racist, critically conscious, culturally competent, and believes all children can succeed as a result of the impact of this study. You deserve to have a teacher who will instruct you in a manner worthy of a royal family. You are kings and queens in the making and I hope this study will reach your future teachers before they reach you.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Literature indicates that the education teacher candidates learn in undergraduate programs does not always translate into the classroom (Roeser et al., 2012; Strom & Martin, 2015). Scholars have supported this notion by suggesting that teacher preparation programs (TPP) are often ineffective when preparing teachers for the classroom (Freeman et al., 2014). Largely, the pedagogical knowledge the teacher candidate receives in their preparation program is not applied during their clinical and field experiences and almost absent when they become a full-time teacher (Ramanayake & Williams, 2017). The development and sound pedagogical practices the teacher candidates learn in the college classroom can be quenched under the social and emotional demands of teaching (Roeser et al., 2012). However, there is also a disconnect between the pedagogies of enactment (Grossman, 2010) and pedagogies of investigation (Zeichner, 2012). The inability to teach through investigative and pedagogical methods might be rooted in how teachers conceptualize their professional vision, how teachers grapple with the complexities of teaching, and how their novice disposition impacts confidence to integrate justice and effective pedagogical practices (Schiera, 2019).

The practice-based teaching model is derived from many pedagogical practices throughout the years (Dutro & Cartun, 2016; Peercy & Troyan, 2017). Practice-based teaching is defined as development focused on learning professional performance, emphasizing specific activities of the profession, and includes investigation of the critical problems of teaching (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Dutro & Cartun, 2016). Ball and Cohen (1999) claimed that how a teacher is developed is not solely based upon where the

teacher is trained but derives from the skills, activities, and teaching practices used to help the teacher candidate demonstrate their understanding of the teaching profession. The shift toward practice-based teacher education appears to be more widely accepted as a necessary focus of professional preparation to become enacted in teaching practice (Janssen et al., 2015). Yet, there are still competing viewpoints of learning to teach (Gallimore et al., 2009) and learning in a practice. Education reformers are increasingly calling for the implementation of practice-based approaches to teacher preparation, specifically highlighting teacher identity (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011) and centering core practices (Dutro & Cartun, 2016; Philip et al., 2019).

However, Philip et al. (2019) suggested that there is a risk to centering teacher education around core practices that could lead to sidelining equity and justice. Specifically, they argued that romanticizing the democratic potential of education minimizes the role of teachers to carry out core practices simply to increase student achievement on standardized assessments. Additionally, reform initiatives that focus on core practices in the name of equity blur the historical legacies of White supremacy in education (Bonilla-Silva, 2001). Furthermore, education reforms often incorporate the language of equity without depth in understanding of what it looks like in teacher education programs (Dyches & Boyd, 2017; Nieto, 2000). To understand equity more deeply, there must also be a commitment to addressing the “education debt” that has been build up throughout American history (Ladson-Billings, 2006). There is a need to counter educational injustices at the hands of White supremacy that subsequently define U.S. schooling (Rose, 2014) by exemplifying best teaching practices that value the knowledge, experiences, and epistemologies of communities of color (Delpit, 2012; Ladson-Billings,

2000; Lee, 2007; Walker, 1996). It appears that advancing core practices within teacher education but not addressing the root causes of inequitable teaching practices that have harmed students of color can amplify educational oppression.

According to *Breaking the Link* (*Breaking the Link*, n.d.), a recent diversity report including 2019 data from the Southeastern city in this study, indicated that 73% of enrolled public-school students are students of color. This is an increase of 1% in the last year. When examining the data based on school poverty and race, 59% of students in low-poverty schools are White. However, in high-poverty schools, 87% of students are Black and Latinx. Essentially, as the school poverty level increases, the percentage of Black and Hispanic students increases as well. Still, less than 6% of students in high-poverty schools are White. The *Breaking the Link* report of 2018 indicated that the majority of students in the same Southeastern school district scoring below proficiency on the end-of-grade tests were students of color and impoverished.

As a result of classrooms becoming more racially, ethnically, socioeconomically, and linguistically diverse in comparison to the teaching workforce being majority White women (Gershenson et al., 2016), the need for teacher preparation training that focuses on equity is becoming more apparent (Banks et al., 2001; Causey et al., 2000; King & Butler, 2015; Verba & Orren, 1985). Some argue that the focus on teacher preparation should not be on the technical aspect of the profession, but have a progressive stance, emphasizing justice and equality (Athanasas & Martin, 2006; Beyer et al., 2018; Wiedeman, 2002). Several TPP today, including the university in this study, attempt to provide teacher candidates with opportunities to engage in critical pedagogy with the goal that they will eventually develop into teachers who can teach in equitable ways (Vlach et

al., 2019). Still, there is much room to explore equity in a practice-based teacher preparation program as discussions of what a teacher candidate needs to be ready for the classroom are ongoing (Goodwin et al., 2014).

This chapter opens up by laying the foundation of university-based TPP and prioritizing equitable teaching practices that focus on equity and social justice. Additionally, the opening of this chapter quickly distinguishes the tension between blending equity and practice-based teaching methods (Athanases & Martin, 2006; Zeichner, 2017). The theoretical framework, introduced in this chapter, speak to the tension by including elements of Critical Race Theory and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory to develop the lens to approach this study. This chapter eventually frames the approach for the study through the three research questions that will guide the subsequent chapters.

Statement of the Problem

Frequently, teacher candidates do not enact effective pedagogical practices once they enter the classroom (Hurlbut & Dunlap, 2019; Roeser et al., 2012). Some argue that TPP are often ineffective when preparing teachers for the classroom (Black, 2003; Freeman et al., 2014). Additionally, teacher candidates need to be prepared for diverse students (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Landsman & Lewis, 2012) given the changing population and neglecting to effectively prepare teacher candidates is a disservice to both the teacher and their future students (King & Butler, 2015). Additionally, the teacher workforce is overwhelmingly comprised of White middle-class monolingual women, which has the potential to exacerbate the issue of teaching in equitable ways (Gershenson et al., 2016). Enacting social justice-oriented pedagogical practices as a new teacher can be complex,

especially when the teacher is within a controlled traditional school environment (Strom & Martin, 2015). Often new teachers struggle with enacting social justice practices in the same way it was modeled for them during their teacher education program (Agarwal et al., 2010). Some scholars have questioned the ability of teacher educators to engage new teachers in meaningful practice-based work (Peercy & Troyan, 2017). Similar to the teacher candidates, teacher educators, who are also majority White, middle class, and monolingual (Stenhouse, 2012), experience a developmental journey as they grapple with making practice-based teaching pedagogy conceptual and practical. These major concerns have employed equity and practice-based teaching methods within a teacher preparation program used in this study. Historically, there has been tension blending equity and practice-based methods into one teacher preparation program (Athanasos & Martin, 2006; Zeichner, 2017). Determining how to blend both equity and practice-based methods can potentially help teacher candidates be prepared for diverse students and also utilize the pedagogical practices learned in their undergraduate program.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore how equity is enacted within a teacher preparation program through the perceptions of the teacher candidates. This insight speaks to the challenges and triumphs of teacher preparation and offers a different perspective on the merging of equity and social justice in a university-based teacher preparation model. This study provides a constructivist viewpoint on teacher preparation and is rooted in the belief that learning occurs as learners are actively involved in a process of meaning and knowledge construction (Hurd, 2009; Lloyd & Fernyhough, 1999; Shivarama, 2014). Central to this study is how teacher candidates are defined.

Teacher candidates are students who have been accepted into a college of education teacher preparation program and are in the process of developing into a professional educator through courses, student-teaching, and partnerships with the school community (Benton & Falls, 2018). In literature, the teacher candidate is known as a pre-service teacher who is enrolled in a teacher preparation program (Zenkov et al., 2019). Similarly, a teacher candidate is also identified as a college or university student seeking specialized instruction and training in an education field to obtain a teacher certification (Benton & Falls, 2018; Hurlbut & Dunlap, 2019), but have not yet graduated (Estes & McConnell-Farmer, 2020). Additionally, teacher candidates can include online students seeking teacher certification (Rush & Cooper-Duffy, 2019). Teacher candidates, although often referred to as pre-service teachers or teacher candidates, will be termed teacher candidates in this study for simplicity and consistency. This study seeks to contribute to existing literature that supports the development of White teachers to be prepared for racially, ethnically, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse students. Additionally, this research makes suggestions on effective methods to incorporate that improve the enactment of teacher education. This study is needed to support new teachers in their exploration of their race, class, and privilege so they are better equipped to deconstruct whiteness in education (Sleeter, 2016) and work towards teaching equitably. Furthermore, social justice and equitable teaching practices have the potential to positively influence students' academic success (Paris & Alim, 2017). Given that the teacher workforce remains a majority of White middle-class women and the student population is becoming increasingly more diverse, the need for TPP to address equity and social justice is becoming more apparent.

Research Questions

To explore the perspectives of teacher candidates on equity and social justice within a university-based teacher preparation program, this study accessed the lived experiences and of teacher candidates at a Southeastern University. To gather meaning on how equity and social justice are presented in a university-based teacher preparation program and potentially enacted by the teacher candidate, this study asked:

1. What are the teacher candidates' perceptions of the curriculum that addresses equity and social justice?
2. How are equity and social justice being enacted by teacher candidates during student teaching?
3. What are the teacher candidates using from their teacher preparation program that helps them enact equity and social justice in their student teaching?

Expected Outcomes

The researcher expects three major outcomes from this study. The first expected outcome is a clearer understanding of how a university-based teacher preparation program addresses equity and social justice in their courses. The researcher expects to gather data by analyzing course descriptions of classes teacher candidates take throughout their matriculation. The second expected outcome is to explore how social justice and equity are being enacted by teacher candidates during their student teaching. Exploring the lived experiences and racial identity development of the teacher candidates through interviews the researcher expects to identify indicators of the enactment of equity and social justice. The final expected outcome of this study is to discover what the teacher candidates use from their teacher preparation program that helps them enact

equity and social justice in their student teaching. More specifically, the researcher expects to suggest how equity and social justice can be enacted based on courses offered by the university-based teacher preparation program.

Theoretical Framework

This study was primarily positioned in Critical Race Theory. Elements of professional development of the teacher candidates were examined through the lens of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. There is contention for incorporating equity and social justice within a teacher preparation program to prepare teacher candidates to deconstruct their own racial identity to attempt teaching equitably. Additionally, the enactment of professional development makes it necessary to provide frameworks that support race, equity, social justice, and development. Given the inclusion of race, equity, and social justice within this study, Critical Race Theory provides the foundation to explore how race, equity, and social justice are addressed within a university-based teacher preparation program. This study examined race through the lived experiences of teachers who are attempting to merge equity within their teaching. Incorporating both theories is necessary for this research as two approaches of preparing teachers are being merged equity and social justice in a university-based teacher preparation program. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Human Learning described the process and the origination of human intelligence in society (Shabani, 2016; Vygotsky, 1978). TPP provides teacher candidates opportunities to learn through interaction with others. Critical Race Theory provided the lens to analyze evidence of equity and social justice within the teacher preparation program as well as the lens to examine the racial identity development of teacher candidates. It goes beyond examining diversity, which is simply the differences in racial,

ethnic, socioeconomic, and geographic backgrounds (Alvarez McHatton et al., 2009). Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory provided a framework for understanding how teacher candidates develop professionally. Both are necessary to create a balance between the two major approaches to teacher preparation.

Essential to this study is the incorporation of Critical Race Theory as a mechanism for understanding why equity in teacher preparation is essential, especially given the racial identity of the majority of the teaching force in the United States. Critical Race Theory was originally conceived by Derrick Bell who positioned the permanency of race and racism in everything (Bell, 1995). Critical Race Theory became popularized through the Civil Rights movement to address legal matters but has since been employed in a variety of disciplines including education (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Hiraldo, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Both Hiraldo (2010) and Ladson-Billings (1998) works expertly recognize the important role and the centrality of race and White dominance in education (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Critical Race Theory (CRT) observes and studies racism, race, and power with the overall goal of transformation (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Furthermore, "the work of critical race theory is often disruptive because of its commitment to anti-racism" (Bell, 1995, p. 899) and appeals to understand the permeance of racism. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) identified six fundamental tenets of Critical Race Theory, which include: 1) interest convergence, 2) social construction of race, 3) racism as a common experience, 4) differential radicalization, 5) role of intersectionality, and 6) voice of color. Interest convergence explains the avoidance of focus on racism by White people in an attempt to continue to receive benefits afforded to them as a result of their race (Delgado &

Stefancic, 2001). It also encourages the examination of decisions to support “equity” when it benefits White people. Secondly, race is socially constructed, and often society chooses to focus on race above other factors such as intelligence and skill (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). CRT also posits that racism has become a normalized everyday experience in the United States and is difficult for White people to address (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Differential radicalism addresses how minoritized groups are constructed to reinforce White supremacy and the needs of the market (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Intersectionality focuses on resisting the single narrative of people of color and instead embraces their diverse lived experiences (Crenshaw, 1990; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Lastly, voices of color highlight the burden of Black people with educating White people about matters for which they may be ignorant (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Critical race theory includes a focus on a commitment to social justice (Solorzano et al., 2000) which should be at the core of TPP that focuses on equity and social justice. Therefore, the view that race should be the primary consideration (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) when investigating equity-focused TPP is assumed. This perspective assists in linking social justice practices to theory (Solorzano et al., 2000) which is necessary when training a majority White female teaching force. Additionally, when incorporating race in TPP through equity and social justice efforts, interest convergence is being addressed as it unearths the aspects of teacher education which have been historically avoided primarily to protect White teacher candidates and teacher educators at the expense of Black teacher candidates.

This study is secondarily situated in Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory of Human Learning. Vygotsky’s theory is one of the foundations of constructivism, the

understanding that the learner has prior knowledge and experiences which is often influenced by their social and cultural environment. Learning, therefore, is achieved when students construct knowledge out of their experiences (Shivarama, 2014). The Sociocultural Theory maintains three major themes: 1) social interaction, 2) the more knowledgeable other, and 3) the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). This study employed the major theme of social interaction, as it occupies a central role in developing an understanding of the lived experiences of teacher candidates within a teacher preparation program. Furthermore, Vygotsky believed everything is learned on two levels. The first level is through interaction with others also known as the social level. The next level is that learning is integrated within a person's mental state or otherwise called the individual level (Vygotsky, 1978).

According to Vygotsky, social interaction plays a significant role in the process of cognitive development. Vygotsky believed that social learning precedes development, which is a stark contrast to Jean Piaget's understanding of child development in which development precedes learning. Using this psychological approach to learning, Vygotsky determined that development appears initially at a social level and subsequently on an individual level (Lantolf & Johnson, 2007). When applied to education, the traditional approach to teaching and learning utilizes a transmissionist model in which the educator transmits information to students through instruction. However, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory promotes learning contexts in which students participate, essentially altering the role of the teacher and student. The educator is positioned to collaborate with students to facilitate meaning, therefore making learning a reciprocal experience for the students and teacher (Shabani, 2016). This is also relevant to the professional growth of teachers (Eun,

2011). This theory allows teacher candidates to be an integral part of their development socially and individually which is a key element of practice-based teaching. The sociocultural theory has the potential to illuminate the origins, and nature of teacher professional development (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 1995). Therefore, cognitive development is understood as an interactive process facilitated by culture, context, language, and social interaction. Teachers who were individually and structurally oriented exhibited a socio-cultural consciousness and described socially just teaching in various combinations of culturally responsive pedagogies, consciousness-raising, and advocacy, whereas individually oriented teachers focused primarily on “color-blind” caring relationships with their students (Whipp, 2013).

Overview of Context and Methods

This study utilized a qualitative design with a case study focus. Largely, the design aimed to explore, through the lived experiences of three teacher candidates, perceptions on how equity and social justice are incorporated in a university-based teacher preparation program, and how it is enacted by the teacher candidates. The sample population for this study was attained through criterion sampling procedures, specifically convenience sampling, to obtain the preferred set of participants. The criterion sample, as noted in the methodology included one multi-ethnic teacher candidate and two White teacher candidates who were former students of faculty in a previous pilot study.

The faculty in the pilot study were noted as demonstrating equitable teaching practices during their classroom instruction. The teacher candidates had the opportunity to demonstrate their learning during their student teaching experiences. This sample was

qualified to provide insight into their attempts to incorporate equity and social justice while student teaching.

The data collection process consisted of providing participants interview questions in advance followed by a one-hour semi-structured virtual interview that was transcribed, coded, and holistically analyzed (Solorzano et al., 2000). Given restrictions during a global pandemic, in-person observations and interviews were not an option.

Transcriptions were uploaded to NVivo, a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS), where it was coded and analyzed. Through the lens of Sociocultural Theory and Critical Race Theory, the data collected explored how faculty incorporate equity in their teaching and how teacher candidates enact equitable teaching in their classrooms.

Data was also collected from the course descriptions, located online, to gain insight on courses most likely to include elements of equity and social justice. The course descriptions were content analyzed (Creswell & Poth, 2016) using a series of terms related to equity and social justice found in the literature. This analysis provided a glimpse of the types of courses offered to the participants that were specifically designed to address equity and social justice.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for three major reasons. First, unlike other studies exploring university-based TPP, this study sought to focus on courses that addressed equity and social justice. As it stands, the majority of teachers in the United States are middle-class, monolingual White women (Gershenson et al., 2016) yet the student population is vastly different racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically (Okhremtchouk et al., 2020).

As teacher preparation programs attempt to prepare teacher candidates to deconstruct their race, class, and privilege to incorporate equitable teaching for diverse classrooms, the need for teacher preparation training that focuses on equity and social is becoming necessary (Banks et al., 2001; Causey et al., 2000; King & Butler, 2015; Verba & Orren, 1985). Second, this study is significant in that it applies to the lived experiences of teacher candidates and how they attempt to include equity in their classrooms. Some argue that the focus of teacher preparation should not be on the technical aspect of the profession, but have a progressive stance, emphasizing justice and equality (Athanases & Martin, 2006; Beyer et al., 2018; Wiedeman, 2002). Several TPP today, including the university in this study, attempt to provide teacher candidates with opportunities to try to engage in critical pedagogy with the goal that they will potentially develop into equitable teachers (Vlach et al., 2019). Still, there is much room to explore equity in a teacher preparation program as discussions of what a teacher candidate needs to be ready for the classroom are ongoing (Goodwin et al., 2014). This study adopted a constructivist approach to exploring equitable practices in a university-based teacher preparation format (Hurd, 2009; Lloyd & Fernyhough, 1999; Shivarama, 2014). It centered on how teacher candidates might acquire knowledge of equity and learn how to apply it given their lived experiences including their racial identity development. Finally, this study is significant in that it will add to the body of research around equity and social justice in a teacher preparation program. Literature indicated that the education teacher candidates learn in undergraduate programs does not always translate into the classroom (Roeser et al., 2012; Strom & Martin, 2015). Scholars have supported this notion by suggesting that TPP is often ineffective when preparing teachers for the classroom (Freeman et al., 2014).

Largely, the development the teacher candidate receives in their preparation program is not applied during their clinical experiences and almost absent when they become a full-time teacher (Ramanayake & Williams, 2017). This study explored the lived experiences of teacher candidates situated in a teacher preparation program with the potential to incorporate equity in their teaching.

