Examining Novice Teachers’ Perceptions of Their Preparedness to Teach Culturally Diverse Students

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Examining Novice Teachers’ Perceptions of Their Preparedness to Teach Culturally Diverse Students

Abstract
The purpose of this qualitative research study was to examine the perceptions of novice teachers’ preparedness to teach culturally diverse students using Bell’s (1995) critical race theory and Freire’s (1970) critical pedagogy theoretical frameworks. These theoretical frameworks are consistent in sharing tenets that recognize racial and social injustices as they pertain to education. This study focused on the personal experiences of novice teachers who volunteered to participate in the study. The participants in this study completed the Graduate School of Education teacher education program located in the northeastern region in a Catholic private college. Through eight semi-structured interviews, the study was able to gauge the participants’ perceptions based on their lived experiences. The data were coded and analyzed to understand the participants’ experiences. The findings concluded that the perceptions by the novice teachers are that they are not fully equipped with the knowledge and experience to teach culturally diverse students. The perceptions are that their teacher education program is not thoroughly preparing teachers to educate culturally diverse students. The recommendation for this includes improving the practice of the teacher preparation program by having higher education administrators include a social justice course as a requirement in teacher preparation programs, implementing mandatory student teaching to occur in urban school districts, and instituting policies to support professional development to increase cultural competency. Understanding how to teach culturally diverse students can result in positive social change for teachers and increase the academic achievement of culturally diverse students.

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Examining Novice Teachers’ Perceptions of Their Preparedness
to Teach Culturally Diverse Students

By
Robin Small

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Ed.D. in Executive Leadership

Supervised by
Dr. Frances Wills

Committee Member
Dr. Jennifer Schulman

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. School of Education
St. John Fisher College

August 2021
Dedication

First, I give all praise and honor to God for giving me the strength and wisdom to complete this journey because, without the Good Lord, none of this would be possible. I dedicate this dissertation journey to my beloved husband and my best friend, Mr. Halsey Small. Honey, you have been my unwavering backbone and crutch from day one. You pushed me enough not to give in while making sure my life had a balance. We share this accomplishment. Thank you for your patience, support, sacrifice, and love to our beautiful daughters, Rainey and Haley. To you my young ladies, thank you for assisting by reading my chapters and assisting with my presentation, providing me with necessary feedback. I would like to thank my parents Mary P. Rainey and the late Pericles Rainey, for always believing in me . . . like you always say, mommy, “if they can do it, so can you.”

Thank you to my dissertation chair, Dr. Frances Wills, and my committee member, Dr. Jennifer Schulman, for your guidance and support. I am grateful for your patience, knowledge, and guidance throughout this process.

To my executive mentor, Dr. Michele Chamblin, thank you for sharing your wisdom. You have set me on a path to be a knowledgeable leader. Thank you to Cohort 11, and a special thanks to my teammates – the Dynamic World Changers. I am forever grateful that you have come into my life. You are awesome! Ladies, destined for greatness. I am honored to have been your teammate.

Thank you, Lord, for all you have done to see this journey complete.
Biographical Sketch

Robin Small is the Interim Principal of Valley Stream North Junior/Senior located in Franklin Square, NY. She is a seasoned educator who has dedicated her services to the Valley Stream Central High School District since 2007 in the following roles: Special Education Teacher, Department Chairperson for Special Education, and most recently, as the school's Assistant Principal for the past 3 years. Before coming to VSCHSD, Mrs. Small was a middle school teacher in the Bronx for 9 years. She earned her Bachelor of Arts/Sciences from the City College of New York. Also, she earned three Master of Science degrees from Long Island University (Community Health), Mercy College (Education), and City College of New York (School Building Leader), as well as advanced certification from Queens College (School District Leader). Mrs. Small began her doctoral studies in the Ed.D. Program in Executive Leadership at St. John Fisher College in spring 2019. Mrs. Small conducted a qualitative study on the perceptions of novice teachers' preparedness to teach culturally diverse students under the guidance of Dr. Frances Wills and Dr. Jennifer Schulman. Mrs. Small earned her degree in 2021.
Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to examine the perceptions of novice teachers' preparedness to teach culturally diverse students using Bell's (1995) critical race theory and Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy theoretical frameworks. These theoretical frameworks are consistent in sharing tenets that recognize racial and social injustices as they pertain to education.

This study focused on the personal experiences of novice teachers who volunteered to participate in the study. The participants in this study completed the Graduate School of Education teacher education program located in the northeastern region in a Catholic private college. Through eight semi-structured interviews, the study was able to gauge the participants' perceptions based on their lived experiences. The data were coded and analyzed to understand the participants' experiences.

The findings concluded that the perceptions by the novice teachers are that they are not fully equipped with the knowledge and experience to teach culturally diverse students. The perceptions are that their teacher education program is not thoroughly preparing teachers to educate culturally diverse students. The recommendation for this includes improving the practice of the teacher preparation program by having higher education administrators include a social justice course as a requirement in teacher preparation programs, implementing mandatory student teaching to occur in urban school districts, and instituting policies to support professional development to increase cultural competency. Understanding how to teach culturally diverse students can result in
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Chapter 1: Introduction

It has been over 70 years since *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), ruled that segregation in public schools is unconstitutional (Jacoby-Senghor et al., 2016). Despite this groundbreaking event, people of color in America continue to struggle within the education system (Green & Edwards-Underwood, 2015; Pringle et al., 2010). Even with the numerous years of research regarding the instruction of teachers who can effectively teach students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, concerns about teacher effectiveness continues to grow (Abdal-Haqq, 1998; Asher, 2007; Borko, 2004; Garet et al., 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Shockley & Banks, 2011; Webb-Johnson & Carter, 2007).

Research suggests that teachers’ beliefs about their students' abilities and background impact instructional decision-making effectiveness and strategies (Baggett & Simmons, 2017; Hollins & Torres-Guzman, 2005; Sleeter, 2011). Differential treatment based on a student’s race and culture has been well documented and may be the cause of implicit processes relating to racial prejudice (Halberstadt et al., 2018; Kaiser et al., 2017). These beliefs about students are categorized in various ways. There has been research that examines the experiences that influence preservice teachers’ White ideology and White racial identity development, and perception about teaching diverse students (Groff & Peters, 2012; Matias & Zembylas, 2013; Neville et al., 2000; Peters et al., 2016). It has been argued that many teachers have operated under the notion that students of color are positioned as culturally deprived, disadvantaged, at-risk, or
abnormal (Baggett & Simmons, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Preparing teachers for cultural diversity has important, distinctive, but interrelated meanings and implications (Milner, 2011). However, there is a lack of consensus on how to prepare teachers to be successful in instructing multicultural and multiracial student groups; thus, the lack of clarity in research findings explains the ineffectiveness of many diversity training programs offered in schools of education (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Reiter & Davis, 2011).

Racism continues to persist in American schools (Kohli et al., 2017). The persistence of structural racism in American schools is well documented (Burghardt Du Bois, 1935; Irons, 2002; Kohli et al., 2017; Spring, 2016; Woodson, 1933). That is, how students are graded, advanced, and disciplined have been seen as indicators and examples of systemic racism reflected in school structures (Kohli et al., 2017). As diversity in schools around the country increases and socioeconomic inequality intensifies, racial and ethnic segregation grows (Milner, 2011; Nieto & Bode, 2018). Students in U.S. schools are more likely to be segregated from students of other races and backgrounds than in the recent past. Racism, one form of discrimination, has a history in U.S. schools, and the effects are widespread and long-lasting (Nieto & Bode, 2018).

The most blatant and obvious form of discrimination is the actual withholding of education, as was the case historically with African Americans. To teach enslaved Africans to read was a crime punishable by law (Howe, 1983; Nieto & Bode, 2018; Weiler, 2004). After the Civil War, the south was determined to keep African Americans illiterate. There was a fear of allowing African American civil rights to establish security. Unfair treatment continued to be the law of the land (Anderson, 2016). The struggle for equality in education began for Black people when they were first denied an
education. However, change for Black people appeared to arrive through the Fourteenth Amendment (Anderson et al., 2018). Citizenship was provided to all persons born or naturalized in the United States, including former slaves granted equal protection of the laws (Anderson et al., 2018). The Fourteenth Amendment has become the basis for many landmark Supreme Court decisions. The denial of educational services to Black people moved to the separate but equal schools as defined in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) was a case involving a Black man who looked White, wanting to ride a "White" railcar. The court ruled against Plessy because he had "Black blood" (Ficker, 1999). *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) set the stage for *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), where the schools were separate but did not allow equal access to resources (Ficker, 1999). Even though the case was a landmark, its effects have remained inadequate in providing equity. Negative perceptions about African American students held by White educators are reflected in racial microaggression within k-12 education (Hotchkins, 2016), impacting student growth and achievement.

Public schools in the United States are becoming increasingly culturally and ethnically diverse in their student populations, as per the research of Barnes (2006). These numbers are especially visible in the urban schools where there is an increasing population of immigrants and other minority, k-12 students (Siawtu, 2011; Taylor et al., 2016). Trends vary by region and subgroups; however, one generalization can be asserted that students are an increasingly diverse group (Kim & Connelly, 2019). Between 2000-2001 and 2007-2008, the percentage of White students enrolled in public schools decreased from 61% to 56% (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2016). During the same period, Black and American Indian/Alaskan Native student
enrollment remain unchanged at 17% and 1%, respectively. However, Latinx enrollment
increased from 17% to 21%, and Asian/Pacific Islander enrollment increased from 4% to
5%. Data indicate that the 20 largest public school districts in the nation enroll 11% of all
public school students, or over 5,000,000 students (NCES, 2016). Of the 20 school
districts, 18 enrolled less than 50% of students reported as White (NCES, 2016). These
students' ethnicity consisted of 77% Latinx, 74% Black, 68% American Indian/Alaskan
Native, 34% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 29% White (NCES, 2016). NCES, providing
data for the nation's 13,900 school districts, or approximately 49,000,000 students who
attended k-12 schools in the United States in 2007, reported that 69% of Latinx students
and 64% of Asian elementary/secondary school students spoke a language at home other
than English (NCES, 2016).

Some demographers predict that culturally diverse students will constitute most of
the student population by 2035 and account for 57% by 2050 (U.S. Department of
Education [USDOE], 2016). However, the teaching force continues to consist
predominately of White females (Loewus, 2017). The percentage of White teachers has
remained constant over the past 30 years, at approximately 90% (Naman, 2009).
Therefore, due to the disproportion of White teachers, all students, regardless of race, are
far more likely to be assigned a White teacher (Naman, 2009).

There is evidence that obtaining a teaching certificate does not guarantee the
preparation of an effective teacher who can teach all learners from diverse backgrounds
(Kumar & Hamer, 2012; Kumar & Lauermann, 2018; Milner, 2011). Research illustrates
those teachers are frequently not equipped to deal with diversity within the classrooms
(Banks & Banks, 2012; Cho et al., 2012; Demers, 2016; Milner, 2011; Zeichner, 2012).
Education research illustrates that teachers treat students differently depending on their ethnic background, and differences in teacher behaviors contribute to racial disparities in achievement (Jacoby-Senghor et al., 2016; Warikoo et al., 2016). Sleeter (2001) and Milner (2011) recognize that there is no real effort to collaborate with teacher education programs to recruit and retain teachers of color to the teaching profession. Therefore, there must be an intentional focus on teacher preparation programs and White teacher demographics in the pre-k-12 arena (Bryan, 2017). Teacher preparation programs must strategically plan to provide preservice teachers with opportunities to analyze oneself regarding teaching and disciplinary practices (Allen & White-Smith, 2015; Bryan, 2017; Losen, 2013; Matias, 2013; Milner, 2011). The literature indicates that teacher preparation programs should prepare teachers to create classroom environments conducive to learning for all students (Eckert, 2013; Green & Edwards-Underwood, 2015).