Positionality of the Researcher

Orientated within Critical Race Theory and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, the term *diversity* is an inclusive term that comprises ethnic diversity, linguistic diversity, socioeconomic diversity (King & Butler, 2015), and also sexual orientation (Mayo, 2014). Diversity, within the context of this study, included but was not limited to, race. Having taught and prepared new teachers, I acknowledge the multiplicity behind the word *diversity* within the context of teacher preparation and teacher education.

I taught middle and high school for nine years teaching in public, private, and charter schools, and became a teacher through a non-traditional teacher preparation program. Given these experiences, I observed firsthand the inadequacies within teacher preparation, especially for educators entering diverse classrooms. Yet, the researcher had little first-hand experience with traditional TPP, such as the program included in this study, outside of teaching a course within the college of education.

The researcher also spent four years developing, coaching, and mentoring first and second-year teachers in a non-traditional teacher preparation program. In this experience, the researcher personally encountered how TPP is doing a disservice to diverse students by providing them with an insufficient, inexperienced teacher. It is the opinion of the researcher that these occurrences are not by accident, but a result of the permanency of

racism in America, and the systemic racist policies and practices. What motivates the researcher to engage in this focus is the desire that all students, regardless of their ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, or linguistic diversity deserve a qualified teacher who is prepared to teach equitably. I also have a particular passion for engaging White female teachers, providing opportunities for them to explore their race, class, and privilege for them to understand why equity in teaching is vital for the success of African American and Latinx and other diverse children. For the researcher, the group that can concentrate on this effort are the lived experiences of teacher candidates who attempt to enact equity in their teaching.

Definition of Terms

The terminology used in the discussion of teacher preparation can be unclear. Regularly, terms are used interchangeably. To add clarity to this study, the following terms have been defined and supported within the research:

Race: Race is a social construct created and upheld in Europe as a way of classifying people based on phenotype (Hubbard, 2007). Furthermore, there is no biological basis for the concept of race (Gannon, 2016; Morning, 2007), yet there are severe implications with race that are associated with power, privilege, wealth, and group domination. White privilege, for instance, affirms race as being institutional, in that Whites have greater access to power and privileges simply based on skin color (Kendall, 2012, p. 63).

Culture: Culture is defined as “the set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors shared by a group of people, but different for each individual, communicated from one

generation to the next” (Matsumoto, 1996, p. 16). Most anthropologists use Tylor’s (1871) definition as a starting point in which culture is a uniquely human trait but can be unlearned and modified to help solve human problems (Tylor, 1871). Tharp (2009) suggested that no culture is truly static; even American culture is radically different in the wake of technology. According to Bodley (2011), culture is the primary tool that individuals use to pursue actions that they perceive to be in their self-interest, but culture, language, and social organization must be shared. Culture is about identity and history and constitutes a form of pedagogy (Dei, 2012).

Ethnicity: According to Daniel (2014), the core or necessary factors of the concept of ethnicity consists of the following: 1) ascription of certain characteristics, 2) plurality, 3) identity, and 4) organization. The most common definition of ethnicity encompasses any sense of collective belonging based on common descent, language, history, culture, race or religion, or some combination of these (Varshney, 2001). Case (2015) argued that the characteristics of ethnicity that vary across countries and over time are critical components of its definition.

Equity: Equity is equity is a multifaceted social phenomenon of equalizing opportunities and equalizing outcomes are vastly different enterprises (Jordan, 2010). What is equitable and fair can be better understood concerning other things and from within a given context. Essentially, perspectives of equity may vary among diverse groups and may be linked to culture (Jordan, 2010). When presented in the literature, equity is also within the umbrella of social justice (Agarwal et al., 2010), which encompasses equity pedagogy (McGee Banks & Banks, 1995), culturally relevant

teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1995), and culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2002). The idea of equity can be applied to a range of teaching practices.

Social Justice: Scholars have interpreted social justice in education as promoting educational equality for marginalized groups (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2006). Teachers, scholars, and leaders engage in social justice education when they attempt to bring social change by addressing social injustice in schools and the greater community (Ayers et al., 2009).

Traditional Teacher Preparation Program (TTP): A program at a college or university that provides specialized instruction and training in an education field with the goal of students obtaining teacher certification (Benton & Falls, 2018; Hurlbut & Dunlap, 2019).

Teacher Candidate: Teacher candidates are students who have been accepted into a college of education teacher preparation program and are in the process of developing into professional educators through courses, student-teaching, and partnerships with the school community (Benton & Falls, 2018). In literature, the teacher candidate is known as a pre-service teacher who is enrolled in a teacher preparation program (Zenkov et al., 2019). Similarly, a teacher candidate is also identified as a college or university student seeking specialized instruction and training in an education field to obtain teacher certification (Benton & Falls, 2018; Hurlbut & Dunlap, 2019;), but have not yet graduated (Estes & McConnell-Farmer, 2020). Additionally, teacher candidates can include online students seeking initial teacher certification (Rush & Cooper-Duffy, 2019). Teacher candidates, although often referred to as pre-service

teachers and student teachers, will be termed teacher candidates in this study for simplicity and consistency.

Faculty: University faculty that teach and prepare teacher candidates for entrance into P-12 schools (Jessup-Anger et al., 2011).

Practice-Based Teaching: Practice-based teaching is defined as development focused on learning professional performance, emphasizing prescribed activities of the profession, and investigating the critical problems of teaching (Ball & Cohen, 1999).

Enactment: Enacting social-justice-oriented pedagogical practices as a new teacher within a controlled traditional school environment (Strom & Martin, 2015). This includes new teachers' implementation of professional judgment (Scales et al., 2018).

Constructivist: The belief that learning occurs as learners are actively involved in a process of meaning and knowledge construction (Hurd, 2009; Lloyd & Fernyhough, 1999; Shivarama, 2014).

Delimitations and Limitations

Delimitations

This study was delimited by the following characteristics:

1. **Participant Population:** Being unaware of the number of available participants, the study expanded the profile of participants to include teacher candidates and new teachers who all were former students of faculty in the pilot study.
2. A focus on a university-based teacher preparation program situated in an urban school district where there was a reasonable possibility that teacher candidates may be recruited to teach in schools with diverse student populations.

Limitations

This study was limited by the following characteristic:

1. This study was limited to multi-ethnic and White female teacher candidates engaged in student teaching.
2. This study was completed virtually due to Covid-19 pandemic restrictions.

Assumptions

This study made the following assumptions:

1. The faculty professional and personal knowledge of equity qualified them to effectively teach equitably.
2. The qualities of the university-based teacher candidates influenced their equitable teaching practices in the classroom.

Organization of Study

This study will consist of five chapters. Chapter 1 introduced the general context and purpose of teacher preparation and equity in teaching given the race of the teaching force and the growing diverse student population juxtaposes to the enactment of preparation, a theoretical framework presenting a constructivist approach to teacher learning, a set of research questions that guided the study, delimitations, limitations, assumptions, the definition of key terms, and significance of the study. Chapter 2 provides a review of works of literature that illustrates the evolution of teacher preparation, practiced based teaching, teaching toward equity, and issues of enactment. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology utilized for this study. Chapter 4 will provide the results of the study to answer the research questions. Chapter 5 will present the findings, summary, and recommendations for future study.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Teacher Preparation: An Historical Overview

Teacher Preparation: The Native Historical Experience

Today, teacher preparation involves teacher candidates' preparation for becoming professional educators. However, the development of this concept has significant historical roots. Before the European colonization of the West, the education of Natives of North America was a successful system of informal education (Reyhner & Eder, 2017; Yeboah, 2005). The purpose of teacher preparation was to prepare teachers to transmit knowledge, skills, values, mindsets, and character to native students in familiar settings (Dobyns, 1976; Urban et al., 2019). This transmission was to ensure that the culture, history, and lifestyles of the tribe continue to exist (Juneau, 2001). Additionally, teacher preparation intended to pass on culture which was vital to flourish in their society (Johnson et al., 2005). The transmission of knowledge was a prescribed process and triumphed over language barriers of many Native groups, religious differences, adjusted lifestyles for the immediate environment, and a social system that would advance the majority (Lee & Cerecer, 2010; Juneau, 2001). Learning was transmitted orally and included developing the youth through prayer, storytelling, memory skills, and listening (Bill, 1988). Native American education also cultivated respect and a healthy disposition toward hard work and inclusion (Banks, 2003). Before European colonization, teacher preparation in Native America thrived on preparing teachers to convey native culture using today's concepts of culturally responsive methods (Gay, 2002; Reyhner & Eder, 2017).

The goals behind schooling were significant to the Native Americans. The philosophy of education focused on the development of the individual in conjunction with developing the entire society while respecting nature (Johnson et al., 2005). The pedagogical practices of Native American teachers included discussions, expeditionary learning, hands-on learning, and making connections (Buly & Ohana, 2004). The curriculum that was developed included the needs of the family and the community as part of the education process. (Thompson & Hare, 2006). It was a holistic approach that cultivated the culture, curiosity, and respect (Lee & Cerecer, 2010). Subsequently, the demise of preparing Natives to teach in addition to Native Education overall was the result of an intrusion process (Bill, 1988). The European colonial intrusion devastated Natives in North America and altered the traditional education formats. During the 1500s, the tribal system of education and teacher preparation was disrupted until approximately 1871 after the treaty between the United States government and the Native American tribes (Bill, 1988; Spring, 2016). Ultimately, Natives became involuntary minoritized people who were coerced and forced into assimilating into American society via boarding schools and other barbaric approaches (Cross, 1998; Penland, 2010). As such, the purpose of schooling and the goal of teacher education, according to Cross (1998), is still to retain traditional cultures amid a hostile American society.

Education: The African, Enslaved African, and African American Historical Experience

Pre-colonization

Education on the continent of Africa was rooted in place, land, and community (Greenwood, 2009). Knowledge transformed intellectual thoughts and was anti-

oppressive in action and practice (Dei, 2012). It included interrelations of the body, mind, and soul to acknowledge the power of ancestral knowing (King, 2005) indicative of the education at Ip Ast University, the first university established in Egypt around 2000 B.C.E. (King, 2005). Egyptians taught advanced concepts, such as medicine, mathematics, science, and astronomy (Asante, 1990; Diop, 1974). This can be confirmed through the Egyptians primary interaction with the Greeks, as noted in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (350 B.C.E./1966), Herodotus's *Histories* (440 B.C.E./2014), Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* (75 C.E./2012), and writings by Hippocrates. Many well-known Greek scholars like Pythagoras, Plutarch, Aristotle, and Herodotus studied under Egyptian philosophers and teachers (Aristotle, 350 B.C.E./1966; Herodotus, 440 B.C.E./2014; Plutarch, 75 C.E./2012).

Despite historical evidence, Africans were producers of literature, art, and a philosophical way of life, long before their contact with the western world (Henrik Clarke, 1977). Before the destruction of the Empire of Songhay by the Moroccans and European mercenary soldiers at the end of the sixteenth century, the Africans in Western Sudan had begun great empires and cultures for a thousand years, most notable empires were Ghana and Mali. The Songhay Empire and the University of Sankore at Timbuctoo were in existence over a hundred years after the slave trade began along the west coast of Africa. During the period in West African history from the early part of the fourteenth century to the time of the Moorish invasion in 1591, the city of Timbuctoo and the University of Sankore in the Songhay Empire were the intellectual centers of Africa. Black scholars were enjoying a renaissance that was known and respected throughout most of Africa and in parts of Europe. At this period of African history, the University of

Sankore was the educational capital of Western Sudan. The University of Sankore had established relationships with similar institutions in Cairo, Cordova, Fez, and Damascus. Western scholarship mostly ignored the great wealth of information on intellectual life in Western Sudan (Henrik Clarke, 1977).

The type of African knowledge, known as heritage knowledge, affirms spirituality as a site of knowing and further argues that knowledge and resistance go hand in hand (King, 2005). Heritage knowledge is also characterized by a philosophy of “world sense,” which is a system of thought and ontologies speaking to the realities and workings of the cosmos, and the nexus of nature, society, and culture. Within African education, the uncertainty of knowing is appreciated along with the power of not knowing. In effect, the fear of not knowing is acceptable and inconsequential (Dei, 2012). Education in Africa exemplified the idea of knowledge as a body of epistemology connecting place, spirit, and body (Denzin et al., 2008). The spiritual is embodied and the learner’s spiritual identities are engaged in education. Spiritual identity is connected to the land or mother earth and one’s inner self or soul and their physical and social surroundings (Dillard, 2000; Dillard et al., 2000).

Post-colonization

In the South during the 1800s, newly emancipated Black students were eager to be educated by Black teachers after experiencing laws that made it illegal for them to learn to read (Anderson, 1988). During this time, there was a deep desire to establish, control, and maintain schools for their Black children and community, also because White people banned Black people from attending their schools. Segregated African American schools were rich in community support and promoted deep parental

investment and engaged, caring faculty (Morrison, 2006; Patterson et al., 2011). The focus of teacher preparation was primarily a drive to establish instruction that emphasized literacy while incorporating communal values (Butchart, 1988; Foster, 1991). Teachers, administrators, and students were all Black, and quickly established schools to educate a large number of students in one room buildings (Murtadha & Watts, 2005). All over the South, schools were established and boards of education were devised to govern, train teachers, and increase the number of Black schools. Teachers were also instructed to go to rural areas to teach students. In 1865, the Freedmen's Bureau became the governing body of the school system (Anderson, 1988). During this time, African American leaders maintained control of policies that governed schools and teacher preparation programs regardless if there was support from the Northern philanthropists or the state and local governments.

Teacher Preparation in Normal Schools

The initiation of segregated normal schools for Whites in the late 1800s was established in Massachusetts and had the primary goal of preparing young women and men to accept independent responsibility for classroom instruction (Skinnell, 2013). However, during this time teaching was thought of as something teachers imposed upon students (Ogren, 2005; Peterson, 2010). In the late 1800s, Edward Sheldon, a superintendent in New York, established a teacher training school that used prescriptive and components of practice-focused methods to prepare several teachers simultaneously (Forzani, 2014; Hollis, 1898). Within this program, there was a consensus on what new teachers need to learn and be able to do. Later in the 19th century, Herbartians recommended that teachers learn five steps of instruction which included: preparation,

synthesis, comparison and abstraction, definition, and practical application (Harper, 1939; McMurry & McMurry, 1897; Ogren, 2005). This group comprised of European trained educators lead by the German philosopher Johann Friedrich Herbart (Hiner, 1971). This became an influential model for approximately ten years. The illustrative lesson also became a tool for training teachers in the late 1800s, which included a combination of observation and discussion (Harper, 1939; Urban et al., 2019). Students also practiced teaching techniques which was followed by debriefing that included a critique on their skills. Hilner (1971) insisted that the American Herbartian movement demonstrates the painful, complex process of transition in educational thought. During the era of Normal Schools, elements of how teachers are prepared today were beginning to be uncovered.

The Commonwealth Teacher Training Initiative

The Commonwealth Teacher Training study, during the 1920s, stands out within this historical context, yet remained a White-only teacher training program with little to no consideration on its impact with Black students. It incorporated over 100 actions that contained every move a teacher might make and every task a teacher might encounter (Charters & Waples, 1929). Examples included planning ways of framing questions to get a longer response from students and strategies on how to select points to emphasize during a class discussion. The Commonwealth teacher training study attempted to identify specific teaching practices believed to create an effective teacher and emphasized those practices during the teacher education program. Some researchers suggest that it is reminiscent of scripted lessons which are utilized in some elementary schools today (Kagan & Tippins, 1992; Parks & Bridges-Rhoads, 2012) and recent efforts to identify

core teaching practices (Dutro & Cartun, 2016). However, this training model did not consider teacher dispositions and their influence on implementing teacher actions. The Commonwealth Teacher Training study provided a scripted approach to teacher preparation. Again, these models were used in segregated White spaces and not on Black children or children of color.

Teacher Preparation Model at Stanford University

The model on how best to prepare teachers continued to evolve in the United States using another segregated White-only initiative. Approximately 40 years after the Commonwealth Teacher training study in the 1960s, researchers at Stanford University developed a similar study in response to the national concern over the value of the U.S. school system and its influences on its global viability (Forzani, 2014). The goal of the Stanford study was to pinpoint the attributes and actions of successful teachers and to support the restructuring of teacher education through a detailed catalog of teaching moves, similar to the list from the Commonwealth Inquiry (Baral et al., 1968). As such, the Stanford catalog, containing hundreds of teaching responsibilities and moves, was used by teacher educators as a comprehensive approach to teacher training and competency-based teacher education (CBTE). Subsequently, CBTE did not become widely used, yet elements have benefited teacher education programs during a time where there was a shift in the field toward more intentional teaching of practice. (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999; Struyven & De Meyst, 2010). One key similarity between competency-based methods and more recent work on core practices is that CBTE focused on teachers' attention on specific teaching activities and used approximations of practice (Kennedy, 1999; Mosley, 2010; Tyminski et al., 2014).

According to Smith et al., when learning to teach, it is not sufficient to learn one particular practice individually because every practice is connected to other teaching practices (Smith et al., 2011). Essentially, it is merging technical skill with professional judgment, and improvisational capability. This sets the Stanford study apart from the Commonwealth training institute in that teacher moves and responsibilities were synthesized rather than kept separate.

***Brown v. Board of Education* Influence on Teacher Preparation**

At this point, teacher preparation engaged teachers who matched the race of their students. This meant that forced segregation by White people created the norm that the race of teachers and students must be the same. However, recent studies have verified how students having the same race teacher can lead to additional academic advantages for students of color (Lindsay & Hart, 2017; Smedley et al., 2001). Yet, it appears that after *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling that enforced the integration of public schools, teacher preparation did not immediately change to prepare teachers to address their racism before educating Black students (Kluger, 2011; Phillip, 1994). As a result, there are several unintended consequences this ruling had on teacher preparation and Black students. Primarily, the schools with majority Black students continued to be intentionally underfunded, forcing Black students to learn with insufficient and inadequate materials (Anyon, 1997). Similar inequities exist among pupil expenditures, as the amount of money spent per child is drastically different depending on where the child lives and the race of the child (Kozol, 2012). This perpetuated the opportunity gap that has continuously plagued Black and Latinx students. According to Darling-Hammond (2015) and other scholars, the opportunity gap is the accumulation of

differences in access to key educational resources such as highly qualified teachers, educational materials, and a high-quality curriculum (Darling-Hammond, 2015, p. 28; Haberman, 2005; Milner, 2009). Another devastating change, once students began to integrate, was Blacks students' intellectual capacity and overall intelligence were questioned by their new White teachers and administrators (Hudson & Holmes, 1994; Kluger, 2011). Soon there was widespread acceptance that Black students were intellectually inferior to White students, which ultimately led to the devastating socio-emotional consequence on Black students (Haycock & Navarro, 1988). This was followed by lowered academic expectations White teachers had for Black students whom they did not want in their schools in the first place. Ongoing racial harassment from White students, coupled with negativity from racist White teachers, consequently led to Black students underperforming in the areas of literacy and mathematics (Brown, 2015; Kunjufu, 1991; Phillip, 1994). Teachers were not prepared to teach Black students nor address their racism, which ultimately had negative influences on the educational outcomes of Black students. The dissonance occurred when they went from learning about themselves in the segregated school, then only learning through a white washed curriculum in an integrated school.