The inequalities in the educational experiences continue to exist between students of color and poverty compared to their White, middle-class counterparts (Anthony-Stevens et al., 2016; DeCastro-Ambrosetti & Cho, 2011). These inequalities have also been highlighted with the most recent COVID-19 health crisis (Cox, 2020; New York Association of School Psychologists [NYASP], 2021). The sudden onset of the virus has created more significant impact on teachers and students’ learning (Middleton, 2020). In the forever changing educational landscape in the United States, preparing teachers for diversity and equity is perhaps the most difficult hardship faced in education (Anthony-Stevens et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond, 2011). All students deserve to have equal access to opportunity no matter their race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, the language
they speak, or the background (Writer & Baptiste, 2017). Teachers from various backgrounds sometimes enter the teaching profession with negative perceptions of students from marginalized racial and economic groups (Darling-Hammond, 2011; Whitaker & Valtierra, 2018). The public education system has failed to support all learners (Anthony-Stevens et al., 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2006). With over 30 years of research on preparing future teachers to teach all students effectively, there continues to be a need to develop knowledge, skills, and perspectives to provide teachers with the ability to approach diversity as a necessity rather than a handicap (Cochran-Smith, 2004). Teacher preparation programs in New York State have the potential to alleviate disparities and social injustices in our current educational system by arming preservice teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively teach culturally diverse students (Green & Edwards-Underwood, 2015; Goldhaber, 2018).

**Problem Statement**

Racial inequalities within the United States education system has impacted the racial achievement gap that has plagued this country since its inception (Nieto & Bode, 2018). As noted in the research, student achievement is affected by multiple variables that are caused by school-related factors. Every student deserves a quality, equitable, rigorous, challenging, and inclusive education that prepares them for a satisfying future (Writer & Baptiste, 2017). Teachers are potentially critical figures empowered to steer their students' future paths (Staats, 2015). In fact, teachers are on the frontlines for facilitating student learning and academic achievement, and are among the most critical determinants of student success (D'amico et al., 2017; Harrison & Lakin, 2018). The development of teacher education programs and certification procedures indicate an
awareness that investing in their education and overall well-being benefits all of society (Green & Edwards-Underwood, 2015; Schellen & King, 2013). However, research shows that teachers' negative beliefs influence the expectations and outcomes of their minority students (Clifford & Walster, 1973; Salerno & Kibler, 2013; Staats, 2015). These stereotypical ideologies and beliefs that are often unconsciously activated and with no provocation by the students are referred to as implicit bias (Devine et al., 2012; Fiske, 2000; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Konrath et al., 2010; Staats, 2015; Whitford & Emerson, 2018). Research has shown that these negative perceptions are common among teachers who work with students who differ from them in their racial, ethnic, gender, and social class backgrounds (Amatea et al., 2012; Banks & Banks, 2012; Demers, 2016; Zeichner, 2012).

As the public school system serves increasing populations of students from multiculturally diverse backgrounds (Naman, 2009) educational leaders must intentionally develop an inclusive learning environment where all students can achieve academic success (Williams, 2018). With the cultural divide, teacher preparation programs are important in preparing prospective teachers to mitigate this divide to improve outcomes for diverse student populations (Kondor et al., 2019). However, preparing teachers who are willing and able to teach in increasingly diverse classrooms may be one of the most challenging tasks facing teacher preparation programs today (Castro, 2010; Kondor et al., 2019). Teacher preparation programs have failed to diversify perspectives and experiences. These program and curricula need to be examined to determine if they are preparing teacher candidates to work in diverse classrooms and communities of color (Green & Edwards-Underwood, 2015).
The New York State Education Department (NYSED) recognized a need to address systemic racism in education that has been deeply rooted in America's culture and instruction. These biases are based on language, gender, skin color, religion, social class, nationality, and ability. NYSED sees that not all students are achieving academic success and seeks to promote equitable opportunities. Therefore, NYSED created a Culturally Responsive Sustainable framework (NYSED, 2018). The four principles include:

- Welcoming and affirming environment
- High expectations and rigorous instruction
- Inclusive curriculum and assessment
- Ongoing professional learning and support

The last bullet reflects the responsibility of higher education faculty and administrators to create a course, or add into existing courses, the opportunity for teacher and leader candidates to identify and address their own implicit bias. Professors have the responsibility to engage preservice teachers in conversation about race that could alleviate implicit biases in the classroom. The ability of preservice teachers to teach students of all races successfully is a necessity for social and racial equity. Without reflection and awareness of racial identity, preservice teachers are unable to explore their race critically, the implications of their race, institutional racism in the educational system, or the racialized experiences of their students (DiAngelo, 2012; Matias & Mackey, 2015).

In order for preservice teachers to completely understand how their ideological stances and constructions of race play out in real-life educational contexts, teacher
education programs must move beyond a fragmented approach to multicultural education towards one that makes direct connections between conceptual understandings of race and the professional choices educators make within the classroom (Banks & Banks, 2012; Demers, 2016; Zeichner, 2012). There is overall evidence that these programs do not offer a curriculum to address racial stereotypes and bias, which can further contribute to inequities in our schools (Green & Edwards-Underwood, 2015). Some studies have shown that there is a lack of conclusive evidence that demonstrates the relationship between completing a diversity training or multicultural education class and diminishing the problems of cultural biases in preservice and in-service teachers (Milner, 2011; Reiter & Davis, 2011). It is necessary to research the perception and perhaps change the minds of preservice teachers' preparedness to teach students of culturally diverse backgrounds because the demographic divide between teacher and student has a significant impact on the achievement gap between White students and students of culturally diverse backgrounds (Amos, 2011; Au & Raphael, 2000; Banks & Banks, 2007; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Elias, 1997; Gay, 2010; Sleeter, 2008; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

**Theoretical Rationale**

The theoretical frameworks employed in this study were Bell’s critical race theory (Bell, 1980, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2016) and Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy theory. The study incorporates the teaching practices of critical pedagogy with the tenets of critical race theory. Critical pedagogy is founded in the intention of explicit advocacy for social justice and transformation within education (Jennings & Lynn, 2005) yet lends insufficient attention to race and overlooks key
questions on power and privilege (Lynn, 2010). However, the frameworks have the same tenets that recognize social justice consciousness, critical thinking, and respect for lived experience and culture as essential to education that is effective, engaging, and liberating for all students (Addleman et al., 2014; Bell, 1980; Delgado & Stefancic, 2011; Freire, 1973; Ladson-Billings, 2006). Both frameworks draw on storytelling, as it is a method to make important claims about race and education (Delgado & Stefancic, 1998; Hughes, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Love 2004; Smith et al., 2007; Solorzano & Yosso 2001, 2002; Stinson 2008; Yosso et al., 2004). Critical race theory and critical pedagogy provide effective lenses when looking into critically engaged teaching and learning about implicit race bias (Kempf, 2020).

The forefather of critical pedagogy, Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator, described a pedagogy that endeavored to free the oppressed populations (Freire, 1970). Freire believed that the purpose of education included raising the critical consciousness of oppressed groups. Also, Freire believed it was a moral imperative that the oppressed group was aware of the structures and systems present in society that perpetuated inequality and injustice in education. When students become conscious of the inequitable historical, social, political, and economic policies, norms, and values that have shaped and determined their place in society, they can truly be in an empowered position to be agents of change in their community (Freire, 1970). Life experiences and the Frankfort School influenced the development of Freire's critical pedagogy (Shih, 2018). Brazil's society, where Freire lived, was politically controlled by a small number of elites, making the environment an autocratic dictatorship. The disparity between the rich and poor was polarizing. Education was inadequate, resulting in high illiteracy rates.
Freire's principle, education as the practice of freedom, pays attention to issues of freedom and authority in education (Shih, 2018). Education for liberation was Freire's main concern, focused on how to educate people to emancipate themselves from the culture of silence, meet the needs of humanity, and develop a more just society (Shih, 2018; Taylor, 1993). Freire’s educational method brings out an individual's critical consciousness and then takes a more serious look at the need to obtain liberation (Freire & Shor, 1987; Shih, 2018). Education liberation often challenges dominance by exposing the absurdity of life's reality (Shih, 2018; Shor & Freire, 1987). Teachers must be aware of themselves as educators and as human beings if they wish to teach students in a non-threatening, anti-discriminatory way. Self-actualization should be the goal of the teacher as well as students (hooks, 1994).

People's perceptions of external reality can be changed with Freire's liberation of education and make individuals more critical and autonomous. Also, Freire argued that education needs to be viewed as a cultural forum, where teachers need to possess the cultural-critique ability that frees them from the constraints of social values to create a democratic conversational context in which students are free to express their own cultural experiences and viewpoints. In turn, this will help students develop independent and critical values, functioning to move society toward democracy (Scholchet & Chiang, 2013).

Students' classroom experiences are dependent upon their teachers' approaches to students' differences (Nieto & Bode, 2018). Students, whether they are disadvantaged socioeconomically or culturally different, enter kindergarten with the same tenacity as socioeconomically advantaged students (Jackson, 2011). What is witnessed in the
classrooms reflect what is discussed in Freire's (1970) pedagogy of the oppressed (Jackson, 2011). For example, students' instructional learning lacks the cognitive stimuli required to engage students and increase their learning (Freire, 1970; Jackson, 2011). Teachers are not tapping into students' strengths and interests, resulting in students not meeting standards and reducing their academic achievements (Freire, 1970; Jackson, 2011). Also, teachers feel oppressed and, therefore, react to it within their lackluster planning and teaching, causing students to respond negatively, creating behavior problems amongst students (Alpert, 1976; Freire, 1970; Jackson, 2011).

In 1994, critical race theory was first used as an analytical framework to access inequity in education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2016). Critical race theory is a movement that analyzed intellectual race, racism, and power. According to Ladson-Billings and Tate (2016), critical race theory is a way of looking at race relations, particularly within the United States, in a broader context than the traditional civil rights approach. Through the lens of critical race theory, race is a social construction acting to divide people in society. Those researchers who employ this theory have been generally committed to social justice. Since the conception of critical race theory, it has become an increasingly permanent fixture within educational research (Ledesma & Calderón, 2015).

Critical race theory looks to help examine the experience of historically underrepresented populations across the K-20 educational pipeline (Ledesma & Calderón, 2015). Critical race theory states that race has been socially constructed and refined over the years, maintaining and reproducing institutionalized racism and White privilege (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2016).
The core principle of critical race theory is that racism is prevalent, institutional, and systemic; racism is not an aberration but rather a fundamental way of organizing society (Sleeter, 2016). When applied to education, as in this study, critical race theory seeks to unveil and explore racism (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2016; Nash, 2013). Critical race theory sets out to explain achievement gaps between students of color and their White peers (Goldhaber & Hansen, 2010; Sleeter, 2017). Educators have found critical race theory vital to their understanding of classroom dynamics, academic testing, and bias (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001). Utilizing critical race theory in this study explores whiteness as property (Harris, 1993; Orozco, 2011), and as the lens for this research potentially connects teachers' biased beliefs towards culturally diverse students to their poor academic performance in school (Brown, 2014; Ladson-Billings 1994; Montecinos & Nielsen, 2004; Sleeter, 2001). This study sought to understand the participants' perceptions of their preparedness to teach in culturally diverse classrooms within an educational system established, designed, and supervised predominately by White administrators.