Additionally, the implementation of *Brown v. Board of Education* left a lasting impact on Black teachers. Tens of thousands of Black educators all over the United States experienced massive layoffs between 1954 and 1965 (Hudson & Holmes, 1994; King, 1993; Madkins, 2011). The National Education Association estimated that approximately 5,000, or two-thirds of Black teachers, would lose their jobs among the 11 Southern states (Tillman, 2004). Black teachers were not prepared to teach White students and

were selected for all White schools based on their skin complexion (Hudson & Holmes, 1994). Fairer skinned teachers and former principals from predominately Black schools were forced into all-White schools and were demoted in pay and position. Additionally, the most effective Black teachers were forced to all-White schools, therefore leaving a huge deficit in the Black teaching population that remained. The public schools with majority Black students were then staffed with the less effective Black teachers. Tillman (2004) suggested *Brown v. Board of Education* marked the beginning of Black student underachievement given that they were presented with an inferior education. The lasting effects of *Brown v. Board* exist today with the widening of the opportunity gap with Black students (Smedley et al., 2001). Smedley et al. argued that the school experiences for Black students in the United States continue to be one of the most unequal in the industrialized world, especially as students receive radically different educational opportunities based on their social status. In contrast, successful school systems around the world's urban centers develop teachers to educate students from different cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds, with success (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Even though *Brown v. Board* attempted to provide all students with equal access to educational resources in a diverse school setting, today, schools serving a larger number of students of color have considerably fewer resources than schools serving mostly White students (Smedley et al., 2001) and also provided with underqualified teachers (Peske & Haycock, 2006). In sum, Black educators were effective and present during the educational equity agenda in the United States given their expansive child-centered perspective, yet these voices were perpetually silenced (Walker, 2013).

White Supremacy in Schools

During the 1960s, significant challenges to the current racial paradigm included minoritized communities rising up refusing to be a permanent underclass (Bonilla-Silva, 2001). In response to this refusal, the following two decades were marked by a reformation of whiteness from a symbol of superiority to one of normality yet remained socially dominant (Omi & Winant, 2014). This hegemonic structuring of Whiteness concentrated racial power relations within the education system which served to naturalize racial stratification where Whites remained at the top of the hierarchy (Doane & Bonilla-Silva, 2003). As such, there is a persistence of White supremacy through a forceful denial that racism is a pertinent social issue (Cabrera, 2014) and a permanent part of society (Bell, 2018).

As racism evolved within society, public schools both in K-12 and on college campuses became sites of White normalization and disruption (Cabrera, 2014). In literature, this contested space focused on the experiences of students of color (Allen et al., 1991; Feagin et al., 2014). However, less common are examinations of how White students see and experience race throughout K-12 and college (Cabrera, 2012), and even less literature around the racial experiences of White men (Kendall, 2012).

Manifestations of racism were also occurring publicly and in private White spaces, where Whites using the n-word and other racist jokes became the norm (Picca & Feagin, 2007). On college campuses, the ability of White students to racially self-segregate has been related to a disturbing trend of racist parties where students dress in costumes informed by racial stereotypes (Wise, 2007). Some racist parties include Latinx stereotypes (Georgevich, 2007). For example, White students at a university in the southwestern region of the United States had a “South of the Border” themed party where many White

females dressed as pregnant maids. Essentially, the manifestations of White privilege allow White students to enact racist stereotypes in private spaces separate from their minoritized peers (Chesler et al., 2005). Thus, there is a need to address race within a University-based teacher preparation, especially among White teacher candidates.

Goal-Oriented Teacher Preparation

Soon after *Brown v. Board of Education* and the Commonwealth teacher training initiative, teacher preparation became more goal-oriented. There was an increased emphasis to train teachers so that all students were pushed to use critical thinking skills (Mahan, 1982; Schoenfeld, 2010) but it was void of addressing racism within teacher training programs. The goals for teachers also changed where teacher preparation shifted its focus from the traditional idea of what teachers should know and to teachers as reflective professionals who educated students within their communities using problem solving and other skills necessary to compete with the new employment opportunities (Cochran-Smith et al., 2013). Within this renewed perspective, learning to teach was recognized as a complicated and rigorous academic journey that transpired throughout the entire career of a teacher, in addition to the teacher preparation that incorporated the fundamentals to teaching (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). This is also coupled with an effective induction to teaching and ongoing mentoring support (Bastian & Marks, 2017; Campbell & Brummett, 2007; Martinez, 2007). Preparing teachers to become professional educators is recognized as a lifelong journey, not a series of tasks to accomplish.

Teacher Preparation and Accountability

Teacher preparation continued to evolve to include oversight to teacher quality and accountability, shifting perceptions of what students need to know to be successful in

the world, as well as how students learn (Cochran-Smith et al., 2013; Furlong et al., 2013). Recent research has called for an evaluation of TPP (Cash, 2016; Etscheidt et al., 2012; Feuer et al., 2013; Goldhaber et al., 2017) in response to federal and state policies to hold them accountable for developing effective teachers (Henry et al., 2012).

Traditional TPP in the United States typically occurs through a university where the teacher candidate experiences an average of four years of instruction followed by an induction into a preservice summer training (Bastian & Marks, 2017; Goldhaber et al., 2017). They are accredited by the state, and those who graduated from accredited programs are eligible to become teachers (Freeman et al., 2014; Koedel et al., 2015). The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) develops the standards used in the United States.

However, the literature reveals that there are obstacles to conducting formative assessments to hold TPP accountable (Cash, 2016; Steadman & Evans, 2014). Cash (2016) recommended the use of quantitative and qualitative methods to identify aspects of TPP that have the most influence on retention and performance in the classroom. Bastian and Marks (2017) shared a common concern especially with the performance and retention of new teachers. More specifically, in the southeast state where this study was done, \$7.7 million from Race to the Top funds was allocated to establish the New Teachers Support Program (NTSP) (Bastian & Marks, 2017). This program was implemented by the public university system and targeted at low performing schools. Researchers found that the TPP that included more intensive participation and coaching yielded more positive results. Within the teacher preparation program, improvements in the capacity to assess and improve programs appear to be a need.

Teacher Preparation and Diversity

The growing racially diverse student population further exposed White supremacy in education and the increases in social and school inequalities (Peske & Haycock, 2006; Royce, 2009; Smedley et al., 2001). As a result, teacher preparation and certification programs became politicized as well as the systems that oversee programs and measure effectiveness (Coggshall et al., 2012; Henry et al., 2012). Furthermore, some argue that the political nature of teacher education in the United States has illuminated how the dominant culture served to support particular concerns and perspectives such as technical or procedural aspects of teaching (Beyer et al., 2018). Yet, the possibility of teaching education as a mechanism of disrupting social reproduction has become more apparent.

As states' immigration patterns increased, so did the institutionalized racism and marginalization of underrepresented groups (Memmi, 2000; Patel, 2012). As a result, diversity and inequality issues were exposed to education policy and practice (Kumashiro, 2009). This led to the emergence of a revitalized civil rights movement to combat the policies that have worked against public education and supports equitable access to quality education (Kumar & Waymack, 2014; Zeichner, 2010). This echoed within the criticism of social justice approaches to teacher preparation and created a growing burden to focus solely on the facets of teacher preparation associated with student test scores (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015; Kim, 2011). Teacher preparation that also prepares teachers to concentrate on student test scores appears to be an unintended consequence.

Teacher Preparation and Identity

A teacher candidate's understanding of their belief structures and teaching styles is a component of an effective teacher preparation program (T. A. Conklin, 2013). The personal identity of the teacher candidate plays an important role in the educator's long-term development and effectiveness (Hong, 2010). One such development strategy includes reflection and analysis of practice, which are not only helpful for the teacher candidates but develop habits that encourage continual development (Santagata et al., 2018). TPPs that incorporate identity development and personal exploration of experiences in content areas have the potential to yield a more prepared educator (Carrier et al., 2017).

Cultural identity mismatch should also be addressed during teacher preparation, given the differences in identity between teachers and students (NCES, 2020). One study suggested that the educational attainment of its North American Aboriginal students was influenced by the cultural mismatch of their teachers (Fryberg et al., 2013). This study proposed that high cultural identification and confidence can positively influence the education results of Aboriginal students. However, if that student has low levels of cultural identification and confidence, they are vulnerable to a culturally mismatched teacher (Fryberg et al., 2013).

Targeting mentoring during TPP and long-term professional development have been cited influencing positive classroom outcomes (Stanulis et al., 2012). Teachers in this study did teach differently as a result of the mentoring they received. Another study indicates that teacher preparation experiences focused on methodical reflection and analysis create opportunities for teachers to learn through experiences and develop characteristics of learning through experiences (Santagata et al., 2018). Teacher

preparation has become more than what can occur during the coursework but has become a more substantial trajectory of professional development experiences.

Teacher Preparation and Student Teaching

Within the teacher preparation model, several conflicting ideas regarding student teaching arose within the literature. More specifically, questions arose about what and how student teaching experiences support pre-service teacher development. There is a disproportionate emphasis on belief and attitude change of the developing teacher (Anderson & Stillman, 2013). Additionally, there is little evidence TPP develops the teaching practice (Agarwal et al., 2010; Anderson & Stillman, 2013). However, researchers also determined that professional judgment in new teachers was a skill developed during student teaching rather than in course work (Bangel et al., 2006; Scales et al., 2018). At times, student teaching can be an important development tool. Yet, skills may not always be enacted in the classroom.

Teacher preparation programs have also been centered on effective teaching skills that include student engagement. As it pertains to inclusion, the literature suggests that effective inclusionary practices are part of their epistemological beliefs of the teachers toward their students (Jordan et al., 2009). Since students are entering the classroom with a variety of ability levels (Brunsting et al., 2014), it might benefit TPPs to include inclusive classroom practices.

Ultimately, the literature suggests that teacher preparation should include a rich and broad curriculum, culturally and community responsive teaching (Boaler, 2002; Gay, 2002), and prepare teachers to educate all children (Zeichner, 2017). Researchers argued that the future directions of teacher education are based on the re-

conceptualization of teaching (Grossman et al., 2009). This includes a revitalization of student teaching experiences to encourage teacher educators to include pedagogies of reflection (Acquah & Commins, 2015) and investigation (Zhang & Zeller, 2016).

Grossman et al. (2009) suggested that to make this change, teacher educators will need to unpack and undo historical divisions that underlie the education of teachers. The curricular divide between foundations and methods courses and the separation between university and schools are examples of these divisions. Therefore, the literature suggests that TPPs be organized around a core set of practices in which knowledge (Fairbanks et al., 2010), skill (Lautenbach, 2019), and professional identity (Bangel et al., 2006) are developed in the process of learning the profession of teaching.

Practice-Based Teacher Preparation

Three core concepts within the practice-based teaching model recommend teacher-candidates comprehend the intricate practice of teaching that includes the following: representation of practice, decomposition of practice, and approximation of practice (Grossman et al., 2009). Representation of practice is described as the various techniques practice is represented in teacher education programs (Grossman et al., 2009; Tyminski et al., 2014). Examples of representation include incorporating videos, case studies, and modeling lesson plans and instruction (Borko et al., 2011). Representation provides the teacher candidates with examples of the professional aspects of teaching. The decomposition of practices essentially disassembles practices into basic ideas to become more easily digestible (Grossman et al., 2009; Janssen et al., 2015). It allows teacher educators and teacher candidates to identify basic pedagogical practices. Grossman et al.'s (2009) examples include understanding how to ask a variety of

questions, how to plan, and how to manage transitions from one activity to the next. Approximation of practices is the space where teacher candidates rehearse a pedagogical skill and then receive specific feedback on how they demonstrated the skills (Grossman, 2010; Schutz et al., 2019). For example, Grossman (2010) shared a teacher candidate could practice the skill of leading a classroom discussion. During approximation of practice, the teacher candidate would rehearse and receive specific feedback on how they led a classroom discussion. Essentially, practice-based teacher education programs provide a variety of opportunities for teacher candidates to begin to comprehend how complex teaching remains while incorporating what they are learning as they translate theories into practice. Ultimately, practice-based teaching has been linked to student achievement. The Boston Teacher Residency utilizes practice-based teaching in their teacher education program. This study found that over time, the graduates of this program outperformed veteran teachers and students saw increased academic gains (Papay et al., 2011). The core concepts of practice-based teaching support teachers putting what they are learning into practice.

The shift toward practice-based teacher educations appears to be more widely accepted as a necessary focus for professional preparation to become an enactment of teaching practice (Janssen et al., 2015). Yet, there are still competing viewpoints of learning to teach (Gallimore et al., 2009) and learning in a practice. Education reformers are continuously and increasingly calling for the implementation of practice-based approaches to teacher preparation, specifically highlighting teacher identity (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011) and centering core practices (Dutro & Cartun, 2016; Philip et al., 2019). However, Philip et al. (2019) suggested that there is a risk to centering teacher education

around core practices that could lead to sidelining equity and justice. Recent work to pinpoint the core teaching practices that should be included in the teacher education curriculum is an established tradition of reform in American teacher education (Zeichner, 2012). Zeichner (2012) argued that included within the development of practice-based teaching should be the incorporation of skills that are evidence-based (King, 2014), adaptable, maintainable, and do not discount significant aspects of good teaching (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Zeichner, 2012). Yet, focusing on teachers' use of core practices is significant when preparing teachers using practice-based teaching methods (Forzani, 2014).

Applying Equity in Teacher Preparation Programs

The opportunity gap is the accumulation of differences in access to key educational resources such as highly qualified teachers, educational materials, and a high-quality curriculum (Darling-Hammond, 2015, p. 28; Haberman, 2005). Therefore, equitable teaching practices can be one critical remedy to the flawed educational system rooted in systemic racism toward Black and Latinx students (DiAngelo & Dyson, 2018). When presented in the literature, equity is also within the umbrella of social justice (Agarwal et al., 2010), which encompasses equity pedagogy (McGee Banks & Banks, 1995; Schmeichel, 2012), culturally relevant teaching (G. Ladson-Billings, 1995), and culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2002).

Recently, there have been questions on whether public education can provide equitable opportunities to Black and Brown children. Specifically, equity in public school funding is a critical issue facing all communities and has been addressed by the courts across the country (Verstegen, 2015). Historically, schools with majority Black and

Brown students have been severely underfunded in comparison to majority White public schools (Darling-Hammond, 2015; Kozol, 2012) which has widened the opportunity gap for Black and Brown students. Inequity not only appears in teaching practices but also in access to school funding.

Policy initiatives within the United States have attempted to address the persistent opportunity gaps by providing guidelines on how to implement equity in education. The passage of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) represents an opportunity for the federal government, states, districts, and schools to equitably design education systems to ensure that Black and Brown students who have been historically marginalized by the same education systems receive an education that prepares them for the demands of the 21st century (Cook-Harvey et al., 2016; Noguera, 2016). ESSA has many provisions that have the potential to advance equity in the United States for students of color. The major provisions included: 1) access to learning opportunities focused on higher-order thinking skills; 2) multiple measures of equity; 3) resource equity; and 4) evidence-based interventions (Cook-Harvey et al., 2016). Applying equity in a teacher preparation program appears to require a systemic approach.

The Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) is a non-government accrediting body within teacher education. Although established in 1954, CAEP recently recognized that eliminating disparities in education opportunities depends on improving teaching quality (*History of CAEP - Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation*, n.d.). The Alliance for Excellent Education, for example, believes that teacher preparation programs that align with CAEP standards are critical to ensuring teachers can enable a diverse student body to meet 21st century standards of learning.

However, professional development needs, contextual factors, and student-oriented challenges have the potential to affect the extent to which accredited institutions address diversity (Alvarez McHatton et al., 2009). Additionally, the incorporation of diversity within CAEP may be present, yet its sufficiency is also questioned (Akiba et al., 2010). Although standards exist to suggest teachers educate students equitably, the degree to which that is effective and sufficient is unclear.

Ethnic Diversity of Student Population

As it stands, the majority of teachers in the United States are middle-class, monolingual White women (Gershenson et al., 2016) yet the student population is vastly different culturally, ethnically, and linguistically (Okhremtchouk et al., 2020). As teacher preparation evolves to prepare teachers for diverse classroom settings, the need for teacher preparation training that focuses on equity is becoming necessary (Banks et al., 2001; Causey et al., 2000; King & Butler, 2015; Verba & Orren, 1985). Still, TPP has yet to sufficiently prepare teacher candidates teaching and learning skills to meet the academic and socio-emotional needs of the diverse student population (Williams et al., 2019).

According to *Breaking the Link*, a recent diversity report including 2019 data from the Southeastern city in this study, indicated that 73% of enrolled public-school students are of color. This is an increase of 1% in the last year. When examining the data based on school poverty and race, 59% of students in low-poverty schools are White. However, in high-poverty schools, 87% of students are Black and Hispanic. Essentially, as school poverty level increases, the percentage of Black and Hispanic students increases as well. Still, less than 6% of students in high-poverty schools are White. The

Breaking the Link report of 2018 indicated that the majority of students in the same Southeastern school district scoring below proficiency on the end of grade tests were students of color and impoverished. As such, this Southeastern city school system has expressed the desire to reduce the concentration of poverty in the schools as well as address systemic segregation and racial isolation. Some initiatives include expanding school options to take in more magnet programs. Ultimately, this school district also reassigned communities to desegregate schools. Nevertheless, the growing racial, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity within this Southeastern city further elevates the need to incorporate equitable teaching practices.

Equity Within Coursework

Consequently courses within teacher education programs nationwide may be lacking in the area of equity. Institutions seem to vary on the type of courses they offer that would include some form of multicultural education or equity (King & Butler, 2015). Furthermore, teacher preparation programs in the Southeastern state studied are not providing multicultural courses for their pre-service teachers, and novice teachers are lacking the ability to produce diverse learning environments for students of color competently (Williams III & Glass, 2019). This study also suggested that teacher preparation programs may be ineffective in preparing teacher candidates to understand how race impacts the classroom. Consequently, teacher preparation programs that do not offer courses that include equity have the potential to create a teacher unable to teach in an equitable way.

Considering the critical issues of disproportionality and the increasing diversity of the student population, it appears to be clearer that teachers be prepared to critically

scrutinize, contemplate, and respond to practices for diverse learners (Sobel et al., 2011). A teacher candidate's cultural capacity and responsiveness are continual beyond multicultural education and education course centered on equity, yet are also influenced by the experiences of the teacher candidate (Williams et al., 2019). Williams et al. suggested that teacher candidates be confronted with issues of equity and social justice during their teacher education coursework for them to critically reflect on their teaching practice, yet equity-oriented education has the potential to be a complex, tricky, and interactive practice (Conklin & Hughes, 2016).