**Statement of Purpose**

The goal of this qualitative study was to examine the perceptions and beliefs of teachers who completed the graduate teacher education program in a northeastern region in a private college, about their ability to effectively educate culturally diverse students. This study was conducted using purposeful sampling to facilitate semi-structured interviews with eight novice teachers. The selected teachers must had less than 8 years of teaching experience.
Research Questions

Research questions are interrogative statements that narrow the statement of purpose to specific questions (Creswell, 2002). The research questions that guided this qualitative study are:

1. What life experiences and interactions do novice teachers report as having influenced their understanding of race and racism?
2. What are novice teachers' perceptions about how their higher education classroom experiences have prepared them for teaching a culturally diverse student?
3. How effectively does a diversity course impact the understanding of race, culture, and differences, and influence plans and strategies for teaching?

Significance of the Study

This study is important because it may lead to the increased achievement of culturally diverse students (Akiba, 2011; Hughes 2010; Kumar & Lauermann, 2018; Zeichner, 2012). Tackling these racialized perceptions may beneficially influence students’ educational outcomes (Halberstadt et al., 2018) since many teachers have limited personal and professional encounters with individual students who are racially, ethnically, linguistically, socioeconomically, and culturally different from them (Gay & Kirland, 2003; Henfield & Washington, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 2006, Tatum, 1997). This lack of unfamiliarity with diverse students can leave teachers ill-prepared to perform effectively in diverse schools (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Henfield & Washington, 2012).
As the United States continues to become increasingly diverse, teacher education programs must develop programs to provide culturally diverse learning to their preservice teachers. This study can help teacher education programs evaluate their program effectiveness in preparing preservice teacher candidates to teach students from culturally diverse backgrounds.

**Definitions of Terms**

*Culturally Diverse* – a system of beliefs and behaviors that recognizes and respects the presence of all diverse groups in an organization or society, acknowledges and values their sociocultural differences, and encourages and enables their continued contribution within an inclusive cultural context which empowers all within the organization or society (Belfield, 2012).

*Cultural Diversity Course* - Courses with specific objectives, content, or pedagogical skills directed at increasing the knowledge and pedagogy of preservice teachers to successfully utilize strategies for fostering intergroup understanding, awareness, and perception by the student of the diverse ethnic, racial, cultural, and linguistic groups represented in schools and the general population (Arsal, 2015).

*Diversity* – Differences among groups of people and individuals based on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual orientations, geographical area, and types of diversity necessary for addressing the effects of candidate's interactions with diverse faculty, candidates, and P-12 students (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE], 2008).

*Perceptions* – Teacher candidates' understanding of their level of preparedness to teach culturally diverse students.
*Preservice Teacher Candidate* – A college student who is participating in a teacher education program. The student has not earned professional certification but is currently teaching.

*Teacher Preparedness (general)* – is a concept that involves the effectiveness of teachers' training and preparation, teachers' education milieu, teachers' knowledge of their content areas and classroom management, and teachers' ability to provide a safe learning environment for students (Albion, 1998; Darling-Hammond & Young, 2002; Lewis et al., 1999).

*Teacher Preparedness (to address culturally diverse students)* – as it relates to culturally diverse teacher activities and instructional decisions that ensure that teachers can effectively teach all students without exhibiting any stereotyping and prejudice.

**Chapter Summary**

There is significant literature that has revealed that preservice teachers form stereotypes and beliefs about diverse students (Desai, 2015; Kang, 2005). Teacher beliefs about students can be characterized in different ways (Baggett & Simmons, 2017). Research that studies teachers' beliefs about diversity represents a vital path towards developing more culturally competent educators who practice teaching in a way that understands all students to be individuals with valuable knowledge and experiences (Banks & Banks, 2012; Gay, 2010; Plata, 2011; Trent et al., 2008). Teacher educators must address how racialized beliefs and practices are manifested in social, legal, and educational contexts because our teachers do not reflect the same diversity (Baggett & Simmons, 2017).
In this study, using the critical pedagogy theory and critical race theory we reveal how preservice teachers internalize race and racism through their teacher education preparation program. Critical pedagogy theory focuses on how to educate people to free themselves from the culture of silence and to meet the needs of humanity and produce a more socially just society (Freire, 1970; Shih, 2018; Taylor, 1993). Freire’s education of liberation can change people’s perception of external reality (Shih, 2018; Shor & Freire, 1987). Critical pedagogy theory will help teachers understand that students are not the only learners in the classroom. Using the critical race theory is a valuable theoretical framework that allow researchers to challenge the dominant narrative as it relates to experiences of race and how racism contributes to inequalities (Bell, 1980). Also, without researching White ideology, White teachers and teachers of color cannot successfully bind their racial liberation to their culturally diverse students (Matias & Mackey, 2015). However, this may be a problematically interpreted as the White savior role, hoping to free culturally diverse students without realizing their racial culpability in maintaining whiteness unconsciously (Matias, 2013; Matias & Mackey, 2015).

There is literature that supports the idea that changes need to come from the teachers and not the students to produce academic success for all students (Mania-Singer, 2017). The research illustrates the need to examine current teacher preparation programs to determine the needs of preservice teachers so they can become aware of students' cultural differences to be more effective in addressing the learning needs of all students (Hossain, 2015). The most effective teacher education programs allow White preservice teachers to reduce their biases, beliefs, and stereotyping as they move through stages of
White identity development (Chavez, 2007; Chicola, 2007; Ferrara et al., 2010; Liang & Zhang, 2009; Lonnquist et al., 2009; Villegas & Davis, 2008; Wiggins et al., 2007).
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction and Purpose

This literature review aims to examine relevant literature regarding teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to teach culturally diverse students and their unintentional and intentional racial bias and beliefs that may impact their effectiveness as classroom teachers. It is necessary to review this topic more so than ever due to the inequalities the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated in education with students of color compared to that of White students (Middleton, 2020). The literature review is organized into the following sections: preservice and novice teachers' beliefs and biases, the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs, and preservice teachers' perceptions of culturally diverse students.

Teachers’ Beliefs

The United States public school system is continually changing and comes with dissatisfied stakeholders (Shockley & Banks, 2011). The most prevalent concern of stakeholders is that teachers are not equipped to serve diverse students due to teachers’ beliefs (Abdal-Haqq, 1998; Borko, 2004; Garet et al., 2001; Shockley & Banks, 2011). Researchers Shockley and Banks (2011) investigated preservice teachers’ perceptions of racial and cultural bias. This qualitative study used the transformative learning theory lens. Transformative learning theory is an extension of consciousness by transforming one’s basic worldview and specific capacities (Elías, 1997; Shockley & Banks, 2011). In teacher education, the primary objective of transformative learning theory is to dismantle
racist, sexist, and other oppressive beliefs so students from culturally diverse backgrounds receive equitable education experiences. For this study, the transformative curriculum was used to engage activities that brought reflection to issues related to race and cultural bias that would result in changes in one’s self-perception, a change in behavior, and understanding of institutional systems (Shockey & Banks, 2011). These authors stated this is accomplished through reflections of one’s self-perception that results in a change.

The transformative curriculum included engaging in activities, exercises, and coursework looking through a social justice framework, reading various course materials and having discussions focused on race and culture, using classroom demonstrations, and journaling. The curriculum was divided into three sections. First, there was self-expression/arts as safe conceptual tools. The arts were used to increase thinking and consciousness (Greene, 1995; Shockley & Banks, 2011). One of the activities to employ self-reflection as a transformative tool was for the teachers to create a paper mache mask. The front of the mask included self-selected symbols and images that represented how they see the world. The inside of the mask only illustrated what they see about themselves. This activity allowed the teachers to look deep within (Shockley & Banks, 2011).

The second section of the curriculum was reflective practice as an unearthing tool. Teachers are not provided an opportunity and/or experience to reflect on their actions due to teaching demands. However, other practitioners have time to reflect while doing their job (Schwartz & Schon, 1983; Shockley & Banks, 2011). Teachers were asked to write about their experiences in the classroom. Prompts were used, such as write about a time
when you felt inadequate as a teacher. The final curriculum section was called deconstructing White privilege. Using McIntosh’s (1989) article, *Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*, the teachers could deconstruct White privilege. One of the transformative curriculum activities required the teachers to create a knapsack and then place items in there that gave them privilege in society. For example, a Black male student placed the word male and tall into his knapsack, which translated into this student believing he had more privilege over a female and short student. Addressing the word privileged in this non-threatening way first ensured that when the discussion of White privilege ensued, the White students would participate in the discussion and feel less defensive (Shockley & Banks, 2011). For example, teacher-student journals allowed teachers to become aware of their own biases and assumptions.

The study participants included 60 full-time classroom teachers enrolled in a master’s degree program centered on social justice, critical reflection, and the creation of democratic classrooms. The study was conducted throughout the 2-year program. The ages of the participants were between 23 and 65. Their k-12 teaching experience ranged from 1 year to over 20 years. Eighty-eight percent of the participants were White and female, similar to the representation of teachers in U.S. public schools (Bryan, 2017; Milner, 2011; Shockley & Banks, 2011). The study focused on the following questions: (a) What do you believe society thinks about issues related to class, culture, race, and sexuality? and (b) What do you think about these issues; is it a different form or the same as what you think society believes? Data were collected throughout the study. The student teachers who participated completed 20 journal entries, 32 WebCT posts, and wrote personal reflections periodically. The data were collected at the beginning,
midpoint, and end of the 2-year program. Also, artifacts from self-expression/arts activities and classroom observations were used in the data collection. The data collected provided an opportunity to understand teachers and their educational journey, beliefs, and disposition about race and culture during their 2 years in the program. The data was facilitated by the qualitative software program Ethnograph v. 5.0, which helped sort data and determine the common themes. This was used even though this was a qualitative study and not considered an ethnographic study. The findings revealed evidence of transformation over the 2-year program. Teachers entered the program, denying connection to bias; however, a year later, the teachers were willing to consider that they were biased. When they completed the program, the teachers believed that they surpassed society to deconstruct privilege (Shockley & Banks, 2011). The study’s limitation was that it did not illustrate whether teachers used the knowledge they had gained to become activists and/or advocated for social justice after the program concluded, either inside or outside of their classroom. Even though the teachers were exposed to the course over 2 years, it is difficult to determine if it was gained from the learning experience or they would have developed it on their own (Shockley & Banks, 2011).

The trends in education show increasing diversity in the student population, in contrast to the majority of teachers remaining White and female. Researchers Taylor et al. (2016) who were also teacher evaluators of the student teachers, had become concerned with the lack of cultural awareness that preservice teachers had considering that most of them had previously taken multicultural education courses. Therefore, they examined the demographic landscape of teacher candidates’ beliefs in teacher education
programs, determining that the trends would likely not change in the near future (Taylor et al., 2016). The Taylor et al. (2016) quantitative study used the Diversity Orientation Survey to examine preservice teachers' perceptions of multicultural education and teaching culturally and linguistically diverse learners. The survey’s responses were based on a Likert scale of 1 to 5, with 5 indicating strongly agree and 1 indicating strongly disagree. Sample statements included such items as: it is important for people to examine possible personal prejudices; in the United States, members of racial and ethnic groups have equal opportunities to be successful; students from economically disadvantaged families should be expected to achieve as well as those from more advantaged families. The participants were full-time, Blue Ridge College students between the ages of 18 and 24. The students were either early childhood or secondary education majors who had completed one semester of teacher education (Taylor et al., 2016). The participant sample population consisted of 57 females (71%), 23 males (29%); 85% White, 13% Latinx and 3% other race. The findings illustrated that preservice teachers were aware of the challenges immigrants and other minority students, especially linguistically and culturally diverse students, face in k-12 schools (Taylor et al., 2016). Results indicated that the preservice teachers were willing to study and become more aware of diversity in order to operate and teach with less difficulty (Taylor et al., 2016). These results illustrate that cultural diversity is an important subject matter, but it does not reform the stereotyped thinking that comes from fear which can lead to bias; however, it is a place to begin (Rhoads, 1995; Taylor et al., 2016).