Discussions about practice-based teaching and teacher education have identified a lack of attention to equity and social justice (Kavanagh & Danielson, 2019). Kavanagh and Danielson's (2019) study examined teacher education coursework for new elementary school teachers in addition to their reflections about their experiences. This study noted that practice-based teacher education was present in the lesson planning for equity, but not in the enactment of practice. They also noted that the teachers examined in the study approached teacher education very differently, which manifested in how the teacher candidates approached equitable practice. Another study interviewed beginning teachers in an induction program who were forced to teach their content using equity. The results of the study showed that their program insufficiently taught them how to teach equitably, yet school communities and teacher education experiences had a greater influence on their use of equity within their content (Bianchini & Brenner, 2010). Bringing equity into coursework appears to have mixed results given the degree to which teachers candidates enact what they learn and their environment. Yet, little research and progress have been found to reconcile the concern of merging equity in practice-based

teacher education (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016; Sleeter, 2008). Essentially, putting equity at the center of teacher preparation (Nieto, 2000) requires an extreme reform of the goals, commitments, and arrangements (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016).

Teacher Candidates Experience with Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2002) offers practical and theoretical principles for becoming a successful teacher of diverse students (Warren, 2018). A teacher preparation program in the western United States examined how they model culturally responsive practices. The results of this evaluation indicated a lack of community-based learning experiences and a narrow understanding of social justice and diversity in education (Sobel et al., 2011). Teacher educators in this study also examined their knowledge and understanding of equity which appears to be essential when evaluating their responses to the teacher preparation programmatic. However, teacher educators in an urban teacher education program had different outcomes when analyzing components of their program that focused on social justice and equity. Conklin and Hughes (2016) found several practices as a result of their study. The analysis revealed that when the teacher candidates lived experiences were honored, the goal of equitable teaching and learning was clearly defined and demonstrated and the teacher candidates were provided with multiple perspectives of viewing the world (Conklin & Hughes, 2016). Equity in culturally responsive practices can influence the teacher candidates' instructional decision making and their perceptions of how instructional choices can influence diverse learners (Lawrence et al., 2020). This qualitative study gathered data from teacher candidates' response to a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The results revealed those teacher candidates who display culturally responsive practices in

their classrooms also possess the ability to self-assess their decision-making that shapes their overall equitable classroom practices. Equity within culturally responsive pedagogy can potentially lead to positive practices with the teacher candidates.

Equity Through Critical Reflection

Critical reflection appears to be a teaching practice readily used by TPP that incorporates equity (Williams et al., 2019). In this narrative study, a teacher candidate engaged in critical reflection as it pertained to her making connections between her classroom and her coursework that incorporated equity. The analysis suggested that critically-oriented teacher education programs might more intentionally make space for narrative reflection that connects to pedagogical practices (Vlach et al., 2019). Critical reflection seems to promote equity in a deliberate manner.

At a time where there is a focus on the importance of Black lives as a result of critical awareness of the impacts of hundreds of years of brutality, it is also crucial to help all educators recognize that Black minds also matter. Black intellect requires attention and support from teachers at all levels (Howard, 2016). Therefore, there needs to be an unapologetic and deliberate focus on the most scrutinized and marginalized students in schools (Aponte, 2018; Darling-Hammond, 2015). To critically address the issues of equity throughout the educational system, teachers may also benefit from critically addressing their race, class, privilege, and whiteness in education (C. E. Sleeter, 2016).

Contextualizing Enactment of Equity in Pedagogy

Teaching Toward Equity

Equity in teaching appears to be more prevalent when teachers orient themselves around social justice in teaching. The beginning steps of teaching toward equity involves exploring the self. Teacher candidates work towards equity when they first work inward to explore their own cultural identities (Hong, 2010; Nieto, 2000). Whipp (2013) identified several factors that influence teachers to enact social justice pedagogy. Primarily, the teacher candidates engaged in cross-cultural experiences before and during the teacher preparation program. Secondly, the coursework and field experiences incorporated challenging materials that addressed the teacher candidates' biases and dispositions. According to Cohen and Lotan (1995), teachers must unpack these biases to work towards believing that all students can learn (Cohen & Lotan, 1995). And third, teacher candidates engaged in one year of ongoing support from their teacher educators (Whipp, 2013). The benefits of ongoing support toward teaching with equity were also demonstrated in the next study. This study examined the ability of science teachers to enact learned equitable teaching strategies given a combination of supports that included cooperating teacher and peer group support (Scantlebury & Kahle, 1993). The result showed that new teachers were able to enact equitable teaching strategies and were more successful in doing so when they had support from cooperating teachers who were passionate about equity. Yet, investigating equity in teaching must emphasize the specific practices performed in the classroom (Boaler, 2002). Creating learning environments that support all students is a significant outcome of these factors (Moschkovich, 2013) in addition to dismantling stereotypes and cultural beliefs (Scantlebury & Kahle, 1993). A study about teacher beliefs and their practices concerning equitable opportunities for students with different ability levels yielded similar results. Equitable teaching practices

consider each student's difference and those differences inform instruction (Morales, 2011). The study concluded that teaching that includes using varied pedagogical practices given the students' abilities can encourage equitable teaching practices. Furthermore, Morales (2011) suggested that teacher education programs should include opportunities for teachers to reflect on their beliefs about how differently-abled students learn and still deserve sound pedagogy to ensure access to equitable teaching.

Another qualitative study found that teachers attempt to gain an understanding of equity from their students correlated to their efforts to incorporate equity in their teaching (Bianchini & Brenner, 2010). This can work in conjunction with meaningful engagement with the local community (Arnold et al., 2013; Beck & Kosnik, 2001) while providing opportunities to connect with the global community (Lehman et al., 2010). Subsequently, studies have shown a correlation exists between teacher candidate engagement with the school community, the empathy they gain for their students (Zeichner, 2017), and their willingness to teach toward equity (Dyches & Boyd, 2017).

However, a model to assess progress toward equity might also be helpful. In one case study, data was analyzed using Kahle's (1998) equity metric to determine progress toward equity using a range of indicators and categories including access to, retention in, and achievement in quality science education (Hewson et al., 2001). The results revealed that the culture and climate of schools are a determining factor toward a teaching candidate's progress toward equity. Another notable paradigm is Shulman's Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK). PCK combines with equity to create Social Justice Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (SJPACK), an adaption of Shulmans PCK. The goal with SPCK is to establish a space for social justice and equity within TPP (Dyches

& Boyd, 2017). According to Dyches and Boyd (2017), the SJPACK model has three particular domains: social justice knowledge, Social Justice Pedagogical Knowledge, and Social Justice Content knowledge. The SJPACK model elevates social justice knowledge as the core component of the domain that essentially drives all pedagogical content knowledge practices. Essentially, Dyches and Boyd argued that PCK should not be separated from social justice knowledge.

Conversely, teaching toward equity might not be possible without the systemic restructuring of the classroom. Lotan (2006) suggested a systemic approach toward equitable teaching through recreating curriculums, revising instruction techniques, and rethinking assessments so that they accurately measure the broad range of intellectual diversity found in classrooms. However, such reforms can be unsuccessful unless educators are willing to explore the root causes of underachievement among low-income students and ethnically diverse students (García & Guerra, 2004). One instructional concept is the student-centered inquiry-based model (Bianchini & Cavazos, 2007). In this study, the researcher used hierarchical linear models (Hofmann, 1997; Raudenbush, 1988) to determine the degree to which the inquiry-based teacher practices encouraged academic achievement among all students and reduced achievement gaps among ethnically, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse students. The results implied that teacher practices that improve overall academic achievement at the same time are as likely to influence greater inequities among diverse students and therefore widening the achievement gap (Secker, 2002). Enacting best teaching practices, at times, might not be equitable. Yet, the central commitment to reform efforts appears to emphasize that educators must believe that all students regardless of ethnicity, culture, gender, and

socioeconomic status are capable of understanding the content. (Hewson et al., 2001).

Notwithstanding, a systemic approach to reforming the classroom may be what is necessary to shift into all teacher candidates teaching toward equity (Lotan, 2006). Lotan (2006) found, for example, that teachers' efforts to learn about equity from their students connected to their attempts to inquire into their practice.

Teacher Perceptions

The way teachers perceive and convey their understanding has been revealed in different ways. As it pertains to equity, one study established a baseline of information illustrating undergraduate preservice teachers' initial perceptions toward equity in education as during their final two years of their undergraduate TPP (McShay, 2000). The results of the study indicated that pre-service teachers' initial perceptions of culture, discrimination, and the historical experiences of marginalized people of color are important factors that contribute to their perceptions and understanding of equity.

However, the study also found that preservice teachers' initial perceptions of the nature of culture and historical roots of racism may affect their preliminary perceptions of equity in education more than their perceptions of the nature and impact of discrimination and of socioeconomic class (McShay, 2000). Another study shared four elementary teacher candidates' understanding of how to teach diverse students (Whitesides & Beck, 2020). The participants developed a broader view of data by the end of their courses but often did not identify inequitable data practices, like tracking. This illustrates that their beliefs and practices are not aligned. A different study evaluated students and teacher perceptions of two differently organized learning environments (Mameli et al., 2020). The study demonstrated that teachers tend to emphasize their capacity to foster agency,

responsibility, and equity both in teacher and student-centered activities. Coady et al (2016) presented a mixed-methods study to address the perceptions of graduates of a TPP that included second language training. Their study found that when general education teachers were expected to differentiate instruction for primary-grade students with diverse learning needs, their perceptions of differentiated instruction yielded nonspecific accommodation strategies and just-in-time scaffolding techniques (Coady et al., 2016). It appears that teachers' perceptions play a key role in how they process and implement their development.

Problem of Enactment

More recent studies elaborate on the characteristics of effective TPP. One key is to view the teacher as an adult learner in a professional development setting when adult learning occurs (Lawler, 2003). The practice-based approach to preparing coursework for teachers can advance professional development beyond the classroom setting (Ball et al., 2009). However, the development and sound pedagogical practices the teacher candidates learn in the classroom can be quenched under the social and emotional demands of teaching (Roeser et al., 2012). Enacting social justice-oriented pedagogical practices as a new teacher can be complex, especially when the teacher is within a controlled traditional school environment (Strom & Martin, 2015). It can also be difficult when new teachers struggle with enacting social justice, given their expectations to do so in the same way as modeled during their teacher education program (Agarwal et al., 2010). The problem of enactment remains a concern when incorporating equity.

One case study explored new teachers' implementation of professional judgment (Scales et al., 2018). The study determined that teachers use these skills primarily in

student teaching rather than from coursework. The results conclude an increased likelihood of enactment if the skill is practiced outside the university setting. Lee (2018) argued that connecting teacher preparation and equitable pedagogical training within the urban context results in positive outcomes for teachers. In Lee's study, teacher candidates were provided with culturally positioned pedagogical development within their future urban classroom. As a result, teacher candidates were more likely to exhibit higher levels of self-efficacy, agency, and confidence (Lee, 2018). Schiera's (2019) study examined the relationship between pre-service teachers learning critical pedagogical tools around equity and the problem of enacting the learning in the classroom. After this study explored practitioner research centered around the intersection of justice and practice, three findings surfaced. The problem of enactment could be rooted in how teachers conceptualized professional visions toward the bigger picture, how teachers grapple with the complexities of teaching, and how being positioned as a new teacher influenced their readiness to integrate justice and practice (Schiera, 2019). Additionally, new teachers in an induction program encounter similar concerns when attempting to enact equitable teaching practices. Bianchini and Brenner (2010) studied two math and science teachers in an induction program. The teachers viewed their experiences as adding little to how to teach toward equity. More specifically, the teachers noted that their previous teacher education in conjunction with school community experiences as more influential towards them learning how to teach equitably (Bianchini & Brenner, 2010).

Literature reveals that cooperative and collaborative learning yield mixed results in increasing the likelihood of teachers enacting sound pedagogy. Although cooperative learning has been cited increasing educational attainment among K-12 students (Nichols,

1996; Slavin, 1984; Wyk, 2012), the results on new teachers can vary. In this qualitative study, interview data showed that even though teachers had positive experiences with cooperative learning, they had challenges implementing it in their classroom (Gillies & Boyle, 2010). Some concerns Gillies and Boyle (2010) found included teachers having issues with time management and teachers having concerns planning cooperative learning. Literature has shown that collaboration is also significant to professional learning communities (Cosner, 2011; Morken et al., 2007; Musanti & Pence, 2010), especially as teachers can experience some form of isolation. Lumpe (2007) claimed that when professional development is rooted at the school-building level about significant topics, teachers are likely to implement said development. Collaboration has the potential to create a sense of collective efficacy and a positive professional environment (Bandura, 2010; Lumpe, 2007).

Problems of enactment may also occur when the root causes behind underperforming students are not addressed. García and Guerra (2004) noted that reform efforts are unsuccessful because educators fail to address the root causes of why students who are racially and ethnically diverse and students from low-income backgrounds are not finding success in schools. Often, teachers locate the problem with the students looking outward toward their family and communities but fail to look within to address biases and deficit mindsets (Battey & Franke, 2015; García & Guerra, 2004). This deficit mindset is not new but has existed in schools for a long time. As mentioned earlier, *Brown v. Board of Education* forced Black students into schools where they were deemed intellectually inferior (Tillman, 2004). When enacting equitable teaching practices

teachers should work toward equal status, which creates balanced interaction among a variety of students (Lotan, 2006).

The literature suggests that teachers are central to education reform, therefore, they need more effective and sustainable opportunities to learn to teach (Beavers, 2009; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999). Shulman (1986) highlighted the importance of an educator to not only be well versed in the content but have the best teaching practices to share that knowledge with their students. Cochran et al. (1993) expanded on Shulman's research by emphasizing knowing and understanding as an active process. Teachers not only need to know the content and how to teach the content but should know their students and the environmental context from which teaching and learning takes place (Cochran et al., 1993). Tabacnick and Zeichner (1984) highlighted the significance of teacher candidates taking an active role in their preparation. However, what they did not include are the challenges that lie in preparing teachers for different environmental contexts and students of different backgrounds (Tabacnick & Zeichner, 1984).

A Case for Methodology

This review of literature explored the many shifts and changes in teacher preparation that included: a) pedagogy within Native and African American cultures, b) scripted approaches to teacher preparation, c) practice-based TPP, and d) equity within TPP. The literature leaves the university-based TPP with the task of merging equity within a practice-based teaching model to support enactment by the teacher-candidate once they enter the classroom. The TPP, in alignment with the review of literature, must be able to prepare teachers for diverse students within the context of equity and social justice.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

The purpose of this study was to engage in a constructivist approach to explore teacher perceptions of equity and social justice practices in a teacher preparation program. This research centered on how teacher candidates might acquire knowledge of equity and the potential to enact it during their student teaching.

The research question of this study asked participants to share their journey of incorporating equity and social justice during their student teaching and explored how a teacher preparation program addressed equity and social justice. The data for this study was collected through obtaining responses to a questionnaire, followed by a virtual interview. Memos were completed throughout this process. Through the data of this specific group of participants, suggestions will be given on how equity and social justice can be enacted by teacher candidates based on courses offered by a university-based teacher preparation program.

A qualitative case study guided the design of this study. Based on the seminal work of Saldaña (2011), a qualitative case study allowed the researcher to develop an in-depth understanding of a particular case, within a real-life, contemporary setting, such as equity in a practice-based teacher education program (Yin, 2014). This methodological design allowed this study to explore the teacher candidates' perceptions of equity and social justice in a teacher preparation program and their attempts to enact equitable teaching practices during student teaching. These teachers were former students of faculty in a pilot study where they were all exposed to equitable teaching practices during the TPP. It also explored issues of race, class, and privilege (Bell, 2018; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Interview protocols, informed and revised by the pilot study, created the

initial foundational understanding of the journey participants take toward incorporating equitable teaching practices within a practice-based teaching format. Participants' responses were analyzed and synthesized given the literature on equity and practice-based teaching to determine how to effectively incorporate equity in a practice-based teaching format.

The chapter begins with an overview of the qualitative research design. An overview of the population and sample for the study is discussed to provide a detailed description and rationale for the intentional selection of the participants. The plan for a pilot study is explained in this chapter to prove the researcher had an opportunity to test the interview protocol for comprehensiveness and reliability. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the data collection, analysis procedures, protocols, and an explanation of the instrument.

Design

This study was informed by a qualitative research design. The holistic approach to case studies, per Yin (2009) and Stake (1995), lends itself to understanding teacher candidates using equity within a teacher preparation program through an analysis of themes that emerged from a selection of teacher candidates. Seminal contributions from Straus and Glasser, and later Merriam and Tisdell, qualitative case study approach is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon or case within its real-life contexts (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Yin, 2014). Incorporating Stake's (2005) focus on pinpointing a specific case, this study pinpointed teacher candidates from a specific teacher preparation program. This study's research design utilized a qualitative case study to explore how teacher candidates use equitable teaching practices in their classrooms.

The design of this study was guided by the procedural approach as outlined in Merriam and Tisdell (2015), Stake (1995), and Yin (2009).

Qualitative Case study, instructed by Creswell and Poth (2016), is a method of analysis and allowed this study to explore how a teacher preparation program addresses equity and social justice in their courses. The research also explored how social justice and equity are being enacted by teacher candidates during student teaching. It finally explored what the teacher candidates used from the TPP that helped them enact equity and social justice in their student teaching. This design will not only reveals lessons learned from teacher candidates within a TPP but provides suggestions on how equity and social justice can be enacted based on courses offered by a teacher preparation program

Research Context

Community

The settings for which the teacher candidates are being developed to teach include racially, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse students in urban settings. According to the seminal work of Milner (2012), *urban* can be classified into the following three categories: urban intensive, urban emergent, and urban characteristic. Urban intensive denotes schools located in large cities. Urban emergent is schools located in large cities but not as large as the cities located in urban intensive. Urban emergent also experiences similar hardships and urban intensive cities. Urban characteristics are schools not located in large metropolitan cities but have a growing number of bilingual people facing marginalization within their community. As such, the location of this study is an urban emergent city where teacher candidates teach in both urban emergent and

urban characteristic settings. The city population is about 885,708 people according to estimates by the U.S. Census Bureau (*U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts*, n.d.).

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier in literature, the growing diverse student populations have exposed racism and White supremacy in education where equity and social justice needs to be addressed in TPP, especially given the racial identity of the majority of the teaching force which is White and female (Cash, 2016; Coggshall et al., 2012).

The University

The setting of this study was a southeastern university located in an urban emergent city. Approximately 33% of the students are racially minoritized and approximately 1,997 students are international. It is considered an urban research institution and is the largest institution of higher education in its region, enrolling almost 30,000 students.

The Teacher Preparation Program

The setting of the TPP in this study is a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education program. This program qualifies graduates for Standard Professional 1 Professional Educator's License in K-6 Elementary Education. Graduates of this program are prepared to meet the Southeastern states' professional teaching standards. Graduates of this program have specific coursework and student teaching experiences in a variety of settings to learn and apply evidence-based knowledge and practices in the field of elementary education

The School District

The school district where the participants completed student teaching is located within the university community in the study and is considered an urban emergent

community using Milner's (2012) classification. There are approximately 150,306 students enrolled in this southeastern school district (*Civil Rights Data Collection*, n.d.) attending 179 public schools (*Southeastern Schools School District (2020-21) | Southeastern City*, n.d.). According to the civil rights data, approximately 38% of the students are Black, 25% of students are Hispanic, 6.7% are Asian, 2% of students are Native, and 27% of the students are White. The student of color enrollment is approximately 72%, made up of majority Black students. This southeastern state average of students of color is 52% and is also majority Black. Participants completed their student teaching in elementary middle schools in the district.