Baggett and Simmons (2017) conducted a qualitative case study to examine how two White teacher candidates understood and conceptualized racial profiling, especially
in educational contexts. The study took place at a predominately White institution in the southeastern United States. This teacher preparation program mirrored traditional teacher education programs in the US, comprising White, middle-class, Christian, and female students (Baggett & Simmons, 2017). The participants for the case study were recruited through an e-blast. Two teachers, Susan and Catherine (pseudonyms) were third-year candidates in a 4-year undergraduate teacher preparation program. The qualitative case study was conducted to answer the following questions:

1. In what ways have teacher candidates experienced profiling?
2. In what ways have teacher candidates observed racial profiling in educational contexts (a) as students, and (b) as teacher candidates?
3. How might critical race reflections prompt teacher candidates to examine their own racial biases?

The study was bounded in time by 2 academic years and limited to a particular topic. Data collection and analysis were ongoing over the course of four semesters.

The researchers analyzed the data using the six-step thematic content analysis approach (Baggett & Simmons, 2017; Braun & Clark, 2006). Step 1 included an open reading of the data, and comments were made on the transcripts for initial inductive codes. In Step 2, the inductive codes were generated at a semantic level for each case. The data were reorganized according to the themes and patterns that emerged across the codes. In Step 3, potential codes were compared, deductively developed relating to broad themes in critical race theory and existing literature on preservice teacher beliefs. In Step 4, each code was checked for patterns and representation of the participants' themes. In Step 5, the themes were defined and named. Lastly, in Step 6, the researchers wrote and
warranted their assertions. After the final sixth step, the researchers crafted positionality statements about research identities as the data analysis process started. The participants described the disparate disciplinary practice, academics tracking, and teachers' misperceptions of students' abilities.

The data illustrated that both teacher candidates were able to observe and articulate that students of color were more frequently and more harshly disciplined than their White peers, that students of color were more likely to be in lower level academics or non-honors/AP classes, and that teachers were more likely to perceive students of color as lazy or oppositional (Baggett & Simmons, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1994). However, one participant did not appear to recognize that she risked becoming part of a system to continue these patterns unless she decided to become an agent of change (Baggett & Simmons, 2017). The findings confirmed the insights of other researchers who determined that teacher preparation programs need to embrace experiential cross-cultural and community-based learning to afford opportunities for preservice teachers to experience encounters that will prompt them to move through development stages and come to a better comprehension of who they are and who their students are as racial and cultural beings. The Baggett and Simmons research concluded that more research is needed to understand how teacher education programs integrate current events regarding race into their curricula to explore how new, current, and evolving societal issues around race and racism influence students' perceptions and interpersonal interactions.

Halberstadt et al. (2018) conducted a qualitative and observational study exploring how preservice teachers react to emotion based on their students' race. The participants included 40 college students enrolled in a teacher education program at a
large university in the United States' southeast region. The participants were in their second or third year of the program and self-identified as preservice teachers. Seventy-five percent were female. The participants identified as White \((n = 32)\), Black \((n = 2)\), multiracial \((n = 5)\), or Asian American \((n = 1)\). The preservice teachers were tested on their perceptions of the students' emotions as different faces were displayed to them. The study was about emotional understanding. Conducted were a series of multilevel models. The participants identified the emotions expressed by Black and White male and female faces to access racialized emotion accuracy and anger bias; participants also judged hostility in videos of four Black and White boys' misbehaviors with peers in school access racialized attributions.

The study focused on three components of emotions that they thought would be most affected by racial prejudice of the perception of it. These feelings were emotion recognition, which is the level to which an individual accurately perceives others’ expressions; anger bias, which is the level to which individuals inaccurately perceive anger in others when it is not present; and hostility attribution, which is the degree to which individuals interpret behavior as hostile. This study showed that Black students' emotions were less accurately perceived than the emotions of the White students. The findings across the three types of emotion-related perceptions (recognition accuracy, anger bias, and hostility attributions) gave a consistent and negative picture of preservice teachers' racialized thinking about emotion (Halberstadt et al., 2018). The Black students were more often perceived by preservice teachers to be hostile. This study was different from other studies as it primarily focused on the emotions of children. This is an often-
ignored factor when it comes to teachers connecting with their students. While being a more explorative study, it did lack in sample size.

Bryan (2017) examined the opinion views about Black males, in the school-to-prison pipeline into the criminal justice system by way of k-12 classrooms (Allen & White-Smith, 2015; Losen, 2013). This qualitative study took place in an elementary school where the student body was 98% White and 2% African American. Less than 1% of the student population received free and/or reduced lunches. Ninety-eight percent of the teachers were White, 1% of the teachers were Black and Latinx. The administrators were a White female principal and a White male assistant principal. Also, there were two White female guidance counselors.

The researcher drew from Lortie's (2002) notion of the apprenticeship of observation teaching, which describes the phenomenon in teaching, meaning teachers teach the way they are taught (Borg, 2004; Mewborn & Tyminski, 2006). This research purports that as young children, White teachers receive stereotypical messages about Black boys in society and k-12 schools, and that these stereotypes and biases are often passed down from one generation to the next such as from teacher to preservice teacher, to White elementary school teacher (Bryan, 2017). The research goes on to say that when White children decide to pursue teaching as a potential career, they bring along the deficit perspectives they inherit from society, k-12 schools, the media, and popular press into their preservice teacher education programs.

The researcher focused on Black boys and the problematic nature of student teacher preparation program (STPP) from early childhood to secondary education, leading to a brief discussion regarding White teachers' socialization in society at large.
and preservice teacher education programs. The study took place at Blaney Elementary School [pseudonym], 15 miles from the university suburban area. The study revealed that due to limited preparation in culturally relevant pedagogies and class management, White preservice teachers enter and leave in-service teaching with deficit thinking about Black boys (Bryan, 2017). As a result, according to this study, they disproportionately targeted them for subjective school discipline. At the same time, they sustained a cycle of intergenerational legacies of negative views and disproportionate disciplining of Black boys, which perpetuates the issues within STPPs (Hotchkins, 2016). As also noted in the research, when students of color attend predominately White schools like Blaney Elementary, they are often misjudged and misunderstood, becoming victims of racial microaggressions because they often do not fit within mainstream White middle-class schooling expectations (Bryan, 2017; Hotchkins, 2016).

Whitford and Emerson (2018) investigated discriminatory discipline practices used with culturally and linguistically diverse students through a quantitative lens. The purpose of this research was to examine the potential that positive empathy interventions can have on reducing implicit bias toward Black individuals, as demonstrated by White female preservice teachers. The research sought to answer this question: can a brief intervention designed to solicit empathy for Black individuals reduce the implicit bias demonstrated by White female preservice teachers?

In the aforementioned study, the participants included 34 White female English-speaking undergraduate students in a teacher preparation program at a public midwestern university. Seventeen participants were randomly assigned to the experimental group, and 17 were randomly assigned to the control group. The overall experiment included: (a) a
completed demographic questionnaire, (b) a completed Implicit Association Test before the intervention, (c) experimental and control group reading passages, (d) participants’ typed thoughts and feelings for 10 minutes in regard to the given experimental or control group writing prompt, and (e) completion of the Implicit Association Test following the intervention. The experimental group read passages consisted of 10 personal experiences of explicit racism faced by Black peers from the same university campus. The experimental group was asked to imagine themselves as Black individuals in an adverse situation. The control group read a passage outlining the integration of technology in elementary science lessons. The control group writing prompt asked them about the technology integration they read (Whitford & Emerson, 2018).

The participants' implicit social cognition was measured using the Implicit Association Test (Whitford & Emerson, 2018). The Implicit Association Test (IAT) measures implicit belief by gauging automatic reaction time to stimulus associations. The researchers selected this measurement tool because discriminatory behavior based on race has been found to be significantly better predicted by the IAT than by self-reported measures (Greenwald et al., 2009; Whitford & Emerson, 2018). Also, criterion validity studies have determined that the Implicit Association Test has effectively predicted judgments and behaviors and can predict membership in interest groups (Whitford & Emerson, 2018; Wittenbrink & Schwarz, 2007).

Data analysis indicated a significant decrease in bias for preservice teachers in the experimental group compared to the control group. Researchers Whitford and Emerson (2018) indicated in the results that empathy intervention might be the foundation for preparation in similar work within the teacher education training program. The results
also indicated that teacher training aimed at racial consciousness and personal awareness of implicit bias holds promise for promoting empathy within the education workforce. The small sample size of 34 preservice teachers who were all White females created limitations for this study. The study could be conducted with a significantly larger sample pulled from across multiple geographic locations (Whitford & Emerson, 2018). The researchers said that further research was needed to demonstrate that the Implicit Association Test's empirical ability to predict meaningful classroom behavior was needed. School discipline inequalities are one major contributor to the prison pipeline for at-risk children and adolescents, but more research using this test could demonstrate better results (Whitford & Emerson, 2018).

Preservice teachers' beliefs about English learners are critical as they enter the teaching profession (Salerno & Kibler, 2013). All teachers hold beliefs that influence their behaviors and decisions on the classroom level (Eisenhart et al., 2001; Harrison & Lakin, 2018; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1993; Peck & Tucker, 1973; Richardson 1996). To further examine preservice teachers' implicit and explicit attitudinal beliefs about English learners, Harrison and Lakin (2018) conducted a quantitative study. Harrison and Lakin (2018) defined explicit attitudes as the conscious mind's results that come across as attainable and reportable by the holder. At the same time, implicit attitudes come without awareness and may be invoked by outside influenced actions. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are preservice teachers' implicit attitudinal beliefs about English learners compared to mainstream students?
2. What (if any) correlations are there between implicit and explicit attitudes and beliefs?

3. How do explicit attitudes and beliefs relate to each other?

The sample included 116 preservice teachers from a large southern university in the US. In the sample, 83.5% were female, with only 1% speaking English as their native language.

The quantitative research design for the Harrison and Lakin (2018) study included participants answering explicit attitude surveys and the IAT. The explicit attitude survey was administered before the IAT. The explicit attitude survey included 25 items categorized as attitudes about English learners, language acquisition beliefs, pedagogy beliefs, perceptions of the impact of inclusion, and perceptions of teachers' support. Responses included a four-point scale of strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree to statements of beliefs and at a three-point scale of seldom/never, some of the time, most or all of the time to statements of practice impact.

The IAT is a computer-based test that requires quick judgments about stimuli presented on the screen. Respondents were provided with words that IAT researchers have determined to represent good and bad attitudinal constructs. Also, respondents were given words that represent the nominal constructs of English learners and mainstream students. The IAT is a method for indirectly measuring the strengths of association among concepts (Harrison & Lakin, 2018; Nosek et al., 2007). The survey seeks to measure implicit attitudes by their underlying automatic evaluation. IAT was selected because of its use in various research in other fields attempting to quantify implicit attitudes.
The findings revealed that preservice teachers generally hold positions of implicit beliefs about English learners and expressed positive expectations for working with English learners and school support (Harrison & Lakin, 2018). Previous research by Harrison and Lakin (2018) with preservice teachers found negative performance against working with ELL students. This study would benefit from including qualitative research that includes observation and interviews to provide an in-depth view and voice to understanding beliefs towards ELLs (Nieto & Bode, 2018).

The Peters et al., (2016) study was a reexamination of a previous study on student teachers' White racial identity (Groff & Peters, 2012; Peters et al., 2016). This study examined the changes in student teachers' White racial identity, color-blindness, and their perceptions of color students. In this study Peters et al. (2016) wanted to spotlight preservice teachers' self-awareness and perceptions of students of color by using a mixed method research approach. The research design included the use of a quantitative survey and responses to open-ended questions that looked to address the following research questions:

1. Do student teachers placed in schools identified as high needs, with greater than 50% of students of color, show change in White racial identity following a semester of student teaching?
2. Do student teachers placed in schools identified as high needs, with greater than 50% of students of color, show change in color-blindness following a semester of student teaching?
3. What are student teachers’ initial perceptions about their diverse placements?
4. What are student teachers’ perceptions about working with students of color following a semester of student teaching in high needs schools?

The aforementioned study took place at a private institution in the northeastern part of the United States that enrolled nearly 5,000 students, and the setting for these student teachers was in high need schools. There was an initial sample of 87 White preservice teachers, but the final sample tally consisted of 76 students. Using the White Racial Consciousness Development Scale-Reviewed (WRCDS-R) and Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS), scores from the quantitative survey demonstrated that student teachers were more color-blind about institutional discrimination and blatant racial issues. Responses to the open-ended questions illustrated preservice teachers started their student teaching experience with biased expectations towards their students of color. These preservice teachers believed that the students had exhibited a bias towards them but, their explanations neglected the impact of sociological factors, such as institutional racism and historical oppression (Peters et al., 2016). The data showed that even though there were no significant White racial identity changes, there was a significant change in color blindness. This demonstrated that preservice teachers became less aware of institutional discrimination, which represents a denial that racism exists and disbelief that policies are needed to eradicate the history of the consequences of racism that have permeated institutions (Neville et al., 2000; Peters et al., 2016).

Matias and Zembylas (2013) examined how the whiteness ideology among White teacher candidates in an urban teacher education program altered their emotions of disgust to false claims of love, empathy, and caring. The researchers believed that it was important that all educators reflect their racial emotions due to the antiracist educational climate
(Matias & Zembylas, 2013). This was an interpretative analysis approach that consisted of 25 participants (23 females and two males). The preservice teachers grew up in middle-class White communities in the Rocky Mountain area in the United States. The preservice teachers were enrolled in the first course titled social foundations and issues of cultural diversity. This is a continuation of previous research in 2011 that evaluated and reconceptualized the U.S. urban teacher education program, in which one of the researchers taught (Matias, 2013).

The Matias and Zembylas study in 2013 seemed to illustrate students' continued beliefs in Whiteness ideology, but they could disguise their racially fueled language towards students of color. The following four questions guided this research:

1. Interpretively, how are White teacher candidates' emotions racialized?
2. How is the emotion of disgust in White teacher candidates' assignments entangled with whiteness ideology?
3. In what ways is the racial angst of White teacher candidates expressed as an emotional projection?
4. How do we, as teacher educators, experience and respond to these emotions to evaluate and reconceptualize urban teacher education (Matias & Zembylas, 2013, p. 323).

The findings demonstrated these White preservice teachers' emotional experiences were connected to White privilege and White ideology, which in turn, influenced the meanings by which these teacher candidates interpreted their emotional encounters with issues of race and racism (Matias, 2011). Findings revealed a similar argument made by Valenzuela (1999), that although teachers claim to be caring, they may lack authentic
care for their underprivileged students due to racial and cultural bias. Thus, according to this research, teachers act as if they care, but they do not care. Emotion makes an appearance, but it is not genuine. This is an example of how diversity courses affect preservice teachers' unconscious or conscious bias towards students of color, yet continuing the disparities in the educational experience of students of color.

Biased perceptions of culturally diverse students are still prevalent in preservice teachers. These studies illustrate that the teacher’s role in the racial achievement gap centers around the teachers and their preparedness to teach culturally diverse students. Even with many studies examining racial prejudice and biased beliefs, the research revealed similar outcomes. These studies reinforced the notion that teacher education programs have not addressed race, equality, and justice with preservice teachers to better equip them for culturally diverse classrooms. More importantly, these studies illustrated the idea that culturally diverse students will never be treated equally until teacher preparation programs change how students are perceived in their teacher preparation programs.

**Preparedness of Teacher Preparation Programs**

It has been stated by the previous United States administration's former Education Secretary, Arne Duncan, that most of the nation's 1,450 schools, colleges, and the Department of Education collectively were not doing an adequate job at preparing preservice teachers for the reality of the 21st century classroom (Goldhaber, 2019). Teacher preparation programs (TPPs) have received a great deal of policy research attention lately (Goldhaber, 2019). The idea is that the preparation for formal classroom responsibilities should improve the readiness of teacher candidates. However, it is
unclear if the value of formalized preservice teacher education is preparing teacher candidates (Goldhaber, 2019). The researcher focused on comparing teachers in traditional teacher education programs versus alternatives such as Teach for America.

There are not many empirical studies that suggest how teacher performance should be measured. For decades, qualitative studies have been the main tool to conduct research on teacher preparation programs. However, in the past decade, large scale quantitative TPP research has emerged. Goldhaber (2019) data systems have linked teachers' effectiveness to students' test scores or summative teacher performance rating, known as outcomes-based evidence about teacher education. Goldhaber (2019) examined the outcome of TPPs by analyzing student test scores. The scores were analyzed using the frequent metric to judge performance (Goldhaber, 2019). Two types of research were conducted. The first was related to new teacher effectiveness. The research described more fully in outcomes-based evidence about teacher education, which found weak relationships between preservice teachers' characteristics and academic experiences and student achievement (Goldhaber, 2019).

The second study was related to cross-sectional research on the system that regulates entrance to the teacher workforce in different countries. This research found that the United States fared unfavorably with teacher preparation to other countries with high achieving students. The finding showed a lack of difference between teachers who entered the profession through traditional and alternative routes. The study revealed that there was not enough empirical evidence to determine if there was a connection between TPPs' features and teaching workforce outcomes (Goldhaber, 2019). Goldhaber (2019)
added that the lack of evidence on the importance of the features of TPPs was primarily due to data deficiencies.

In preparing preservice teachers to teach diverse learners, they must enroll in a multicultural class (Amos, 2011). It has been documented that White preservice teachers demonstrated resistance to these multicultural courses (Amos, 2011; Cochran-Smith, 2004). This contrasts with preservice students of color, who demonstrated commitment to multicultural teaching, social justice, and providing children of color an academically challenging curriculum (Amos, 2011; Sleeter, 2001).

Within these teacher education programs, it is important to analyze how students of color and White students react, receive, and respond to each other when they interact and communicate with each other (Amos, 2011). Amos (2011) investigated what kind of interaction occurs between minority and White preservice teachers in a multicultural education class and how they impact minority preservice teachers' participation in class. The participants for this qualitative study consisted of four minority preservice teachers: a Native American female in her 30s, a Korean female in her early 20s who had been adopted by a White family, a Mexican American female in her early 20s, and a bi-ethnic female in her early 20s whose father was Mexican, and whose mother was White. The participants were enrolled in a teacher education program and were majoring in elementary education at a predominately White university in a rural area of the Pacific northwest. The participants took the required multicultural course taught by the researcher (Amos, 2011). In total, there were six minority students in the class of 30 students. Amos (2011) used a small sample of participants to ensure the study elicited meaningful experiences. The participants were interviewed at the end of the quarter,
once the course was completed. The researchers kept a journal to chronicle her experience in the class every time the class met. The researcher jotted down comments and observations of both the White and minority students and their interaction patterns. The data collection revealed three important themes that emerged from the investigation: frustration, despair, and fear (Amos, 2011).

The findings from the Amos (2011) study illustrated that the frustration came from the White students exhibiting insensitivity to race and ethnicity. The White students presented a joking arrogance toward race. The despair of the minority students stemmed from the frustration and irritation by being dominated by their White peers' comments. For example, a White female student commented that she came to relate with the Mexican group because she had a half Mexican boyfriend and Mexican friends. These seemingly harmless comments triggered anger among the participants (Amos, 2011).

The fear among the minority students was generated from their being outnumbered by the White students, and their concerns about speaking their minds. The White students would become argumentative during a class discussion around race experience. These aggressive discussions were not limited to the participants, but also towards the minority professor of the class. The fear of ostracism by their White peers made the participants silent (Amos, 2011). Through a discussion, the findings revealed that many White students left with their biased beliefs intact, even after taking a multicultural education course. If the White preservice teachers exhibited these types of resistance in a class that would prepare them to teach diverse schools (Amos, 2011), one could imagine how they would impact students' learning when in their future classrooms.
A factor that also should be examined is the effectiveness of the instructor teaching this multicultural class. Perhaps the instructor could have done more to provide a more receptive learning space for the participants.

Due to the United States' forever changing landscape in the education system, it has become a challenge for teacher preparation programs to prepare their teachers for diversity and equity (Anthony-Stevens et al., 2016; Darling-Hammond, 2011; Milner, 2011). The schools are diversified, but disparities continue among students of color, perpetuating the failure of public education's ability to effectively teach all learners (Anthony-Stevens et al., 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2006). Researchers Anthony-Stevens et al. (2016) examined the teacher education program's diversity in a predominately White public university in the United States' rural northwest region. This was a qualitative method study using ethnographic and autoethnographic research design. The majority of the students were White, which gave a false reason why there was a lack of emphasis on diversity in the course content and field experiences (Anthony-Stevens et al., 2016). This study included one professor and four preservice education students from early childhood primary and secondary education programs. The data revealed that the participants unanimously agreed that diversity does not exist in their region, which equated to the minimal importance placed on understanding diversity when preparing to be a teacher. Also, it demonstrated that preservice teachers would become ill-equipped to develop skills to navigate diversity in local and global education landscapes (Anthony-Stevens et al., 2016).

This research by Kumar and Lauermann (2018) is seen as a continuation of the research conducted by Kumar and Hamer (2013). The study examined the relationship
between preservice teachers' experiences in teacher education, their beliefs about culturally diverse students, and endorsed instructional practices within social reconstructionist and achievement goal theory frameworks (Kumar & Lauermann, 2018). This study revolved around three research questions:

1. Are the number of semesters spent in teacher education and the number of courses taken that explicitly focus on multicultural education related to preservice teachers' cultural beliefs as well as their endorsement of mastery and performance-focused instructional practices?

2. Are negative beliefs about diversity associated with reluctance to adjust instructional practices to the needs of culturally diverse and minority students, as well as an endorsement of less mastery and more performance-focused instructional practices?

3. Does reluctance to adjust instructional practices to the needs of culturally diverse and minority students mediate the associations between preservice teachers' negative beliefs about diverse students and their endorsement of mastery and performance-focused instructional practices? (Kumar & Lauermann, 2018, p. 429).

This cross-sectional study used data from 2,129 preservice teachers. To be a participant, they had to be present on the day of data collection in one of the targeted teacher education courses. The majority of the sample consisted of female and White preservice teachers, and their ages ranged from 17 to 55. Data were collected over 12 semesters to obtain a large sample representative of teacher education students across various stages of their licensure. Most of the measures in this study (except for personal
characteristics) were assessed on a scale from 1, meaning not at all true to 5, meaning very true. The findings revealed an association between experiences in teacher education and student diversity endorsement of mastery and performance-oriented practices and reluctance to adjust instruction to culturally diverse students' needs (Kumar & Lauermann, 2018). The number of multicultural education courses completed negatively predicted preservice teachers' stereotyped beliefs and positively predicted mastery orientation.

After conducting this study, it was realized that in need of preparing teachers for a changing world, teacher education programs should provide preservice teachers with opportunities to become increasingly aware of their prejudices and stereotype beliefs. It is recommended that dialogue needs to begin in order to develop effective instructional practices in diverse settings. The dialogue also must center on the potential impact of teachers' biased beliefs on students' academics, social, and psychological development. These discussions should permeate every course in teacher education programs. Also, programs must increase field experience opportunities to develop an appreciation for context-specific understandings and practices (Kumar & Lauermann, 2018).