Participants

Three participants were chosen from the population from which to gather data (Mertens, 2014). More specifically, convenience sampling was used as identified by Creswell (2013), Miles et al. (2014), and Patton (2015). Convenience sampling, according to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), is a selected “sample based on time, money, location, availability of sites or respondents” (p. 98). The criteria established for the three teacher candidates’ participation included: a) Multi-ethnic and White female college of education students, and b) engaged in student teaching at the time of data collection. c) former students of faculty in the pilot study. Participants were referred by faculty from the pilot study. Given the literature around the evolution of teacher preparation, which included practice-based teaching methods juxtaposed with the need to incorporate equitable teaching practices of White teachers given the growing diverse population, this choice justifies the usefulness and intentionality behind the criteria for this study.

The first criterion for the teacher candidate participants was purposefully stated to differentiate the participants from other students in the College of Education. This served as a way to explore how White female teachers understand equity and attempt to teach equitably in the classroom. The second criterion was to ensure that the participants were teacher candidates that are engaged in student teaching. The purpose of this criterion was to be able to potentially observe equitable teaching practices as informed by literature (McGee Banks & Banks, 1995; Strom & Martin, 2015).

This study only selected participants who were easily accessible. To meet the desired number of participants of the study, convenience sampling was used as a method (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Those who met the criteria and consented to participate in the study were chosen. Consent to participate in the study included the following: a) availability to complete a questionnaire before the interview, b) availability for an approximately one-hour virtual interview which was audio-recorded and transcribed, c) availability for follow up interview for validation purposes, and d) notification of intent to use data from the study. At each activity of the study, the participant was reminded of the purpose of the study, potential benefits, potential emotional distress, and confidentiality of the study.

Participant Profile

The participants in this study each brought unique life experiences and perspectives to reflect on their teacher preparation experience as it relates to race, equity, and social justice. The location of their experiences all took place in the United States at a southeastern university. This study is particularly unique in that each of the participants is completing their student teaching during the worldwide pandemic of COVID-19. This

caused each of them to face unique challenges of online teaching when previously not prepared to do so. As illustrated by the Critical Race Theory, as identified by Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), this study applied the concept of *naming* to portray the voices of the participants who are White individuals who aspire to be working for equity and social justice. The participants were named Robin, Gina, and Bronwen. In many instances, the teacher candidates' reflections of their lived experiences resonated with the work of these scholars. For the researcher, these names symbolize the hope that each of these participants, with continued racial identity development, applying abolitionist education, and incorporates efforts to dismantle White supremacy in education, could one day be positioned along the side of these scholars for social justice and research. As this study positioned the participant interview as conversations, the findings of this study were written through their voice using the first names of their pseudonyms.

The Participants

Gina

Gina a compassionate teacher candidate who grew up in a small quaint town near the southeastern city where the study took place. She described her small town as a majority white middle-class community with deeply rooted values and limited exposure to diversity. She had fond memories growing up multi-racial with Polynesian and White parents. However, she was raised by her White mother and her side of the family which influenced the lens through which she views the world. She describes her family as caring and loving but grew up knowing she looked different from her White family and White friends. She is passionate about equity especially in the area of inclusiveness because she understands what it feels like to be an outsider. She was eager to attend the

university in the study, with hopes of encountering diversity and experiencing other cultures. She also learned Spanish to expand whom she can community with once she enters the classroom. She provided a unique perspective when addressing equity and social justice that stemmed from her feelings and growing up in mixed in a White household and because she is expecting her first child. She is in her final year of the teacher preparation program and is currently student teaching.

Bronwen

Bronwen is another passionate teacher who grew up in another middle-class small town near the southeastern city where the study took place. She identifies as White and grew up with adopted siblings of color in a predominately White community. Bronwen has deep empathy for minoritized groups, which stems from her relationship with her adopted siblings of color and witnessing how they navigated the White world around them. She approaches equity and social justice as a learner, leading with compassion and eager to learn ways she can advocate for her students. She too is in her final year of the teacher preparation program and shares a lot of interesting insights that stemmed from her adopted siblings. Her reflections were insightful and expressive as she reflected on her perceptions of equity and social justice in the teacher preparation program.

Robin

Robin identifies as White and grew up in a small working-class White community in the New England area where she experienced little if any racial diversity. She admitted that she was overwhelmed with the diversity she initially experienced when entering college including making negative assumptions about classmates, but has used those experiences to develop her. As a new mom, she is excited about teaching and plans to

move back to her hometown to be closer to her family and educate students. She is excited to have the opportunity to apply what she has learned about different cultures when she returns with the knowledge she has gained from her TPP but admits that there is so much she still needs to learn. She realizes that her journey to truly understanding equity and social justice is just beginning and it will be her responsibility to continually grow. Her reflections provided insight and understanding of a traditional teacher in the United States: White, middle class, and monolingual. Robin is a student teacher in her final year of the teacher preparation program and is currently student teaching.

Data Collection and Procedures

Course Descriptions

Course descriptions of all the classes the participants took during the TPP were collected from the university website. These course descriptions provided a brief synopsis of what was covered in each of the classes the participants took throughout their matriculation in the TPP. Each course description was examined through the lens of equity and social justice, specifically focusing on identifying terms related to equity and social justice commonly found in the literature. There were thirty-six courses offered in the TPP program and 6 identifying terms used in the content analysis. The courses that included terms that closely aligned with equity and social justice provided insight on the type of exposure the participants had to equity and social justice in their coursework.

Table 1

Equity in Coursework Content Analysis Table

Course	Race, Class, Privilege	Equity	Diversity, Diverse (types)	Social Justice	Cultural(ly) Relevant	Urban
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10...						

The Interview Process

The main instrument for data collection in this study was the semi-structured one-on-one interview with the participant as outlined in Creswell and Poth (2016). The interview processes included providing participants interview questions in advance, scheduling and conducting the interview, and contacting participants as possible follow up as questions arose. Once the participants sign the informed consent form, the researcher emailed interview questions in advance and established a mutually agreeable deadline to complete. When the participants responded to the interview questions, the researcher scheduled the virtual interview. The interview date and time was determined by what was most convenient and private for the participant to find a place where they could freely share or stop sharing per the informed consent process. Participants were informed to allow approximately 30 minutes to one hour to record their responses to the questionnaire and approximately one hour for the in-person interview which was audio-recorded and transcribed using a password protecting technological device. Participants were also informed that any identifying information would be removed. According to

Rubin and Rubin (2011), the interview is essentially a social interaction established within a dialogue. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) further defined interviews as the places “where knowledge is constructed in the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee” (p. 4) in an attempt to understand their perspective of what is going on around them (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The researcher used the interview process to gain insight into how the participants perceive equity and social justice within their TPP and how they enact it in their classrooms.

Interview Protocols

Questions were determined for the primary interview based on the researcher’s development of a set of interview protocols. At the start of the protocols, introductory questions were asked of the participants. The purpose behind the introductory questions was to get to know the participant and build rapport to effectively engage in a conversation using semi-structured interview questions. Since the participant was able to respond to the interview questions in advance, the researcher was able to build connections with the participant before the interview to help make them more comfortable. The interview questions were organized based on the research questions of the study. The research topics in this study centered on exploring equity in life and in practice.

Table 2

Interview protocol

<i>Theoretical</i>	<i>Research</i>	<i>Question</i>
<i>Framework^a</i>		<i>Question</i>

	Establishing Rapport	1. Tell me about yourself as well as your personal and professional backgrounds
SCT		2. What do you think your strengths are as a teacher?
SCT		3. What do you think are your weaknesses as a teacher?
SCT		4. Describe your most rewarding experience with a student.
SCT		5. Tell me about an achievement of which you are particularly proud.
SCT		6. As a teacher, what does success mean to you?
CRT	How is equity and social justice being enacted by teacher candidates during student teaching?	7. What does equity and social justice mean to you?
CRT		8. What does it mean to teach in an equitable way?
CRT		9. Can you describe your favorite class that incorporated equity and social justice?
CRT		10. Describe the activities within that class that made it stand out?
CRT		11. How did your students respond? What were some key takeaways?
CRT		12. How did this lesson influence future lessons?
CRT		13. How has technology played a role in your classroom?
CRT		14. What is the most complex assignment you have given?
CRT		15. How did students respond?

CRT	What are teacher candidates using from their teacher preparation program that help them enact equity and social justice in their student teaching?	16. Which courses at your university stood out to you the most regarding equity and social justice?
CRT		17. In what ways were equity and social justice incorporated in the courses you took?
CRT		18. In what way did those courses that discussed equity and social justice influence what and/or how you taught in the classroom?
CRT/SCT	What life experiences provide a context to incorporating equity in practice?	19. In what ways have your life experiences prepared you to student-teach through the lens of equity and social justice?
		20. If you could change anything about your clinicals, what would it be?
		21. In what ways can you predict the success of your students you taught during your student teaching?
		22. Anything you would like to add?

Note. ^aThe acronyms within the theoretical framework column represent the following: CRT = Critical Race Theory; SCT = Sociocultural Theory

Pilot

A pilot study was conducted to evaluate the research design and revise the interview protocol. Participants in this study were also former students of faculty from the pilot study. In qualitative studies, in particular, it is especially important to pilot test the instrument and procedures (Mertens, 2014). The pilot study participants were selected based on their contribution to the university-based teacher preparation program and their experience developing other faculty in the area of equity. The pilot study participants met all the criteria needed to participate. The researcher, per Creswell and Poth (2016), communicated to the participant the purpose and significance of the pilot study. The responses from the pilot study participants were incorporated to improve the interview protocol as well as provide insight on equitable teaching practices. The pilot study also allowed the researcher to practice engagement in a case study using semi-structured interview questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) as well as obtain participants from this study using convenience sampling.

Collection of Data

The researcher acquired informed consent from each participant who met the criteria to participate in the study. At the time of consent, interview questions were sent to the participants in advance of the interview which was scheduled based on the participants' availability. Once the responses to the interview questions were received, an interview was scheduled. The audio-recorded interviews resembled a conversation between the participant and the researcher. The interview data was transcribed. Data from the course descriptions were collected from the university website. Each of the course de

Data Analysis and Procedures

The data analysis method was directed by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), who provided detailed guidance on qualitative data analysis as built upon by Flick (2013). Flick (2013) described data analysis as “the classification and interpretation of linguistic (or visual) material to make statements about implicit and explicit dimensions and structures of meaning-making in the material and what is represented in it” (p. 5). Taking linguistic and material statements into account, this process was completed in five steps: a) transcription, b) coding, c) memoing, and d) accuracy checks. In preparation for the interview, the researcher coded responses to the interview questions. Once the interview was complete, the researcher read through the entire transcript line by line without coding and then read and coded the data. Descriptive coding was completed using Nvivo, a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) (Saldana, 2015). This software enabled the researcher to apply more than one code to the same passage or sequential passages of data. Using Nvivo also helped the researcher to ensure quality by maintaining and organizing the data. This process is repeated for each subsequent interview.

Based on Merriam and Tisdell (2016), content analysis was used to examine course descriptions of classes the participants took during their TPP. Content analysis is used to analyze documents and, in this study, the documents were online course descriptions. This type of analysis is a discreet practice that allows researchers to analyze relatively formless data in the view of meanings (Krippendorff, 2013). Modern content analysis has often been applied to communications media, and deal with measuring the frequency of messages (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this case, content analysis was used to measure the frequency of words associated with equity and social justice as a way to

get insight into the type of exposure the participants had to equity and social justice in their coursework.

Based on Yin's (2009) description of analyzing case study data, data was transcribed and holistically analyzed. Through this process, a detailed description of the case was revealed (Stake, 1995). Thereafter, the researcher analyzed particular themes that arose from the data to gain a deeper understanding of the case (Mertens, 2014). Yin (2009) suggested identifying issues within each case and then identify common themes amongst the cases. The data was triangulated (Creswell & Poth, 2016) through the following: 1) participant questionnaire, and 2) participants interview. Ultimately, this data analysis process helped the researcher make sense of the data by reducing and interpreting what the participants have said (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Ethical Considerations

Before launching this study, the researcher completed the required documents and received the necessary permissions from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct research using human subjects. Given the IRB approval for the study, research received informed consent forms from all the study participants. The informed consent form detailed the purpose of the study, the expectations of the participants, the potential benefits of the study, the possible emotional distress of the study, the method of ensuring confidentiality, and the explanation of how the data will be used. Participants were made aware of how to disengage from this study at any time. Additionally, before participants signed consent documents, they were made aware of the audio and transcription device that were used during the interview. The purpose of the audio-recording was to support the analysis and coding process as well as enable the researcher and participant to engage

in a conversational interview. Participants were also be ensured that all raw data would be locked and secured for five-years after publication, under the University's Policy Statement #306 (the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, n.d.).

Limitations

There are several potential limitations with the case study design that are in line with Cresswell and Poth (2016). Given restrictions due to COVID-19, the researcher was unable to observe teacher candidates in their classroom but used their virtual interview to gain self-reported data on what the participants did while in their classroom. The potential for resource limitations, both in time and financially, the study of more than one case can potentially diminish the overall analysis. The more cases the researcher studies, the less depth any single case can be. The researcher had limited time to analyze the data which required particular adjustments once the study commenced.

Assumptions

The implementation of this research design was grounded in a few important assumptions. The first assumption was equity, as stated in the literature review, was especially important for White teachers as they prepare for diverse students. This study assumed that through teaching toward equity and incorporating equitable teaching practices, students from diverse ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds will have positive academic outcomes. An additional assumption of the research design was that equity in a practice-based teaching model can be qualified in the lives, experiences, and examples of the participants. To support this assumption, the researcher also assumed the proficiency of the participants has been gained through life experiences, teaching, service, and reflection. Lastly, this research designed assumed that the

participants can connect their experiences to their influences in professional practices.

This maintains that the participants lived experiences were influential enough to inform their practices within the university and school settings.

Summary

This chapter introduced the guided methodology for a constructivist approach to exploring equitable practices in a practice-based teacher format. The study identified its sample population through the use of criterion and networking sampling. Through a qualitative research design, the researcher identified data collection and analysis tools to address the research question of the study. The chapter concluded with a structural plan for presenting results and a review of ethical procedures for the study. The findings of the study will be detailed in the forthcoming chapter.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore teacher candidates' perspectives on how equity is being enacted through a teacher preparation program. This insight speaks to the challenges and triumphs of teacher preparation and plans to offer a different perspective on the merging of equity and social justice in a university-based teacher preparation model. This study reflects a constructivist viewpoint on teacher preparation and was rooted in the belief that learning occurs as learners are actively involved in a process of meaning and knowledge construction (Hurd, 2009; Lloyd & Fernyhough, 1999; Shivarama, 2014). This study contributes to existing literature that supports the development of White teachers to be prepared for racially, ethnically, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse students. Additionally, this research makes suggestions on effective methods to incorporate that improve the enactment of teacher education. This study is needed to support new teachers in their exploration of their race, class, and privilege so they are better equipped to deconstruct Whiteness in education (Sleeter, 2016) and work towards teaching equitably. Furthermore, social justice and equitable teaching practices have the potential to positively influence students' academic success (Paris & Alim, 2017). Given that the teacher workforce remains majority White middle-class women and the student population is becoming increasingly more diverse, the need for TPP to address equity and social justice is becoming more apparent.

This study had three research questions: a) What are the teacher candidates perceptions of the curriculum that address equity and social justice?, b) How are equity and social justice being enacted by teacher candidates during student teaching?, and c)

What are the teacher candidates using from their teacher preparation program that helps them enact equity and social justice in their student teaching? Each question was answered through the participants' lived experiences, reflective facts on the experiences, and an analysis of the perceptions of relevant teacher education coursework to develop an in-depth understanding of the case. This study took place within a real-life contemporary setting to understand equity in a practice-based teacher education program (Yin, 2014). It also explored issues of race, class, and privilege (Bell, 2018; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Research Question 1 explored the teacher candidates' perceptions of the curriculum that addresses equity and social justice. This was designed to capture the particular course(s) the teacher candidates completed that had the most potential to cause them to be confronted with issues of equity and social justice. When teacher candidates are confronted with these issues, it encourages them to reflect on their teaching practice (Williams et al., 2019). Course descriptions were carefully analyzed using content analysis, tracking the frequency of terms associated with equity and social justice explained in Chapter 2.

Research Question 2, which explored how equity and social justice are being enacted by teacher candidates during student teaching, was designed to capture the participant's challenges and misconceptions about what equity looks like and how it can be applied to their teaching. Participants shared their experiences in their attempts to incorporate equity and social justice during their clinical. Participants also shared stories that captured their unique understanding of equity and social justice and what that looked like in the classroom during Covid-19.

Research Question 3, which explored what teacher candidates use from their teacher preparation program that helped them enact equity and social justice in their student teaching, was designed to explore the specific aspects of the teacher preparation curriculum the teacher candidates used when attempting to enact equity and social justice. The question prompted stories of the teacher candidates reflecting on specific courses that directly influenced how they approach issues of race, equity, and social justice. As stated earlier, at times, new teachers struggle with enacting equity social justice in their teaching (Agarwal et al., 2010). Kavanagh and Danielson (2019) noted that practice-based teacher education is often present in the teacher education curriculum, but not the enactment of practice.

This chapter is organized by the three research questions expressed in Chapter 1: a) identify the teacher candidates perceptions of the curriculum that addresses equity and social justice, b) the experiences of teacher candidates enacting equity and social justice during student teaching, and c) aspects of teacher preparation program curriculum that teacher candidates used to help them exact equity and social justice in their student teaching. The data collected is organized by descriptors, experiences, and interrelations of each research question and their alignment to Constructivism, Critical Race Theory, and Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory as theoretical frameworks. The data is analyzed using a holistic approach to case studies, per Yin (2009) and Stake (1995) and using content analysis of the course descriptions per Merriam and Tisdell (2016). These methods support the understanding of teacher candidates' experiences using equity with a teacher preparation program, through an analysis of themes that emerged from the participants,

gather textual-structural meanings, and determine the shared experiences of the participants.

Within each section, organized by research questions, the chapter will unfold emerging themes, and significant statements aligned within, that were generated from the data analyzed. The themes that emerged are used to synthesize textual and structural descriptions into a textual-structural meaning that provides the shared experience of the participants concerning each research question. This chapter concludes with the synthesis of each textual-structural meaning that provides a composite of the textual-structural meaning of the shared experience of the teacher candidate enacting equity and social justice within a teacher preparation program.

Themes

The analysis of data revealed several themes with each research question posed in the study. The themes ranged from *courses that include elements of equity and social justice* to aspects of the coursework that contributed to the teacher *candidates' attempts to enact it in their teaching*. Each theme was analyzed through a bounded system, the TPP, which uncovered participants understanding of their experiences. These experiences ranged from the *equity in coursework* to *equity enacted*, contained the integrated experiences and reflections of their perceptions of equity and social justice in a teacher preparation curriculum and teacher enactment of equity and social justice in teaching.

Perceptions of Equity and Social Justice Curriculum

Research question 1, which asked *What are the teacher perceptions of equity and social justice in the curriculum ?*, analyzed the teacher preparation curriculum through

course descriptions of which all the participants were prepared. Using Critical Race Theory and other notable works identified in Chapter 2, six key terms were identified that specifically addressed race, equity, and social justice. Those terms were applied to the teacher preparation course descriptions all participants experienced. Thirty-six courses were offered, yet, the six terms were frequent in seven courses. Bear in mind, equity and social justice can be included in courses that did not include terms in their course descriptions. Through content analysis, as illustrated by Table 2 and Figure 1, three significant themes emerged: 1) *insufficient opportunities for equity in coursework*, 2) *All in one*, and 3) *False Start*.

Table 3

Education Curriculum that Mention Equity and Social Justice in Descriptions

Course	Race, Class, Privilege	Equity	Diversity, Diverse (types)	Social Justice	Cultural(ly) Relevant	Urban
1			x			
2			x			
3			x		x	
4	x		x			
5	x	x		x		x
6		x	x			
7			x		x	

Note: Course descriptions were publicly assessable on the website of Southeastern University and accessed during data collection. Descriptions are assumed to be most recent and may have differed when teacher candidates took the course.

Figure 1

Pie Chart Depicting Equity and Social Justice in Teacher Preparation Descriptions



Note: Courses analysis was made during the fall 2020 term and assume all courses were offered to teacher candidates during their matriculation of the teacher preparation program.

Insufficient Opportunity for Equity in Courses

A content analysis of the course descriptions provided insight on courses most likely to expose the teacher candidates to issues of race, equity, and social justice. Out of 36 total courses offered, only seven courses frequented terms related to equity and social justice. As stated in Chapter 2, the majority of the teacher workforce is majority White women, yet the students are majority students of color. Given these particular statistics, offering only 19% of coursework that most likely to addresses race, equity, and social justice, given the analysis of the course descriptions are insufficient. However, six out of the seven courses included some form of diversity within the language of the course description but two out of the seven specially addressed equity. Coursework involving diversity seems more likely than courses that address how to treat diverse populations equitably. Elements of interest convergence appear in the avoidance of courses offered in

this topic, given that the majority of faculty at this institution are White and the majority of the teacher candidates are also White. This avoidance is ultimately at the expense of Black faculty, teachers and students. Equity and social justice may have been historically avoided in coursework which would negatively influence Black teachers and Black students.

All in One

Out of the seven courses that frequently included terms related to race, equity, and social justice in the content analysis, one class had the majority of the terms . The course is entitled “Theories and Practice for Equity Urban Education.” Within this course, students were to examine ideological, cultural, and systemic structural inequities in urban and other educational settings. It focused on educational theories and practices that specifically promote equity and social change. The course also investigates socioeconomic class, race, religion, language, gender, and personal identity. As the only course that matched nearly all of the criteria out of 36 courses, it appears that there was a reliability that this would be the course to emphasize race, equity, and social justice within this particular teacher preparation program. All of these topics addressed in a single course may not be the best strategy when attempting to provide a comprehensive teacher preparation program that addresses equity and social justice (Milner, 2020). Additionally, if equity and social justice are present in other courses not specifically designed with focus, it could present irregular patterns rather than constant results.

False Start

It is unclear when coursework that addresses aspects of race, equity, and social justice is placed throughout the teacher preparation program. However, as mentioned in

Chapter 2, teacher preparation has become more than what can occur during the coursework, yet the coursework throughout the entire teacher preparation can incorporate issues of equity and social justice that can continue through professional development experiences. School leaders, parents, and other stakeholders have expectations on the pedagogical practices teachers gain through a university teacher preparation program. Yet, with less than 20% of the coursework addressing race, equity, and social justice, it is difficult to determine if teacher candidates can be prepared for racially, ethnically, socioeconomically, and linguistically diverse students. Thereby creating a false start for teacher candidates exploring a journey of equity and social justice needed to be prepared for diverse students.

Equity and Social Justice Enacted

Research question 2, which asked *How is equity and social justice being enacted by teacher candidates' during student teaching?*, collected the descriptions and experiences of teacher candidates' attempts to incorporate equitable teaching practices during their student teaching. Through the voice of the participants, each with unique experiences and exposures to equity, three significant themes emerged: *a) Attempts Equity, b) Diverse (or lack of) experiences in teaching, and c) Values diversity.*

Attempts Equity

When participants were asked how they incorporated equity and social justice during their student teaching, there was an understanding of what equity is, but a lack of confidence in how it applied to their teaching before and during Covid-19. Robin shared

how her curriculum provides the same learning strategies to every student, to which she responded:

So, we had a bunch of meetings before the school year started that really talked about how we're using the ESL curriculum for literacy, and we are to be teaching it the way that it's written verbatim... I really just don't feel like equity means everybody gets the exact same thing... I have only done what the ESL curriculum has written and that has not given me a lot of opportunities to feel like I really addressed any kind of equity or social justice issues at all.

However, Robin also shared an interaction with an ESL student where she attempted to support the student's access to instruction and realized there was an even deeper concern with equitable access to instruction. Robin stated:

But we had the hardest time, so he was given a hotspot and he was given an iPad to use. And he couldn't figure out how to unmute himself, and we couldn't communicate with him well enough to get him unmuted. Yeah. So, we were doing things like, you know, putting stuff into Google Translate and trying really hard but we had reached out to the ESL teacher for her support here. Um, and, as far as we know, there's been no contact between the ESL teacher and this family, so far, here. So, that was startling to me as a student teacher, kind of realizing that that support that he's clearly entitled to just right now is not happening.

Similar to Robin, Gina articulated what equity means, however actually applying it during student teachings appeared especially challenging before COVID-19. Gina stated:

Equitable teaching means giving each student what they need to achieve the goals set for them in the classroom. This will differ according to their needs, resources,

and backgrounds. Equitable teaching requires an interest in students' personal lives and interests.

Likewise, Gina found difficulty explaining how she applied equity before her current placement school, yet COVID-19 appeared to have magnified the digital divide which makes access to current educational opportunities inequitable. Gina stated:

I'm having a hard time thinking of any class that has stood out to me regarding equity and social justice. I suppose my current placement school is working the hardest to help students during COVID-19 by providing hotspots for families with limited WiFi and by sending food home for the days students are not in school [currently in Plan B]. I can't think of an example of a class or school that has incorporated social justice, though.

Interestingly, when Bronwen shared her perceptions of equity and social justice and provided an example, her example was closer aligned to equality and was not necessarily equity and social justice. Bronwen shared:

So, kind of social justice and equity kind of go hand in hand. For me, it's hard to separate the two but social justice is the act of everyone having a fair chance. The way you get there is through equity not equality. So, one kid needs to stand up while doing work and another one needs to sit there and have some kind of noise cancelling thing going on or maybe one needs to describe it orally, and another can write it down. Another [way to] express themselves in some physical artistic way, just giving them that chance to show "Look, look at me. This is what I can do." That's really a school specific one.

Diverse Experiences in Teaching

When the participants were asked to reflect on equity and social justice within their student teaching, many shared diverse experiences in teaching where they were confronted with different aspects of diversity including racial, ethnic, linguistic, ability, and socioeconomic diversity. Bronwen recalled a particularly rewarding experience with a student with a learning disability which she believed yielded an equitable outcome.

Bronwen stated:

I had a student, K, who was severely behind and had extreme ADHD. I was able to get her in a place where she could focus and helped build that confidence within herself. The mother of K constantly praised my efforts and progress made with her during meetings. She was making great progress with her new accommodations when everything had to change due to COVID requirements of school in March 2020. I was out for a walk one day in my fiancé's grandparent's neighborhood when I ran into the family months after school ended. The mother still praised my efforts both in person and online and told me of K's rise in self-confidence... I also had a student at the same time with extreme behavioral challenges that caused academic gaps. I was starting to get through to him and he was started to perform better in academics when COVID hit.

Gina, who comes from an ethnically diverse background but raised in an all-White home, revealed disappointment being in a southeastern city and still placed at a school that lacked racial diversity. She also noted that she experienced several courses that address diversity, even if not explicitly illustrated in the coursework descriptions or student teaching placement. Gina stated:

I'm finally in this city where I'm learning so much and all my classes are very focused on diverse learners and appealing to different kinds of people and in bringing that into your classroom, you know, I mean you know [southeastern city] is super focused on that right now. And then I can go into these schools where I would I still wasn't teaching to super diverse classes... so that was a little bit disappointing to me. And not even so much racially like, but definitely socioeconomic status was not super varied in most of those schools. So, I would have liked some more experience working with kids who came from less privileged backgrounds. Just because I know that I'll serve those kids at some point and I want to make sure that I know how to show up for them because you don't know how someone's lived experiences are going to come into your classroom until you see it.

Gina also recalled a time when she worked with a linguistically diverse student and made several attempts to communicate to learn how to best teach him. Gina stated:

During a clinical in a 1st grade classroom, I met a student who had just moved in and only spoke Portuguese. The teacher asked me to work with him because he was crying and she did not know how to communicate with him and teach her class at the same time. I pulled him aside and used my Spanish skills to bridge the language gap between us. I would say something to him in Spanish, then repeat myself in English. He would then repeat the phrase in Portuguese. In this way, we found a system that allowed us to learn from each other and get some schoolwork done, and I discovered that he was highly intelligent and could already write full sentences in cursive.

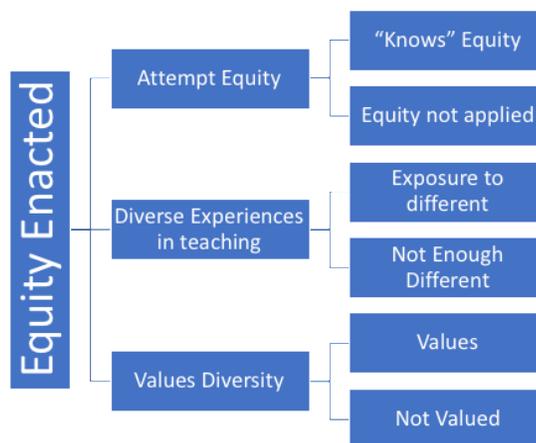
Valuing Diversity

When participants were asked how equity and social justice were enacted during student teaching, only one participant revealed how much they valued diversity, even if they did not see in growing up or experience it during certain placements while student teaching. Since valuing diversity was not explicitly asked in the interview protocol, not valuing diversity may not be a safe assumption of Robin and Bronwen. However, Gina specifically articulated how she values diversity and how she has tried to be inclusive within her student teaching. Gina stated:

I value multiculturalism and authentic representation of cultures, and I make an effort to include different cultures in my teaching practices. For example, I use books containing languages other than English in my morning read-alouds [*Querido Primo*] and refer to Native American tribes by their original name instead of their common name when teaching Social Studies (Haudenosaunee vs. Iroquois). I minored in Spanish in order to build my language skills to better communicate with Spanish-speaking students and their families.

Figure 2

Participants Response to Equity in Student Teaching



Equity and Social Justice in Curriculum

Research question 3, which asked *What are teacher candidates using from their teacher preparation that helps them enact equity and social justice in their student teaching?*, sought to collect the descriptions and experiences of teacher candidates within their courses that helped them to incorporate equitable teaching practices during their student teaching. Through the voice of the participants through the exposure to the curriculum, three significant themes emerged: *a) Evidence of equity in courses, b) Teaching goals clarified, and c) defines equity and social justice.*

Equity in Courses

Given that there are approximately seven courses that directly spoke to equity and social justice based on course description, each participant was able to recall at least one class that expanded their understanding of why equity and social justice are a critical component to education. Noteworthy, all of these experiences took place with classes that frequently address equity and social justice in their course descriptions noted in Table 3. Essentially all of the classes the participants referenced were of the seven courses listed in Table 3. Bronwen recalled a particular activity was that was eye-opening:

...there was another one [class] to where it was talking about seating on the bus again with racism and back in the 50s and 60s and all that kind of stuff, where she gave you a random or no you pick a random card, you'd had a yellow or a red card I believe. And if you'd picked a yellow card you had to sit in the back of the classroom. If you had a red card you'd have to sit in the front And then she wrote really small on the board, where all the people on the front of class could see it they had no problem. And she gave them a fake grade of 100 and said all

the people in the back well it's your fault. Why couldn't you see it I put it up here your own bus, your own classroom, just kind of making experience that, that's not fair.

Bronwen continued with a special education class where she remembered equity as a focal point:

[In] the SPED classes... we were talking about how students with disabilities in the past have kind of been viewed as something's wrong with them or something's broken, they're not the same and having lower expectations. When really you just need to differentiate, I guess is the right word to use. You change up how you teach how you let them show what they've learned that kind of thing. So that one kind of stands out to me those two classes.

Robin recalled her experiences reflecting on this particular school district that opened her eyes the issues of inequities close to her. Robin stated:

So, seeing that disparity even within a school district was shocking for me. And then we took a map of the surrounding areas. And we overlapped and it was you know this map had areas of low socioeconomic status and this one was the racial divide and layered them on top of each other and we got to see really where these high concentrations of privilege were versus underprivileged areas. It's so many different ways and so many different categories and it really drove home that these systemic issues are so related... And to see how truly interlinked they were was really cool for me.

Gina, like Robin, recalled a course that provided a historical perspective on issues of equity and social justice. This particular course was so powerful to her, that it motivated her to play an active role in advocacy. Gina stated:

I don't remember the name of the course, but it was about equity in the classroom and reviewed several instances in American history when education was not at all equitable, such as the Civil Rights Movement and the "civilization schools" that many Native American children were forced to attend by the U.S. government. That class not only opened my eyes to how much we as a society have to make up for and correct within ourselves, but also how many of my peers are unaware of some social injustices happening in the world today, which makes me feel I have to advocate that much louder for students in minority communities because even some of my fellow teachers/teacher candidates are not aware of their privilege and the effect it has on students.

Gina also indicated how she attempts to apply equity from what she learned in her coursework, primarily in the way she responds and entreats her students. Gina stated:

These courses gave me more to think about and consider when planning and speaking to students. I try to use respectful and neutral language whenever possible, such as saying, "Your adults" versus "Mom and dad." I do not assign gender norms to students because I do not believe in assuming a child's identity. I also try to make an effort not to make White, middle-class, English-speaking culture the norm in my class because it does not reflect my students' experiences;

instead I acknowledge several different cultures when giving examples of people/society in general.

Teaching Goals are Clarified

When the participants reflected on equity with the coursework it allowed them to further clarify their teaching philosophy and goals moving forward post teacher preparation program. The participants were excited about the possibilities of what equity and social justice will look like in their careers as educators. However, Bronwen did not mention career implications within her work that related to what she gained from the teacher preparation program. Still, Robin recalled how the coursework reframed her thinking about student growth. Robin stated:

...because I love data, data's great obviously we rely a lot on data, but it can be misleading. So focusing a lot on one on one attention as much as you can with each student to kind of really see you're showing growth Are you truly growing or have you, you know, picked up something different and there still might be a misconception, so academically I think just, I mean just the relationship with that student as a learner, and the exact same thing can be said for seeing them grow as people.

Gina continued to reflect on how the coursework has encouraged advocacy within her teaching. Gina stated:

My goal is to be a teacher that advocates for minority students and families, and creates opportunities for students to learn from each other... I want to become the teacher that would have been beneficial for me or my husband to see while attending school: someone who looks like us, makes an effort to speak our

language and participate in our culture, and who uses my personal experiences as learning opportunities for myself and my peers. This is the kind of teacher I hope my daughter will also have, so I try to learn as much as I can about equity, social justice, authentic representation, and historical erasure as I can in order to be a more well-rounded person and teacher.

Defines Equity and Social Justice

Each of the participants, through their experiences with the teacher preparation program, was able to provide a working definition for equity and social justice. It is apparent that the TPP provided a foundational understanding of equity and social justice that can be built upon in future professional developments. Bronwen stated:

Equity means everyone has a fair chance. They may not have the exact same situations or gifts but they are on an even playing field. Social justice to me means very similar things as equity. Social justice is when everyone has a fair chance equity is how they get there... To teach in an equitable way means to meet students where they are in a way they learn and go from there—not expect them to catch up and learn the way you teach.

Robin also had a similar definition. Robin recalled:

Equity means that all of my students get what they need to be successful regardless of their circumstances, their backgrounds, or any preconceived notions others may have about them... Some students need a taller ladder to stand on than others to see over the exact same fence. Social justice means that wealth, opportunity, privilege, acceptance, and respect are experienced by all individuals

and are not disproportionately experienced depending on your background, race, socioeconomic status, or identity.

Gina's view of equity and social justice contained a universal right. Gina stated:

Equity means that each person gets what they need to succeed, which may not be what the next person needs. Not everyone has the same resources to be successful, but that doesn't mean they are incapable of achieving success. Social justice is when people are all treated with dignity and respect, which may be different than what other groups of people consider to be justice. However, certain human rights are universal, such as the right to live without fear of injury, and when these rights are ignored or threatened in some way I believe it is right for that to be addressed and corrected.

Figure 3

Participants Response to Equity and Social Justice in the Curriculum



The findings present a myriad of ways the participants viewed the enactment of equity based on what they gained from their teacher preparation program as well as what they enacted while student teaching. Among all participants, the teacher preparation

program contributed to their overall understanding of equity and social justice. This foundation provided support to the development of their teaching philosophy, which also was influenced by the participants' experiences in and outside their student teaching classroom. To provide the participants voice throughout the findings, three additional themes also emerged.

Connecting Equity to Home and Family

Notable to Gina and Bronwen was their reflections of equity within their home and family that were brought to the forefront when reflecting on equity and social justice in the classroom. At a young age, Bronwen's family, who identifies with White, adopted non-White children. Bronwen stated:

My oldest [adopted] sister is mixed race. We know she is at least half White and partially not White but not sure specifically if that's Black, Latinx, etc. as dad is unknown—just a narrowed down list of people, all of whom are Black, Latinx, or mixed. My youngest [adopted] sister is also mixed but she is White/Eskimo or Native Alaskan. Lately, I've heard Eskimo is a derogatory term. Her father's family refers to themselves as Eskimo.

This reflection to ethnic diversity within her home may have given Bronwen a glimpse of the treatment of people of color in her community and why equity and social justice can make signified strides toward inclusion. When Bronwen mentions how the term “Eskimo” is a derogatory term, she gave insight to sensitivity and respectfully identifying diverse groups. Her empathy towards non-offensive language was pronounced here.

Gina comes from a mixed-race background, yet raised by her White mother, and married an Asian man. Gina shared:

I was raised by a single mother in a White, middle-class family. I myself am mixed race (White, Pacific Islander, Asian), and though I never felt singled out because of this while growing up, I always knew that I was different than everyone else I grew up with. It wasn't until college that I learned how to name my experiences. My husband is Asian American with immigrant parents who speak another language at home besides English. He was raised in the same White, middle-class community but was singled out much more than I was, and he continues to be singled out as an adult. Our child will look different than the majority of the population in our community.

Gina not only identified with groups that have been “othered” but also is near a group that has not only been “othered” but disenfranchised during COVID-19. Gina also recognized the plight that will be on her child grown up mixed-raced in a predominately White community. Her reflections of home and family revealed a specific passion for equity and inclusion she strives for in the classroom.