Schellen and King (2014) explored cultural opportunities that prepared preservice teachers in a certification program to teach diverse populations. This study's population consisted of 53 undergraduate preservice teachers (PSTs) enrolled in the last 2 years of a middle grade (fourth to eighth) teacher certification program at a large public university in the southwestern United States. The university divided the 53 PSTs into two groups. Each group completed the field experience and student teaching in a different district. Group 1 completed their field experience and student teaching in District A. The
percentage of economically disadvantaged students in District A was 41.5% of the student body. At the same time, the sample in District B was almost double that at 80.8% identified as economically disadvantaged. Most students in District A were White, and the majority for District B were Latinx. Schellen and King (2014) used a modified, grounded theory approach. The findings suggested that preservice teachers responded to multicultural opportunities and might have been growing more accustomed to diversity. The literature and the results from this study suggest that teacher preparation programs should offer multicultural courses, regular educational courses with an embedded multicultural component, and field-based experiences to their PSTs (Schellen & King, 2013).

Another researcher, Siwatu (2011), sought to explain the reasons behind the high rates of teacher attrition in urban schools. Some researchers have attributed the trends in teacher attrition to inadequate teacher preparation and low self-efficacy beliefs. This study was created to investigate the context-specific nature of prospective teachers’ sense of preparedness and self-efficacy beliefs. Siwatu (2011) examined the influence that school contextual factors have on American preservice teachers’ sense of preparedness and culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy appraisals. The researcher used a counterbalanced, repeated measure experimental design. The researcher used the experimental design to determine the impact of the two experimental conditions, commonly referred to as the independent variable, on a predetermined outcome (Creswell, 2005).

This study’s participants were 34 preservice teachers (elementary, middle, and secondary levels) enrolled in a teacher education program located in the southwest
region. The sample consisted of 21 female students (62%) and 13 male students (38%). The participants’ racial background was as follows: 21 White (62%), five African American (14%), four Latinx (12%). The average age of the sample preservice students was 22.21. Sixteen (47%) of the participants were juniors, and 15 (44%) were seniors. A small number of participants were post-baccalaureate and graduate students (Siwatu, 2011).

The quantitative data analysis for this study used a series of paired-samples t-tests to determine if there were significant differences in preservice teachers’ sense of preparedness to teach in an urban school compared to a suburban school (Siwatu, 2011). A paired-samples t-test was also used to reveal significant differences in preservice teachers’ self-efficacy appraisals for teaching in an urban school compared to a suburban school (Siwatu, 2011). Siwatu (2011) selected the paired-sample t-test to identify the difference between two variables. Siwatu (2011) evaluated whether preservice teachers’ Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale (CRTSE) beliefs differed because of manipulating school context, urban school versus suburban school.

This study proceeded in two phases. The first phase of analytic data procedures consisted of descriptive and inferential statistics. Siwatu (2011) used the mean and standard deviations to calculate items on the Sense of Preparedness Questionnaire with sample questions such as, “rate how prepared you feel to effectively teach African American students enrolled in an urban school.” The second phase consisted of a descriptive and inferential analysis of the data (Siwatu, 2011). The means and standard deviations of the self-efficacy strength indexes, and each item were examined (Siwatu, 2011). Siwatu's (2011) study suggested that preservice teachers felt most prepared to
teach White American, African American, Latinx students, and ELLs enrolled in a suburban school compared to an urban school (Siwatu, 2011). Also, preservice teachers felt less prepared and confident to teach English language learners regardless of their enrollment in an urban or suburban school.

The study conducted by Reiter and Davis (2011) examined the effectiveness of a diversity training program designed to sensitize preservice teachers to the expected diversity of their future students. The researchers examined a specific diversity program at a midsize southern university that consisted of weekly diversity seminars over two semesters. The study examined whether there was an association between completing a diversity training program and responses regarding the potential influence of students' background characteristics on their learning experiences. Examining the teachers' placed in the diversity training program using the Gorski typology demonstrated where the program failed to facilitate real structural changes. Two sets of preservice senior education students were surveyed as part of this study. The final sample size for these researchers was 133. The dependent variable was based on the perception of which preservice teachers perceived that students' background characteristics were influential in their learning. This was created using the six Likert-scale items. These six items were:

- A child’s race is an indicator of his or her academic capabilities.
- Minority children typically have a tougher time learning than White children.
- Children of a higher social class will probably get better grades than other children.
- Poorer children usually have a harder time learning.
• Children whose parents completed college are more likely to complete college than other children.

• The way a child is raised affects his or her achievement in school.

The independent variable in this research was whether the respondents completed the diversity training program. The control variable included mainly the demographic characteristics. The responses ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The data analysis used the OLS regression to identify the strength of the relationships between the variables. The findings indicated one-fourth of the total sample consisted of senior teaching fellows who completed the diversity training. The regression analysis of the data predicted how respondents perceived that student background characteristics were influential in learning. The analysis illustrated that a small amount of the measures included were significantly associated with the outcome. More interesting is that there was no significant correlation between completing the diversity training program and responses regarding the possible influence of students’ background characteristics on their learning. Women were less likely to report that they believed that students’ background characteristics were influential in their learning (Reiter & Davis, 2011).

The results revealed that diversity training programs/courses had no impact on preservice teachers’ attitudes. The diversity programs should encourage preservice teachers to reflect upon and question their assumptions, biases, and thinking about teaching, learning, cultural and other differences, which should result in the adoption of broader value systems among these students (Batchelder, 2008; Giroux, 1989; Heard, 1999; McLaren, 2007; Milner, 2011; Reiter & Davis, 2011; Wallace, 2000). In this
regard, this particular diversity program was arguably ineffective (Reiter & Davis, 2011). Ultimately, there was no correlation between completing the training program and the preservice teachers’ beliefs. The limitation of this research was the sample size. Future research needs to be conducted with more participants in a larger teacher training program to evaluate and develop teacher bias prevention and elimination programs.

Recently, global educators have been making strides to prepare teacher candidates for the racial, cultural, and socioeconomic differences in their students to adapt to the needs of every student (Addleman et al., 2014). In a study conducted by Addleman, et al. (2014) at George Fox University, 24 teacher candidates participated in a cultural immersion field experience. The goal of this experience was to have the teachers better understand the diversity of their students. This study's data were collected using a phenomenological approach (Addleman et al., 2014). After this study was conducted, the researchers concluded that a teacher well-trained in their students' cultural diversity could be one of the most important factors in improving student learning (Addleman et al., 2014).

There has been a significant increase of culturally diverse students in the public school system (Barnes, 2006). Therefore, a study was conducted to determine if a teacher preparation program was designed adequately for preservice teachers to instruct culturally and linguistically diverse students (Barnes, 2006). The study examined 24 preservice teachers who used a culturally responsive teaching framework to teach reading to urban elementary school children who earned low and intermediate scores on their state reading examination (Barnes, 2006). The research highlighted that teacher education programs must scaffold the teaching and learning moments to focus on
academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness (Barnes, 2006). The study revealed that the quality of teachers continues to be the most school related influencer of students’ academic performance.

The teacher education program has failed to produce qualified teachers able to address the needs in high-needs areas. Therefore, reforms have addressed concerns by mandating specific qualifications for all learners’ teachers (Eckert, 2013). Eckert's (2013) study, conducted in Baltimore, MD, used a mixed-methods approach to measure teacher preparation and qualifications. The study examined novice teachers in urban district teacher efficacy and 1-year retention. This was a mixed-methods sequential explanatory study, which included the collection and analysis of quantitative data. The researcher analyzed the data from the schools and staffing survey (2009-2010) and interviews. Teacher efficacy measured a teacher's perception of preparedness. Empirical research has suggested that high teacher efficacy and positive teaching behaviors, retention, and student achievement are linked (Eckert, 2013). Teacher efficacy is categorized into sets of beliefs, personal teacher efficacy (PTE), and general teacher efficacy (GTE). PTE measures how prepared the teacher feels. GTE measures types of outcome expectancy such as confidence and their ability to promote success regardless of the environment (Eckert, 2013, Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). An important aspect of teacher retention is to be prepared to remain in high need areas.

Phase 1 of the Eckert (2013) research was quantitative, and it concentrated on the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between teacher preparation and teacher efficacy among novice teachers in high poverty/high minority schools?
2. What is the relationship between high qualified teacher (HQT) status and teacher efficacy among novice teachers in high minority schools?

3. What is the relationship between teacher preparation and 1-year teacher retention among novice teachers in high poverty/high minority schools?

4. What is the relationship between HQT status and 1-year teacher retention among novice teachers in high poverty/high minority schools? (pp. 79-80)

Phase 1 used nationally representative survey data from the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) 2007-2008, and the Teacher Follow-Up Survey (TFS) from 2009, and the common core of data (CCD). All data were retrieved from the National Center of Education Statistics. Data were analyzed to connect teacher preparation, teacher efficacy, and teacher retention (Eckert, 2013). The variables used to uncover the connection included high poverty/high minority urban school preparation level, highly qualified teacher (HQT), teacher efficacy, and teacher retention. The controlled variables included teacher gender, teacher race (White/non-White), highest degree (ranging from Bachelor’s to Ph.D.), age of teacher, years of teaching experience, school level (elementary/secondary), and region of the country. The data were evaluated between the variables using multinominal ordinary least squares (OLS) and logistic regression. The study was designed to understand the evidence that links teacher preparations, teacher efficacy, and teacher retention. The quantitative analysis found support for the linkages. Therefore, Eckert (2013) created qualitative interview questions to interview the participants for a deeper understanding of the linkages.

Phase 2 looked to answer the research question: how do novice teachers in urban schools explain each of the quantitative research relationships? Eckert (2013) was unable
to contact the teachers from the SASS survey. However, 25 novice teachers in high poverty/high minority urban schools were asked to complete an online survey containing relevant items from the SASS survey. A compromise score was created to measure preparation level, PTE, and GTE for the collected data and the same for the SASS data to the two samples. With the convenience and snowball sampling method, 14 teachers were selected for initial phone interviews. Then by using stratified based on PTE and GTE scores, ages, gender, preparation type, and school level, five participants were selected for the in-person interviews. This research looked to answer the extent to which accepted measures of incoming teacher qualification predict teacher efficacy and teacher retention in high poverty/high minority urban schools. This phase was designed to answer why the research questions for Phase 2 were either supported or not supported (Eckert, 2013).

Based on the findings, there was a problem regarding the quality of preparation for teachers entering high poverty/high minority urban schools that desperately needed a quality teaching force. The analysis of the data from the schools and staffing survey and qualitative interviews revealed that qualifications do predict teacher efficacy to an extent (Eckert, 2013). The results did not solidify that education course taken, and length of student teaching could solely measure a teacher’s qualifications. Future research needs to identify measurable teacher quality elements that will enable districts to accurately predict teacher quality that will remain in that school. This is important because high poverty/minority schools hire teachers who can articulate a belief in their success in that school.

Whitaker and Valtierra (2018), conducted a 2-year mixed-method case study that examined if and how a teacher preparation program can change preservice teachers’
motivation to teach culturally and linguistically diverse learners. They used interviews and focus group data to identify the impact of explicit instruction on culturally responsive pedagogy, diverse practicum opportunities, with an emphasis on culturally oriented self-inquiry as factors that enhanced teachers' desire to teach diverse students (Whitaker & Valtierra, 2018). Three research questions guided the study:

1. How do preservice teachers' self-schemata related to multicultural teaching evolve during their teacher training?
2. How do preservice teachers' beliefs about the value of multicultural teaching change during their teacher training?