Proactive Enactment of Equity vs. Reactive Enactment of Equity in the Classroom

When the participants reflected with questions around enacting equity and social justice in the classroom, Gina and Bronwen shared ways on how they proactively incorporated equity versus teaching with equity reactively which Robin exhibited. Robin recalled a time where she reacted to a student having trouble, but also made negative assumptions about the family based on what she observed in the background. Robin stated:

But there is—there's a couple kids that, you know, you can see their background on Zoom and you kind of see where they're at and then one of the kiddos we

know he's in a single wide, he has six siblings, with him, and grandparents, parents and an aunt. Um, none of them speak super fluent English, one of the older siblings is conversational. But we had the hardest time, so he was given a hotspot and he was given an iPad to use. And he couldn't figure out how to unmute himself, and we couldn't communicate with him well enough to get him unmuted. Um, so we were doing things like you know, putting stuff into Google Translate and trying really hard but we had reached out to the ESL teacher for support here fine. Um, and, as far as we know, there's been no contact between the ESL teacher and this family, so far, here. So, that was startling to me as a student teacher, kind of realizing that that support that he's clearly entitled to just right now is not happening.

However, Gina, given her passion for creating inclusive environments proactively created an activity not provided in her curriculum, that she believed was an equitable approach to what she is directed to teach. Gina stated:

An assignment student's are currently working on in my classroom: they must read a passage (differentiated according to their reading level/needs), identify important details and write them in a graphic organizer, then retell the story in the passage by drawing a comic. Then students must use the comic to verbally retell the story to another student.

Additionally, Gina specifically mentioned how she attempts to be culturally and linguistically responsive in her teaching practices. Gina stated:

I value multiculturalism and authentic representation of cultures, and I make an effort to include different cultures in my teaching practices. For example, I use

books containing languages other than English in my morning read-alouds [*Querido Primo*] and refer to Native American tribes by their original name instead of their common name when teaching Social Studies (Haudenosaunee vs. Iroquois). I minored in Spanish in order to build my language skills to better communicate with Spanish-speaking students and their families.

Throughout Bronwen and Gina's interviews, they expressed their desire to build relationships with students to make them feel seen and feel comforted. Bronwen stated, "I've valued them as more than just a student with a number with a grade. Yeah, I want to know about them I want to make education important to them." Similarly, Gina shared how she appreciates the relationships that give her insight into teacher effectiveness which supported her effort to learn how to enact equity in the classroom. Gina stated:

I am very proud of the relationships I have built with different students over the years. I feel like I haven't been able to spend enough time with a group of students to know if I have effectively taught them anything, but I always know within a few days if I have successfully made a connection to a student.

Interestingly, only Gina and Bronwen shared the importance of building relationships and made explicit insights into making connections with their students and providing a brave space for them to learn and grow which led to proactively look for ways to teach with equity. There could be a correlation between the awareness of ethnic diversity within their family and the degree to which the participants incorporate equity through building relationships and overall empathy for the students. Empathy appears to play a role in how equity is enacted in the classroom.

In summary, the findings of this study revealed much about equity and social justice education and enactment with teacher candidates. Participants revealed not only their concern with the insufficient coursework that addressed equity but their overall desire to become more proficient beyond the classroom. The participants' different student teaching experiences also revealed their desire for closeness to diverse student populations, yet admitted to experiencing monoethnic and monolingual upbringings. As such, enactment of equity was more prevalent in Gina, who derived from a multiethnic background and was proactive in her enactment to equity and social justice in her classroom given her empathy for minoritized and underrepresented groups.

Research Question 1 explored the teacher candidates' perceptions of equity and social justice in the curriculum. When the curriculum was carefully analyzed using content analysis explained in Chapter 2, it was clear that this program did not have enough courses to adequately engage teacher candidates in equity and social justice. The lack of courses that explicitly include equity and social justice reaffirms the notion of interest convergence in that not having these courses continually benefiting White teacher educators and White teacher candidates at the expense of Black Teacher educators and Black students. The curriculum is also taught by a majority White monolingual female faculty which is significant in understanding reasons why dismantling a white-washed curriculum is essential to being inclusive of equity and social justice. This curriculum is insufficient in preparing teacher candidates, especially White women, for diverse student populations. Additionally, all of the courses the teacher candidates referenced in their interview were part of the seven courses identified through the content analysis. This is also interesting in that during the pilot study faculty, whose

courses were not part of the seven, taught using equity. The teacher candidates may not have perceived that instruction as equitable teaching because the faculty may not have explicitly said so.

Research Question 2, which explored how equity and social justice are being enacted by teacher candidates during student teaching, uncovered the teacher candidates' understanding of equity and social justice from an intellectual standpoint, but also their inability to enact it in their teaching. However, as noted in Chapter 2, their definition of equity and social justice may not be correct. The teachers had a better understanding of equality and a surface understanding of equity and social justice. With few courses for the teacher candidates to support their understanding, it is not surprising that their understanding is limited. However, given the multi-ethnic background of Gina, and her personal experiences with feeling different while being raised in a White household, her enactment of equity and social justice appears to come from her desire to create an inclusive environment for students of color.

Research Question 3, explored what teacher candidates use from their teacher preparation program that helped them enact equity and social justice in their student teaching did show the influence of the few classes in the curriculum that did address equity and social justice, yet it was not enough for teacher candidates to feel confident in utilizing equitable teaching practices. As research has indicated in chapter 2, teachers often do not enact what they learn in their TPP, however, this lack of enactment can potentially be rooted in a personal understanding of what they need to enact. Perhaps when teachers identify personally with the content learned in a TPP, they are more likely to enact it. Creating multiple opportunities for equity and social justice, including

opportunities to make personal connections can increase the likelihood of enactment during student teaching.

CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Chapter 5 is organized in four sections: a) a comparison to literature, b) recommendations to the field, c) implications, and d) future possibilities for research. This chapter begins with a comparison of findings to literature to establish if and how the data extend the findings of literature to make new contributions to the field of teacher preparation. The recommendations to the field then explore the findings in the study and their broadening to the topic of equity and social justice within a teacher preparation program. This chapter proposes key recommendations to support the advancement of teacher preparation into concrete actions for research and practice in a university-based teacher preparation program. The implications to the field identify tangible approaches to incorporating equity and social justice that are sustainable while dismantling White supremacy in education. This study concludes with an agenda for future research and action to extend and further refine teacher preparation programs to better prepare teachers for diverse students.

Classrooms are becoming more racially, ethnically, socioeconomically, and linguistically diverse yet the teaching workforce is still majority White women (Gershenson et al., 2016); therefore, the need for teacher preparation training that focuses on equity is becoming more apparent (Banks et al., 2001; Causey et al., 2000; King & Butler, 2015; Verba & Orren, 1985;). Some argued that the focus on teacher preparation should not be on the technical aspect of the profession, but have a progressive stance, emphasizing justice and equality (Athanases & Martin, 2006; Beyer et al., 2018; Wiedeman, 2002). Several TPP today, including the university in this study, attempt to provide teacher candidates with opportunities to engage in critical pedagogy with the goal

that they will eventually develop into teachers who can teach in equitable ways (Vlach et al., 2019). Still, there is much room to explore equity in a practice-based teacher preparation program as discussions of what a teacher candidate needs to be ready for the classroom are ongoing (Goodwin et al., 2014).

Education reforms often incorporate the language of equity without depth in understanding of what it looks like in teacher education programs (Dyches & Boyd, 2017; Nieto, 2000). To understand equity more deeply, there must also be a commitment to addressing the “education debt” that has been build up throughout American history (Ladson-Billings, 2006). There is a need to counter educational injustices at the hands of White supremacy that subsequently define U.S. schooling (Rose, 2014) by exemplifying best teaching practices that value the knowledge, experiences, and epistemologies of communities of color (Delpit, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Lee, 2007; Walker, 1996). Advancing core practices within teacher education but not addressing the root causes of inequitable teaching practices that have harmed students of color can amplifying educational oppression and perpetuate White supremacy.

Through the shared experiences of teacher candidates within their last year of a teacher preparation program, this study offers a narrative on the effectiveness of equity within their teacher preparation program. This study provides contextual inputs of equity and social justice using the critical race theory while also understand the development approach Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory provides. Ultimately, the purpose of this study was to gather meaning on how equity and social justice are presented in a university-based teacher preparation program and potentially enacted by the teacher candidates.

This study identified the overall concern with the ineffectiveness of teacher preparation programs, especially in the area of enactment juxtapose to a majority White women teacher workforce compared to a majority diverse student population. Through the theoretical frameworks informed by the Critical Race Theory and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, Chapter 1 established three research questions that framed the focus of this study: a) *What are the teacher candidates' perceptions of the curriculum that addresses equity and social justice?*, b) *How are equity and social justice being enacted by teacher candidates during student teaching?*, and c) *What are the teacher candidates using from their teacher preparation program that helps them enact equity and social justice in their student teaching?* Chapter 2 thoroughly explained the journey of teacher preparation from pre-colonialism to the modern-day, identifying the concerns incorporating equity and social justice into a university-based teacher preparation program. Chapter 3 presented a qualitative case study as the research methodology to discover the experiences of three teacher candidates and to understand how they attempted to incorporate equity and social justice during their student teaching. The findings of these participants, as detailed in Chapter 4, are integrated into themes organized by the research questions. The data derived from the interviews of the participants and analysis of the curriculum are reduced to a composite of shared experiences on incorporating equity in a teacher preparation program and enactment in the classroom.

Comparison to Literature

The findings of this study, when compared to the literature, provide both insight and an affirmation on the topic of equity and social justice within a teacher preparation

program and its enactment with teacher candidates. Before the colonization of the West, Natives of North America designed teacher preparation in a culturally relevant and sustainable manner (Johnson et al., 2005) so that cultural norms, language, and religion were passed down inclusively (Banks, 2003). Similarly, within the African context, education not only transformed intellectual thoughts but was anti-oppressive in action and practice (Dei, 2012). Yet today, teacher preparation functions under White supremacy, and educational curriculums are Whitewashed, perpetuating thoughts and ideas that are contrary to the truth and the lived experiences of diverse teachers and diverse students who receive instruction from a majority White teacher workforce.

Teacher Preparation Since *Brown v. Board of Education*

The enactment of this landmark case enforced the integration of public schools, yet teacher preparation did not immediately change to prepare teachers to address their racism before educating Black students (Kluger, 2011; Phillip, 1994). Decades later, teacher preparation programs, like the one in this study, are still not adequately addressing racism, equity, and social justice to prepare White teacher candidates for the diverse students. Similarly, schools where the teacher candidates student teach appear to be just as segregated as schools before *Brown v. Board* era. This study affirmed the vital need to re-examine how teachers are prepared, especially when the demographics still reveal a majority White teacher workforce teaching a majority diverse student population. This includes addressing why the White female majority teacher workforce needs to address their racism before engaging Black students.

White Supremacy in Teacher Education

Historically, Whiteness has been a symbol of superiority to then becoming one of normality while remaining socially dominant. (Omi & Winant, 2014). Similarly, there is a persistence of White supremacy through a forceful denial that racism is a pertinent social issue (Omi & Winant, 2014) and a permanent part of society (Bell, 2018). Additionally, the idea and behavior of White people who think they are inherently better than everyone else. As such, this study affirmed that the lack of courses within the teacher preparation curriculum that addressed equity and social justice issues reaffirms the denial of racism within this teacher preparation program that allows these key issues from being adequately incorporated. This study revealed that there is still a dire need to address race and racism within the teacher preparation program, especially among White teacher candidates. TPP can no longer exist in passive environments where racism and white supremacy are overlooked, but be eager to take a stance and deny perpetuating a white-washed curriculum that does not support Black teacher educators and teachers, as well as not address the racism within White teacher educators and teachers.

Teacher Preparation and Accountability

Literature reveals that there are obstacles to conducting formative assessments to hold TPP accountable (Cash, 2016; Etscheidt et al., 2012; Feuer et al., 2013; Goldhaber et al., 2017). Yet, this study determines that there needs to be a re-evaluation of how TPP is held accountable and a change on what defines an effective teacher (Henry et al., 2012), especially when the accrediting bodies operate in a place of colorblindness habitually avoiding whiteness and white supremacy because it continually benefits White teacher educators and White teachers. This study revealed the need for non-punitive accountability to grow in the area of racial identity development, equity, and social

justice for both the teacher educators and the teacher candidates. Additionally, with few courses offered, accrediting bodies need to include parameters that require courses that address equity and social justice to be a part of what constitutes an effective teacher preparation program. Since TPP programs are preparing a majority White teacher workforce, universities should also be held accountable for how they are diversifying the student and faculty body to encourage growth in this area. Similarly, universities should be held accountable for recruiting diverse teacher educators who, based on this study, were extremely instrumental in the exposure to equity and social justice issues.

Teacher Preparation and Student Teaching

Within the teacher preparation model, several conflicting ideas regarding student teaching arose within the literature. For instance, there is little evidence that TPP develops the teaching practice (Agarwal et al., 2010; Anderson & Stillman, 2013). The results of this study suggest that TPP can support the development of the teaching practice when there is repetition and when it is culturally relevant and increases cultural competency.

Teachers in this program need multiple exposures to equity and social justice before feeling confident enacting it in the classroom, however, specific activities and assignments within courses that addressed equity and social justice were very present with the participants when they planned lessons for their students. Furthermore, the literature suggested that teacher preparation should include a rich and broad curriculum, culturally and community responsive teaching (Boaler, 2002; Gay, 2002), and prepare teachers to educate all children (Zeichner, 2017). This study affirms this suggestion and expands the research to include the broad curriculum should specifically include equity

and social justice and opportunities for teachers to develop their racial identity to work toward dismantling White supremacy.

Applying Equity in Teacher Preparation Program

The literature suggests that equitable teaching practices can be one critical remedy to the flawed educational system rooted in systemic racism toward Black and Latinx students (DiAngelo & Dyson, 2018). Furthermore, the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) has recognized that eliminating disparities in education opportunities depends on improving teaching quality (*History of CAEP - Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation*, n.d.). The results of this study add to the body of literature to advocate that not including sufficient exposure to equity and social justice in coursework can produce teachers who are underprepared for diverse students.

These underprepared teachers will cause harm to students through their classroom instruction and the implementation of a Whitewashed curriculum. Public education can provide equitable opportunities to Black and Brown children when it provides those opportunities to teacher candidates during their training.

Equity Within Coursework

Literature indicated that institutions seem to vary on the type of courses they offer that would include some form of equity and social justice (King & Butler, 2015).

Furthermore, teacher preparation programs are not providing equity and social justice courses for their pre-service teachers, and novice teachers are lacking the ability to produce diverse learning environments for students of color competently (Williams III & Glass, 2019). This study affirms the literature in that teacher preparation programs that do not offer courses that include equity have the potential to create a teacher unable to teach

equitably. Study participants embodied an intellectual understanding of equity and social justice but were unable to demonstrate equity and social justice in the classroom. Limited exposure to coursework, like the TPP in this study, is responsible for this lack of growth, which literature has already concluded.

Teaching Toward Equity

The literature suggested that teacher candidates work towards equity when they first work inward to explore their own cultural identities (Hong, 2010; Nieto, 2000). According to Whipp (2013), teacher candidates engage in cross-cultural experiences before and during the teacher preparation program. Additionally, teacher candidates are more likely to teach with equity when the coursework and field experiences incorporated challenging materials that addressed the teacher candidates' biases and dispositions. This study affirms this belief that teacher candidates studied few opportunities to explore their cultural identities, but when they did, it influenced their outlook but not their action on teaching diverse students. Specifically, one participant complained that her clinical experiences were not diverse enough and strongly desired more cultural experiences to become more culturally competent. Teaching toward equity is more than providing head knowledge to teacher candidates, but must create an environment that results in actual change in teaching when they enter the classroom, especially when the classroom comprises diverse students.

The Problem of Enactment

Kavanagh and Danielson's (2019) study examined teacher education coursework for new elementary school teachers in addition to their reflections about their experiences. Their study noted that practice-based teacher education was present in the

lesson planning for equity, but not in the enactment of practice. They also noted that the teachers examined in the study approached teacher education very differently, which manifested in how the teacher candidates approach equitable practice. Another study by Bianchini and Brenner (2010) interviewed beginning teachers in an induction program who were forced to teach their content using equity. The results of that study showed that their program insufficiently taught them how to teach equitably, yet school communities and teacher education experiences had a greater influence on their use of the equity within their content (Bianchini & Brenner, 2010). This particular study adds to the body of research elaborating on the difficulty teacher candidates experience when attempting to enact equity. Although this program did not force them to teach their content using equity, the program's lack of coursework addressing equity and social justice certainly did not prepare them to do so. All the participants expressed wanting to know more about equity and social justice and did not feel confident in their ability to teach with equity. Their attempts to teach equitably demonstrates their desire to put what little they did learn into practice. Developmentally, teacher candidates need multiple exposures of equity and social justice over a while to process it intellectually but examine their racial identity with the time to practice enactment. Similar to Darling-Hammond and Skyes (1999), and later Beavers (2009), this study confirms that teachers need more effective and sustainable opportunities to learn to teach with equity during their student teaching experiences.

Recommendations and Implications

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are offered to ensure that that teacher educators and university-based teacher preparation programs remain vigilant in dismantling Whiteness and White supremacy to effectively prepare a

currently majority White teacher workforce for diverse students. The following recommendations emerged directly from the data of the student and have been framed into the following: a) *recommendations for practice* and b) *implications*.

Recommendations for Practice

These findings suggest a myriad of concerns when attempting to incorporate equity and social justice within a university-based teacher preparation program as well as teacher candidates' enactment of equity and social justice in the classroom.

Recommendation One

Equity and social justice need to be the thread and the bread as it relates to coursework in a teacher preparation program. Based on the findings of the study, teacher preparation programs are neglectful when incorporating equity and social justice.

Findings suggest:

- Integrating social justice and equity needs to be presented as a nine-course meal the teacher candidate experiences as they matriculate through the program. Social justice and equity content needs to be threaded and explicitly stated in every course to provide students with a taste of equity and social justice in every class, not just classes with that primary focus.
- Developmentally, teacher candidates need multiple experiences and exposures to equity and social justice to develop their racial identity to be able to comprehend equity and social justice. Cognitive development is understood as an interactive process facilitated by culture, context, language, and social interaction. The more teacher candidates interact

with equity and social justice, the more likely they will have the courage to attempt to enact social justice and equity within their student teaching.

- Equity and social justice is not an additive sprinkled sporadically throughout the curriculum, it is the bread, the lens, the food that fuels all the other courses. In many institutions, similar to the one in this study, equity and social justice appears to be an additive because the teacher educators are unable to adequately teach through this lens given their limited exposure to diverse experiences in their education and upbringing.

Increasing the presence of equity and social justice in coursework, providing multiple opportunities of exposure to teacher candidates, and realizing that it is what is fueling the teacher preparation program is highly recommended when creating structures that work towards dismantling White supremacy in education to prepare teachers for diverse students.

Recommendation Two

Teacher preparation programs should acknowledge that what they put into a program is what will come out. The degree to which teacher preparation programs emphasize equity and social justice can be illustrated in the outcome, the teacher candidate. Findings support that the teacher candidates were as prepared as they could be for diverse students given the de-emphasis of equity and social justice in their TPP.

- Universities cannot be perplexed when the teacher educators are not competent in equity and the courses that support this development are grossly insufficient. Providing the same coursework that devalues or limits teacher candidates' exposure to equity and social justice will not help

them work toward teaching with equity. Similarly, using the same curriculum year after year in hopes that one day it will magically create an social justice oriented White female teacher prepared to teach diverse students is also highly unlikely.