The findings of the study suggested that teacher preparation programs with plentiful opportunities for personal and professional engagement with multiculturalism, along with culturally oriented self-reflection, can strengthen teachers' beliefs in their own ability to teach diverse learners and ultimately, increase their interest in doing so (Whitaker & Valtierra, 2018).

Classroom experiences for all students should be free of biases, translating into all students being seen and educated as gifted. Three compelling lessons about pedagogy for students labeled as gifted stand out: (a) belief in and expectations for their ability drive the choices of exposure and opportunity that are made available to them; (b) their education is designed as a constantly unfolding series of invitations to them to explore their innate capital, the frontier of their intelligence (Whyte, 2002); and (c) the invitations
they receive through their education are complemented by guidance on how to apply the discoveries they make about their intelligence so they can better determine what they want to pursue to feel self-actualized (Jackson, 2011).

Pedagogy that ignites learning for all students includes the following practices:

- identifying and activating student strengths
- building relationships
- eliciting high intellectual performance
- providing enrichment
- integrating prerequisites for academic learning
- situating learning in the lives of students
- amplifying student voice

All students have the intrinsic desire to learn, be challenged, be heard, and be motivated. Teachers having a positive perception of students encourages the high intellectual performance of students who are capable of achieving academic success.

The literature review demonstrates a growing disconnect in education in the United States between teachers and students. Whether the research is qualitative, quantitation, or mixed methods, the findings are compatible. The research suggests that teachers need to be sufficiently trained with well designed, evidence-based programs to create an inclusive environment in their classrooms.

**Teachers’ Perceptions of Culturally Diverse Students**

Teachers’ perceptions can have a significant impact on student learning. Socioeconomics, multicultural awareness, the impact on African American students, and
challenges of linguistic learners can all influence teachers’ approaches in working with students of varying backgrounds.

**Socioeconomics**

While labeled one of the most progressive countries globally, America still has its problems regarding the education system (Hughes, 2010). There are still major challenges in educating students who live in poverty (Hughes, 2010). There is still a drastic difference in the overall quality of education provided to low-income communities (Hughes, 2010). In a qualitative study conducted by Hughes (2010) of California State University, it was discovered that student academic success is largely reliant on their teacher's quality. The researcher theorized that due to the negative stereotypes surrounding impoverished communities, newly hired teachers use a different method of interacting with the students (Hughes, 2010). This method has proven ineffective as students living in poverty have drastically lower graduation and educational rates than those who are economically advantaged (Hughes, 2010).

Researchers have been trying to get to the root of educational inequalities for years to offer possible recommendations (DeCastro-Ambrosetti & Cho, 2011). Various perspectives and possible answer have included a focus on IQ (DeCastro-Ambrosetti & Cho, 2011; Jensen, 1969), low social classes as it related to IQ (DeCastro-Ambrosetti & Cho, 2011; Eysenck, 1971), and cultural deficit which relates to familial, linguistic, cognitive, and attitudinal backgrounds to lower academic achievement (DeCastro-Ambrosetti & Cho, 2011; Valentine, 1968).

Another contributing factor to teacher expectations of their students may be linked to the students' physical appearance. Clifford and Walster (1973) first noted this
concept of physical appearance influencing a teacher's expectation of specific students. DeCastro-Ambrosetti and Cho (2011) focused on the teacher and the teacher's expectations based on their students’ physical characteristics. The research question was: what do teachers think of their students based on the students’ physical characteristics? Additional questions were also the focus of this research: what perceptions, racist or otherwise, might teachers have about their students? Are teachers, as they have positioned themselves within classroom discussions and debates, neutral and color-blind, treating all of their students the same way? Or do they base their assumptions on a life lived in a greater society in which racism and stereotypes exist?

The participants for the study were 226 secondary education teacher candidates (DeCastro-Ambrosetti & Cho, 2011). The candidates were enrolled in professional education classes in a suburban university in Southern California. The research design used was an attitudinal survey to solicit teacher candidates' perceptions of adolescents based on their physical characteristics. The survey consisted of eight photos of adolescents from four major racial groups (Black, White, Asian, and Latinx) and 10 inflammatory statements created to elicit deep-seated perceptions. The findings revealed that the participants' responses were related to the adolescents' race and gender, which revealed their stereotypes and prejudices. The findings demonstrated that teacher candidates carried preconceived ideologies about the adolescent; they saw a photo clearly along racial and gender lines. (DeCastro-Ambrosetti & Cho, 2011). These stereotypical ideas can easily find their way into future teachers' classrooms, leading to unequal education for specific students.
Amatea et al. (2012) examined a course at a large public research university in the southeastern United States. The course was titled Family and Community Involvement in Education. The purpose of the study was to examine the course's impact on students concerning their relationships with low-income and/or culturally diverse families. Four research questions guided this study. This study's participants were preservice elementary education majors in their junior year. Pre- and post-course data were gathered over 1 year from five sections of the course. The instrument included a demographic questionnaire, the Teacher Family Role Expectations Scale, and the Teacher Efficacy in Engaging Families Scale. The overall results demonstrated that after completing the course, the preservice teachers were less stereotypic; they were more confident about using family-centered involvement practices and conceptualized students' problems in fewer terms. Family centered practice focuses on the belief that the best way to meet a students' needs is within their families. Amatea et al. (2012), were optimistic that the young, White, middle-class student teachers who made up most of the sample were becoming more responsive to low-income and ethnic families' needs and expectations.

**Multicultural Awareness**

Akiba (2011) from the University of Missouri, studied the relationship between preparation characteristics and preservice teachers' multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills. Multicultural teacher education has been defined as a change in school climate by preparing teachers to provide an equitable education for all students regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, language, religion, and country of origin. Through this study, Akiba (2011) sought to answer these two research questions:
1. How do the initial level and change in preservice teachers' beliefs about diversity in personal and professional contexts differ by their background characteristics?

2. What characteristics of teacher preparation for diversity reported by preservice teachers are associated with positive changes in their beliefs about diversity in personal and professional contexts, controlling for their background characteristics (p. 674).

What made this study different from others was its focus on the teacher preparation program’s characteristics, unlike the others that focused on the pre-post survey that analyzed the attitudes and beliefs at the beginning of a diversity course or field experience. These types of studies used a single group pre-post design (Akiba, 2011). Akiba designed a study that utilized the limitations of previous studies by measuring students’ learning experiences connected to the characteristics of teacher preparation for diversity between eight sections of a diversity course along with a field experience course. By doing so, the research established the relationship between teacher preparation and changes in beliefs about diversity. Additionally, using the individual’s controlled characteristics explained the initial differences in beliefs about diversity among preservice teachers. Therefore, this would separate the relationship between teacher preparation characteristics and changes in preservice teachers’ beliefs. This study used 243 elementary, middle, and high school preservice teachers from a teacher education program in a midwest research university. The data were collected from students who were enrolled in fall 2006 and spring 2007. The diversity beliefs in
personal and professional context scales were used. Preservice teachers used this scale to measure both societal and educational concepts related to diversity (Akiba, 2011).

The instruments’ reliability and contact ability were thoroughly examined with both the preservice teacher sample and the predicting teacher sample. Personal beliefs about diversity issues such as interracial marriage and race superiority were measured using a 15-item subscale from Diversity Beliefs in Personal Contexts. Sample statements included, “There is nothing wrong with people from different racial backgrounds having/raising children” (Akiba, 2011, p. 660). The second, 25-item subscale from Diversity Beliefs in Professional Context measured education related issues such as culturally responsive instruction and segregation/integration. Sample statements included, “Teachers should not be expected to adjust their preferred mode of instruction to accommodate the needs of all students” (Akiba, 2011, p. 660). The coding for the responses was arranged from 1-strongly disagree to 6-strongly agree.

Paired-sample $t$-test and ANOVA were used to conduct data analyses to answer the research questions. Two sets of inferential statistics were conducted for each characteristic: a paired sample $t$-test or ANOVA for the mean difference in the pretest for each characteristic, such as female versus male. The findings revealed statistically significant improvements in their diversity belief scores in a professional context and the end of the diversity course and field experiences, but no improvement in the personal context. Female students reported higher diversity belief scores for both personal and professional. However, graduate students scored higher for personal context than undergraduate students. Three of the characteristics revealed to be associated with
improvements in preservice teachers’ diversity belief scores in both personal and professional contexts (Akiba, 2011).

Even though these changes were small, they could improve preservice teachers’ learning and instill positive beliefs about diversity when instructors make a conscious effort to alter their delivery of instruction in diversity course and field experiences. These were significantly associated with positive changes in preservice teachers’ beliefs about diversity in both personal and professional contexts. Therefore, it was recommended that an inclusive classroom environment be established to encourage positive beliefs regarding diversity among preservice teachers. Also, the field experience promoted positive interactions between preservice teachers and people from diverse backgrounds. Finally, a mentor should have been assigned for support and to foster a self-reflection to provide an opportunity to understand the connections with diversity course work (Akiba, 2011).

Kim and Connelly (2019) examined early childhood preservice teachers' multicultural teaching efficacy and their association with their multicultural attitudes and intercultural sensitivity. The study used 90 female preservice teachers enrolled in an early childhood teacher education program in a state university in the northeast. The participants were predominately White (93.8%), with 6.2% sample reporting as Latinx, Asian, biracial, or others. The multicultural efficacy scale was used to examine early childhood preservice teachers' sense of multicultural communication competence scale to gauge preservice teachers' intercultural sensitivity.

A modified Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey assessed preservice teachers' multicultural attitudes (Kim & Connelly, 2019). The results from the Kim and Connelly
(2019) study illustrated that preservice teachers' multicultural attitudes and constructs of intercultural sensitivity, including cultural sensitivity, were positively related to multicultural teaching efficacy. It also showed that preservice teachers' attitudes and beliefs are important factors in early childhood preservice teachers' multicultural teaching efficacy (Kim & Connelly, 2019).

**Impact on African American Students**

African Americans continue to perform behind their White peers (Ogbu, 2003; Pennerman, 2009; Pringle et al., 2010; Steele, 1997). Pringle et al. (2010) studied this issue by examining the impact of teacher expectations on African American students' academics as perceived by the students. The research design was a qualitative study that used an interpretative approach. This qualitative research required a level of delicateness when gathering and interpreting data. Through the lens of African American students, the study examined the impact teacher expectations had on their academic achievement. The interpretive approach allowed the researchers to understand the key concerns that affect teacher expectations of African American students' achievement. The field notes were used to interpret the results of the study.

Researchers Pringle et al. (2010) interpreted the field notes for the results because they wanted to understand the effects of teacher expectations on African American students' academic achievement as perceived by the students themselves. The study was conducted in the United States' southeast region using two high schools with opposite demographics. The approximate sample size for this study was 441 students. The first high school had a high percentage of White students (91.9%), and the other high school had a high percentage of minority students (72.1%). The study participants included 48
African American high school seniors. There were 10 (3.2%) students from the first high school and 38 (28.3%) students from the other high school.

The research question sought to answer: what are African American high school students' perceptions of teacher expectations? The two themes emerged from the findings: teacher expectations and qualities of teacher instruction. Teacher's expectations correlated with whether teachers genuinely cared about or even liked the students. Three-fourths of the students reported they had a perception that their teacher had a low expectation for them. One-half of the participants believed that race and ethnicity were a factor in how their teachers viewed them. The majority of the 48 students who participated in the study believed that race or ethnicity was a factor in the way their teachers viewed them. The African American students were either not encouraged or blatantly discouraged from taking advanced or honor classes. Also reported was that teachers did not expect high quality work from African American students as they did White students. Research indicated that teacher expectations are one of many factors that strongly influenced students' academic success (Pringle et al., 2010). When teacher expectations are low, students display low morale, lack of motivation, and they hate attending the class (Nieto & Bode, 2018). This study should be analyzed with some caution because it was a relatively small sample size.