- Expectations from principals on new teacher effectiveness should be measured based on the degree to which the teacher preparation programs invest in creating an environment where teacher candidates are addressing race, class, privilege, racial identity, equity, and social justice. School principals should have a clearer understanding of how to develop new teachers given the teacher preparation programs they came from. If their school emphasizes equity, the teacher candidates would thrive. If the school does not emphasize equity, the teacher candidate would not thrive in their attempt to enact equity in their teaching. This suggests a differentiated approach to in-service teacher preparation as well as another source of accountability.
- Universities need to introspectively and critically determine why so few courses are offered to students in the area of equity and social justice. This is necessary to determine the root causes of the perpetuation of White supremacy in teacher education. Sufficiently threading equity and social justice would create a teacher better prepared for diverse students. It calls into question, however, if universities want teachers to be prepared for diverse students or is there a level of disregard to Black and Brown students for putting more, most likely, White middle-class female teachers

into the workforce to end up in a diverse classroom insufficiently prepared for diverse students.

Overcoming barriers to dismantling White supremacy and Whiteness in the curriculum is highly recommended for teacher preparation programs working toward providing a curriculum that threads equity and social justice.

Recommendation Three

Teacher preparation programs should not assume that teaching about equity and social justice will immediately translate into teacher candidates' enactment of equitable teaching practices. This recommendation is the result of a deeper understanding of the development of a teacher candidate. Developmentally, it is inappropriate to assume that a few courses that encourage intentional discussions about equity and social justice will immediately result in the teacher properly enacting equitable teaching practices.

- Even though teachers can articulate equity and social justice, they do not have the pedagogical skills to incorporate it in their teaching. Having a clear understanding of equity and social justice is critical to beginning the process of learning best teaching practices that produce results in the classroom.
- Knowing is different from doing. A teacher candidate may begin to understand the basic concepts of equity and social justice but may be far from enacting it in their teaching. Multiple social interactions where teacher candidates engage in equity and social justice will support the cognitive development that leads to teaching with equity.

- Teacher candidates can recognize Whiteness and White supremacy by framing it as a confirmative stance. Yet how is showing up in their actions or inactions in the classroom?
- Who will hold teacher candidates accountable to actionable growth toward teaching with equity when teacher educators are not held accountable? TPP needs to determine the solution which may require uncomfortable steps which includes dismantling Whiteness and White supremacy in education.
- Teacher preparation programs must go beyond the intellectual understanding of equity and racism. It is not acceptable to have conversations about it, when the conversations do not lead to enactment, encourage racial identity development as well as a change of heart.

Providing this recommendation means coming to terms with realistic expectations for current and future teacher candidates growth given the time needed for racial identity development in preparation of teachers for diverse student populations.

Recommendation Four

Hire White faculty only if they meet specific developmental criteria that are necessary when cultivating White teachers for diverse students. Findings in this study suggest that White faculty do have a place in teacher preparation programs focused on equity and social justice, however, it is recommended that they sustain specific qualities that contribute to dismantling Whiteness and White supremacy in education.

- White faculty in a teacher preparation program that focuses on equity and social justice must approach their work with a critical lens. Similar to

Ladson-Billings' culturally relevant pedagogy, White teachers must have a critical consciousness that leads them to question aspects of teacher preparation programs that perpetuates Whiteness and White supremacy.

- White faculty must be actively anti-racist, motivated by their desire to be the change they want to see in their teacher candidates. Being actively anti-racist must be fluid throughout the White faculty's personal and professional life. It may present in the community they choose to live, in their place of worship, where they shop, and where their children go to school. Every aspect of this White faculty's life must be actively anti-racist.

Offering this recommendation means changes in hiring practices, having anti-racist hiring committees and truly understanding the lens from which faculty prepare teachers for diverse students to not perpetuate practices that yield poor results.

Recommendation Five

Teacher preparation programs that are working toward equity and social justice can glean from existing programs that are currently effective. Many successful teacher preparation programs focus on equity and social justice that TPP like the one in this study can learn from.

- The School of Education University of San Francisco (USF) focuses on trauma-informed, culturally transformative, and culturally responsive approaches to teaching. USF achieves this goal by recruiting teachers who are from similar backgrounds as their students and reflect the ethnic and racial identities of their students. Additionally, many courses require

students to reflect on their racial identity to engage in topics of racism and systems of racial oppression. The emphasis of this program is for students to self-reflect, unlearn, and re-learn in a brave space where they can be vulnerable and be pushed outside of their comfort zone. They take a learner-centered approach rather than a content-centered approach.

- Rutgers University incorporates equity and social justice in their program by centering on relationships with the students within the urban community. The teacher preparation program also contains culturally relevant materials within the curriculum. Rutgers emphasizes and encourages student-teachers to see themselves as change agents, viewing the role of education as one who can foster passion in education, justice, and equity within the students they teach.
- The University of Massachusetts at Amherst describes their teacher preparation program as one that provides a social justice curriculum that seamlessly bridges theory and practice, drawing on a variety of fields and areas of study beyond education. Student teachers engage in research, methods, and theory on the current ideas surrounds social justice issues and social justice practices in education. Student teachers also explore the way marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence also lead to inequities in education. The program provides a clinical approach with in-depth hands-on experiences where students learn to enact effective social justice education practices in and outside the classroom

- The Pitt School of Education at the University describes their program as one that is committed to advancing equity and justice in society through education. Their faculty see themselves as agents of change, driven to make a difference in schools, education systems and power structures. They are committed to equity and justice in every aspect of the schools work and in their community by providing mentorship, resources, leadership. They are also committed to engaging in difficult conversations around race as well as challenge systemic issues that disproportionately affect marginalized students of color. With their long history of advancing social justice initiatives, Pitt Education was one of the first schools to adopt social justice.

There are universities that incorporate equity and social justice within their teacher preparation program. This recommendation requires a bold revision of the curriculum and clinical experiences to create an environment where equity and social justice is the thread and the bread.

Recommendation Six

Teacher Preparation programs that attempt to incorporate equity and social justice need to keep outcomes with children as a central and primary goal. It is important to remember the “why,” and how TPP can positively or negatively influence the outcome for children.

- Teacher preparation programs are accountable to children of color. For hundreds of years, education has been used as a tool to harm, disenfranchise, colonize, and segregate children of color. Teacher

preparation programs are primarily responsible for preparing teachers to undo the wrongs of the past to help support a better future for children of color.

- Teacher preparation programs must change their practices by including a plethora of courses that address equity and social justice because when they do not, TPPs are further damaging children in classrooms when they do not. Children are directly impacted by the underprepared teachers that exit teacher preparation programs. Having such teachers has historically resulted in discipline disproportionality, contributing to the school to prison pipeline, increasing the number of high school dropout rates, and overall negativity influencing Black and Brown students' academic achievement.
- Equity and social justice should not be diminished to simply “buzz” words in a teacher preparation program for external and surface appeal. Incorporating equity and social justice has real-life applications in the classroom with living, breathing children. Teacher preparation programs must be keenly aware of the human element to any decision that can influence the preparation teachers for diverse students.

Teacher preparation programs play a significant role in not perpetuating the trauma that creates life long-lasting effects on children of color. Sparing the feelings of White teachers and White teacher educators at the expense of the potential trauma a racist teacher has on a Black and Brown child should no longer be an option.

Implications

The implications of this study are supportive of developing a sustainable teacher preparation program that threads equity and social justice. Implications address the deeply rooted systemic issues that are perpetuated when White supremacy reigns in teacher preparation programs. For equity and social justice to materialize in teacher preparation programs, several implications on teacher educators and teacher candidates are inferred.

Implication One

White teacher educators must resist and resolve the bubble of Whiteness and increase their proximity to diversity. “We can’t live in a silo of segregation and expect to teach in a space of diversity” (Hancock, 2019). Based on the findings of the study, White teacher educators who are not actively living outside of the bubble of Whiteness are implicitly or explicitly contributing to teacher candidates’ inability to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to teach diverse students. Implications of this matter also concern the following:

- White teacher educators must confront the Whitewashed curriculum from which they taught and currently teach. Expecting a White teacher educator who was trained under a Whitewashed curriculum to teach through the lens of equity and social justice is unrealistic. There is a learning gap that must be identified and reconciled to progress toward a more equitable curriculum.
- White teacher educators must step out of their White communities and work across lines of racial and socially economic differences collaboratively. White teacher educators need these collaborative

partnerships to further their racial identity development, undo previous assumptions of diverse populations, and positions to learn from them.

- White teacher educators need to deny themselves from around using deficit language when describing schools in urban communities with majority Black and Latinx students. Continually using deficit language when addressing diverse groups perpetuates ignorance and white supremacy in teacher candidates which influences their ability to teach equitably.

Teacher preparation programs must be intentional about the development of White teacher educators, primarily for their contribution to the success or failure of teacher candidates enacting equity and social justice in their classroom.

Implication Two

Intentionally hire teacher educators with experiences in diverse spaces and who are from diverse backgrounds. Given that the majority of the teacher workforce is White women, yet the majority of students are racially diverse, teacher educators from diverse backgrounds can support dismantling Whiteness and White supremacy in education by not contributing to the incompetence of the teacher candidates. Further implications are as follows:

- If every child, teacher, and teacher educator came from the same ethnic, racial, linguistic, and socioeconomic background, teacher preparation programs would not need to teach equitably. However, the demographics of our student and teacher population are drastically opposite. Providing teacher candidates with teacher educators from similar backgrounds to

their students provides cultural insights into a world that teachers are historically underprepared for. It is critical to examine not only the White female teacher workforce but the White female teacher educator workforce that is likely perpetuating Whiteness and White supremacy by evaluating university hiring practices that fuel this dilemma.

- Teacher educators with experiences in diverse spaces can provide a framework for how equity and social justice are centered in curriculum. Providing this fluidity helps support the development of the teacher candidates to be able to see the big picture of why equity and social justice matter in education. If teacher educators are not providing this perspective, the teacher candidates run the risk of only intellectualizing racism in education without the pedagogy and insight on how to begin to dismantle it.
- No longer is it acceptable to hire a teacher who just have content expertise. Teachers must have a social justice orientation that they learned in their TPP. Teachers need to enter the classroom well verse in social justice and content knowledge in order to prevent the harming students.

Hiring teachers educators with diverse content and research experiences is a key element to dismantling Whiteness and White supremacy in education that hinders efforts of equity and social justice development for teacher candidates.

Implication Three

Teacher Preparation programs must create pathways to equity and social justice courses and certificates to create a differentiated teacher preparation experience.

Teacher preparation programs need to essentially “KWL” the student-teachers. To maximize the development of the teacher candidates, teacher preparation programs need to know their students and know how they conceptualize equity and social justice, to provide a preparation that is specific to their racial identity and professional development. The following includes the specifics of this implication:

- Teacher preparation programs need to recognize that the one-size-fits-all approach to preparing teachers for the diverse students is ineffective and is contradictory to the pedagogical practices that inform instruction. Teachers come from a variety of diverse experiences and it is those experiences that are going to guide their learning. These experiences, according to Vygotsky, often are influenced by their social and cultural environment. Teacher preparation programs need to interview students, gather information on their background to determine what they need and how the program can create an environment to support their social and cultural growth and development.
- Every teacher preparation program needs to provide teacher candidates the opportunity to have a minor. This creates opportunities for a deeper understanding of equity and social justice for candidates who are ready for a more intense experience. Withholding these opportunities can stunt the growth and development of teacher candidates who are ready for more challenging racial topics.
- Providing a differentiated approach to teacher preparation programs can become a recruitment mechanism to increase the enrollment of students of

color. Students of color are often ignored within the curriculum but providing a threaded equity and social justice curriculum along with differentiated experiences allows the students of color to learn about themselves, the systems, and social justice in a way that can help them become better teachers.

- With the influx of students of color entering teacher preparation programs, affinity group spaces are needed as a brave space for students to be transparent about their experiences and receive the social and emotional support from their peers of color. Students' academic success is positively influenced when affinity groups are in place, as such, it would benefit TPP to create a safe outlet that leads to student success.

Developing a specific and sustainable teacher preparation process will provide teacher candidates exceptional experiences and allow teacher educators to meet students where they are in their identity, racial, and professional development to create teachers ready for diverse students.

Implication Four

Teacher preparation programs create sustainability when they are ongoing and consistent beyond university experiences. Preparing teachers to use equity and social justice must be continuous to allow teachers to grow developmentally and apply what they learn in a variety of settings. Participants in the study shared their desire to continue to learn how to incorporate equitable teacher practices beyond their university experience yet realized there is no clear pathway to do so. In many successful school systems around the world, teacher training is a continual process (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017), yet

teacher preparation programs in the United States thrive on expediency. This implicates the following:

- Professional development delivery needs to slow down for teacher candidates to apply what they learn and deepen new knowledge. Teacher educators can create plans on how teachers incorporate what they learned over a period of time, not just in one semester. Slowing down the pace will allow students the opportunity to gain mastery in topics related to equity and social justice, not just be able to intellectualize it for the sake of being able to contribute to a class discussion.
- School systems and universities can develop a scope and sequence that provides benchmarks and goals for ongoing development. Faculty, especially, have the unique position to continue to offer collaborative professional development with school districts to provide continuity while school districts have the opportunity to align their professional development to meet the specific needs of the new teachers.
- All stakeholders including principals, parents, and community members can contribute to the ongoing professional development of teachers once they enter the classroom and require non-punitive accountability to growth in identity development, equity, and social justice. Teachers are responsible for the outcomes of their students and the stakeholders share the responsibility on the outcomes of the incoming teacher success.

A sustainable mechanism for long-term professional development of teachers implies the contributions of stakeholders, university and school district partnerships, and non-

punitive accountability to growth that is specific to the racial identity and professional development needs of the teacher.

Future Possibilities of Research

The scope of this study examines equity and social justice within a teacher preparation program curriculum and its enactment with teacher candidates during student teaching. This study creates multiple opportunities for future research. As a study of equity and social justice in teacher preparation, this study can be extended to quantitative outcomes that offer an assessment of teacher preparation curriculum and its utilization with teacher candidates. Future studies also must evolve to present equity and social justice language more directly that communicate the magnitude of the racism that plague teacher preparation programs. To emphasize equity more poignantly, future studies should include anti-racism language.

Replication of Study

This study can be replicated in different universities with different teacher candidates and teacher educators. The simple substitution of the location leads to multiple extensions of the study and creates new research opportunities. Additionally, the substitution of the teacher candidates, within the same setting, provides new framing and richness of the study of the location.

Longitudinal Case Study Teacher Candidates

Utilizing a longitudinal study of the participants of this study would provide data that can reveal how teacher preparation that introduces anti-racism and social justice influences enactment years after the program. It can also confirm the recommendation for why providing anti-racism and social justice development over a period of time

beyond the university experience can yield positive results. Participants in this study shared how they are interested in teaching equitably way beyond their teacher preparation program and a longitudinal study would add additional data to support this effort.

Longitudinal Study Teacher Educators

Utilizing a longitudinal study of teacher educators incorporating equity and social justice in their teaching can provide insight on the growth in enactment and identity development of teacher educators who are experiencing professional development around equity and social justice. This study could help determine the effectiveness of this type of development and its utilization over a period of time. As teacher educators grow in their understanding of anti-racism and social justice in addition to identity development, this study could reveal how teacher educators transform when they prepare teachers through the lens of anti-racism and social justice.

Longitudinal Study Teacher Preparation Curriculum

Developing a longitudinal study of the teacher preparation curriculum could provide a way to examine the long-term effects of a curriculum that is working toward incorporating anti-racism coursework and social justice. The study can evaluate the development of a teacher preparation program's progress toward the goal of increasing the number of courses that provide social justice and anti-racism as the foundation, rather than the reliance on a few courses.

Narrative Study of Gina

Gina is the only participant in this study from an ethnically diverse background and expressed deep feelings of empathy for diverse students and a strong desire to create opportunities for them to succeed. To add to the literature to support increasing the

number of diverse teachers in the workforce, this narrative study strives to examine Gina's lived experiences in a deeper way to pull out attributes that make her more likely to enact anti-racism and social justice in the classroom. This study can also explore how to recruit and retain teachers like Gina to provide students with teachers who reflect their diversity and empathize with their experiences.

Qualitative Case Study

Given the restrictions of COVID-19 at the time of data collection, this study can be repeated with similar participants, but include access to teacher candidates' instruction through classroom observations. This would help examine how they perceive anti-racism and social justice to be enacted in the classroom. Classroom observations would provide critical insight that could reveal if what they know about anti-racism and social justice matches what they attempt in the classroom.

Summary and Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to add to the body of research supporting the inclusion of equity and social justice in teacher preparation programs by providing insight into the curriculum and the lived experiences of teacher candidates. To move the study toward that purpose, three research questions were established. Based on the findings concerning the research question, it is concluded that:

- *Treat Equity and Social Justice like Oxygen:* Teacher preparation programs do need to address equity and social justice in the curriculum in a way that is fluid and integral, rather than occasional and random. As concluded in the findings, fewer than 20% of the courses offered specifically address equity and social justice. Yet, the teacher workforce remains majority White and the student

population is growing in its diversity. At what point will teacher preparation programs accept the challenge of offering a comprehensive approach to preparing teachers for diverse students? Based on the findings of this study, many universities have an uncomfortable journey ahead to uncover the rationale behind repeatedly depriving the curriculum of oxygen while simultaneously needing to dismantling White supremacy in the curriculum or run the risk of becoming irrelevant or a relic of days past.

- *Pre-Treat Teacher Educators with Diversity:* To address equity and social justice with fidelity, teacher educators must come from diverse backgrounds and/or have proximity to diverse spaces. As mentioned in the findings, teacher educators should not teach what they have not experienced. Teacher candidates need teacher educators from diverse backgrounds to provide authentic guidance on how to grow in their identity development, and also how to develop the cultural competence needed when teaching diverse students.
- *Treat Teacher Candidates Like Sponges:* As the findings revealed, there were very few courses that address equity and social justice, yet what the teacher candidates received soaked in. Teacher candidates need multiple exposures over time, beyond their program, to fully grasp what it means to teach with equity. The more exposure teacher candidates get with this topic, the more they will feel confident enacting it in the classroom.
- *Treat Teacher Preparation Programs with Boldness:* It will take bold and courageous decisions to dismantle the racist systems and work toward having a teacher preparation program that is authentically immersed with anti-racism and

social justice. It requires changes in faculty, changes in the curriculum, and changes in perceptions. The need for equity and social justice is not going to disappear, therefore teacher preparation programs need to address it directly, intentionally, and continually.

This study is significant in that it provides further insight into how teacher preparation programs can better address equity and social justice so that teacher candidates can work toward teaching in equitable ways. Through a case study approach, this study provides a way for university-based teacher preparation programs, through the lived experiences of teacher candidates, the impact of equity and social justice in a curriculum. Through the lens of constructivism, Critical Race Theory and Vygotsky's Sociocultural theory, this study presents solutions and future research possibilities supported by findings from teacher candidates, grounded in research to support anti-racism and social justice in the curriculum, and in the instruction and enactment in the classroom.

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