There is minimal research on White teachers' responsibilities while educating African American students in predominately White schools (Henfield & Washington, 2012). Henfield and Washington (2012) looked to analyze teachers’ perceptions of their experiences with African American students. Conducted was a qualitative study that examined White teachers' perceptions of their experiences in a predominately White
midwestern middle school with a growing affluent African American population. The research questions that framed the study were: (a) how do White teachers perceive their experience of teaching African American students, and (b) how do White teachers perceive the experience of teaching in a school with a rapidly growing African American student population (Henfield & Washington, 2012, p. 151). The participants included 26 White middle school teachers who had experience teaching African American students. Of the chosen sample, 19 were female (73%), and seven were males (27%). Twelve teachers (46%) had received professional development multicultural trainings. The teachers taught in various disciplines and had between 6 months to 30 years of teaching experience. The study utilized in-depth focus group interviews, where teachers elaborated on their experiences navigating racial, ethnic, and cultural boundaries (Henfield & Washington, 2012).

The analyzed data revealed that teachers experienced challenges when working with African American students. The participants articulated a lack of confidence in their ability to connect with and effectively educate African American students. Particularly, teachers felt a lack of information about African American students prevented them from building a constructive relationship. The findings also illustrated low regard for their administrators' responsiveness to their requests for multicultural professional development. A limitation of this study is that no African American students were interviewed about their interaction with White teachers (Henfield & Washington, 2012).

**Linguistic Learners**

Cho et al. (2012) investigated integrating language diversity into teacher education curricula in a rural context. The study took place at the University of
Wyoming, located in the rural mountain West. The college had approximately 600 individuals in the teacher education program. The population was about 90% White, predominately female, and from rural communities across the state and other states that border Wyoming (Cho et al., 2012). The research used both quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data. The adapted Likert scale and open-ended survey data sources were used to examine candidates' attitudes, values, and understandings of language acquisition and teaching second language learners. The research questions for this study were:

1. How do candidates in our teacher education program describe their essential understandings of language diversity and their perspectives on teaching ELLs?

2. To what extent do candidates in initial level courses differ from those in upper-level courses in their understandings, ideas, and dispositions specific to language diversity in education (Cho et al., 2012, p. 66).

The researchers hoped that in creating and sharing this account, they could advance understanding about the role teacher education can play in preparing the next generation of teachers for the linguistic diversity in their prek-12 schools (Cho et al., 2012). The findings illustrated that candidates' ideological perspectives around certain aspects of language diversity were pliable and that they changed over time.

It is important to understand how teachers conceptualize linguistically diverse students. Therefore, Salerno and Kibler (2013) conducted a research to study with that focus in mind. The research question was: how do preservice teachers at a university in the south-Atlantic region describe linguistically diverse students in the preservice teacher
end-of-program case study project? These case studies looked to understand how preservice teachers' perceptions of linguistically diverse students appeared before entering the classroom. The sample included 65 teacher participants preparing to work with various age levels from k-12. The participants documented and analyzed their final field experiences before graduation.

The participants selected three to four students they considered challenging but not struggling academically. The preservice teachers observed the students five times, interviewed their classwork teacher, and gathered three work samples per student. Participants analyzed the information and wrote about the findings for each student. In the findings, preservice teachers described linguistically diverse students' behaviors as being quiet and reserved. The preservice teachers were able to self-assess to realize that these students' groups may go overlooked or seen as invisible. This can also indicate that preservice teachers may not have fully created a space where students feel comfortable and safe to contribute to classroom discussions (Roberts, 2009; Salerno & Kibler, 2013). Teacher education programs need to provide preservice teachers with experiences where they get to know linguistically diverse learners in a supportive and skilled environment.

A sequential design study was conducted by Kumar and Hamer (2013). The study's purpose was to examine the strength of the relationship between White preservice teachers' beliefs in relation to actual classroom practices they were likely to endorse. The final study sample included 868 preservice teachers enrolled in coursework toward licensure in a midwestern university. The number of African Americans and other ethnic groups of preservice teachers was too few to conduct meaningful comparative analysis (Kumar & Hamer, 2013).
The data collection was based on a sequential design using both cross-sectional and longitudinal data. Trained research assistants administered the survey to preservice teachers enrolled in various courses based on their college level. The cluster analysis of cross-sectional data (n = 784) suggested that approximately 25% of preservice teachers explicitly held some stereotypical beliefs about poor minority students and expressed some discomfort with student diversity (Kumar & Hamer, 2013). Also, analysis of variance results provided evidence that preservice teachers were significantly less biased and prejudiced and more likely to embrace usable instructional practices by the time they were ready to graduate from the teacher education program, than they were during their first year in the program (Kumar & Hamer, 2013). The findings support the hypothesis that the learning that occurs in a teacher licensure program positively shapes preservice teachers' attitudes toward culturally diverse students and encourages them to adopt adaptive classroom practices (Kumar & Hamer, 2013).

Research shows that our public schools are more diverse than ever (Matias & Mackey, 2015; NCES, 2016). However, our teachers do not reflect the same diversity. The literature review exposes the theme that many teachers arrive in the classrooms with negative perceptions of culturally diverse students. However, research also reveals that participation in high quality diversity coursework decreases the negative attributes teachers ascribe to diverse students. Also, the literature findings allude to the possibility that teachers who are aware of their stereotypical ideologies initiate positive changes. Therefore, this study’s focus on examining this northeast teacher education program provides recommendations to improve their diversity education coursework.
Chapter Summary

While labeled one of the most progressive countries globally, America still has its problems regarding the education system (Hughes, 2010). The racial inequities that exist prior to 2020 were aggravated and amplified by the COVID-19 crisis which had a profound impact on education (NYASP, 2021). Providing each student with equity is the driving force to their success. (NYASP, 2021). Research shows that changes need to come from the teachers in order to and achieve academic success for all students (Mania-Singer, 2017). The research illustrates the need to examine current teacher preparation programs to determine the needs of preservice teachers so they can become aware of students' cultural differences and adapt their teaching strategies to be more effective in addressing all students' learning needs (Hossain, 2015).

It is imperative that teacher educators address how racialized beliefs and practices are manifested in social, legal, and educational contexts because our teachers do not resemble the same diversity (Baggett & Simmons, 2017). Previous research reports preservice teachers’ lack of racially diverse experiences and interactions, called for investigations into how preservice teachers can be prepared to engage with their culturally diverse students effectively (Nelson & Guerra, 2014; Segall & Garrett, 2013; Vaught & Castagno, 2008). Courses in cultural diversity and related content have become the strategy most teacher education programs utilize to introduce preservice teachers to information about and interactions with racial diversity, making the exploration of the experiences of those responsible for teaching those courses invaluable (DiAngelo, 2020; 2014; Picower, 2009; Sleeter, 2001).
Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology

Introduction

Racial inequalities within the United States' education system impact the racial achievement gap that has plagued this country since its inception (Nieto & Bode, 2018). Systemic racism continues in America's schools (Du Bois, 1935; Irons, 2002; Kohli et al., 2017; Spring, 2016; Woodson, 1933). As the diversity in public schools increases, the teacher demographics remain at over 75% White, female, and middle-class (Loewus, 2017; Naman, 2009). Teacher preparation programs must prepare teachers for cultural diversity (Eckert, 2013; Green & Edwards-Underwood, 2015; Kondor et al., 2019; Milner, 2011). However, there is a lack of consensus on how teacher preparation programs address the racial stereotypes and biases that can further contribute to inequities in our schools (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Reiter & Davis, 2011). According to Nieto and Bode (2018), student achievement is affected by multiple variables caused by school-related factors. For example, a student's physical attractiveness has been associated with teachers' expectations of students' intellectual abilities (Clifford & Walster, 1973). The discipline approaches to Black, Latinx, and Native Indian children contribute to students' achievement. Black, Latinx, and Native Indian students are also suspended at a higher rate than their White peers, causing an interruption in their learning process (Gregory et al., 2010). Teachers in schools that serve poor students from varying ethnic and racial backgrounds have low expectations of their students (Nieto & Bode, 2018). Research has also demonstrated that students living in poverty tend to have few resources and districts
in these areas may hire underqualified teachers, compromising students' learning progress (Beatty, 2013; Nieto & Bode, 2018)

The purpose of this research study was to examine how teachers who completed the graduate teacher education program of a northeastern regional private college believed they were prepared to educate culturally diverse students. The study used a qualitative design to examine how the novice teachers perceived their preparation to teach culturally diverse students. The research was important because it could increase culturally diverse students' achievements (Akiba, 2011; Hughes, 2010; Kumar & Lauermann, 2018; Zeichner, 2012). The study attempted to uncover how well novice teachers were prepared to teach, based on their higher education experience, personal and professional encounters, and lived experiences.

Given that the majority of U.S. teachers are White and female, this demographic is significant when considering American students' growing diversity and implications for teachers' capacity to teach in diverse American classrooms effectively (Diggles, 2014; Hsiao, 2015; McGrady & Reynolds, 2013; Reiter & Davis, 2011; Santamaria, 2009). NCES (2021) reported that most of the student population would consist of students of color by 2050. This information was relevant to the research questions. The research questions that guided this study were:

1. What life experiences and interactions do novice teachers report as having influenced their understanding of race and racism?

2. What are novice teachers' perceptions about how their higher education classroom experiences have prepared them for teaching a culturally diverse student?
3. How effectively does a diversity course impact the understanding of race, culture, and differences, and influence plans and strategies for teaching?

**Research Design**

The study utilized a qualitative methodology to examine novice teachers’ perceptions of their preparedness to teach culturally diverse students based on the teacher preparation program and their own lived experiences with race, racism, and beliefs to teach all students effectively. Qualitative research is used for in-depth studies that address phenomena, experiences, and situations from the participants' viewpoints (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative research requires the researcher to obtain a deep understanding of social and human problems (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A qualitative design is commonly found in education research. It is appropriate for the researcher to examine how people interpret experiences and beliefs, construct their worlds, and attribute meaning to their experiences (Merriam, 2009; Wiggins et al., 2007). Creswell and Creswell (2018) described the five approaches in qualitative research, and the narrative approach study is appropriate for this research because it explores the lives of several individuals.

A narrative study is often used to inquire into teacher preparation programs (Coulter et al., 2007). Through the narrative study, the lived story of each participant was analyzed. The narrative approach allowed the researchers to build upon the participants' personal stories unique in the telling and retelling of a person's life and experience to show growth in education. It allowed the teachers to reflect on questions and learn from their experiences (Coulter et al., 2007).
To learn of their perceptions and level of preparedness for working with culturally diverse students, the novice teachers participated in one interview that highlighted their experiences before and during their current teaching assignment. Interviewing is a common strategy in qualitative studies. These interviews aimed to obtain rich and reflective thinking (Lodico et al., 2010). The study used an interview guide and remained open to in-depth probing of the participants for unexpected leads that might develop common themes (Glesne, 2006). The study included interviews that revealed their teacher education program's preparedness and their own stories related to race and racism. The open-ended questions captured participants’ feelings, behaviors, and perceptions. The goal of the research inquiry was to find themes within the collective experiences of each participant.

Research Context

The study examined the Graduate School of Education teacher preparation program of DeReef College [pseudonym], a private, 4-year, Catholic institution. DeReef college is an independent Catholic college rooted in the Dominican tradition of study, spirituality, service, and community. DeReef College is committed to academic excellence with respect for each person. The students are taught to seek the truth, reinforce human dignity, and alleviate social ills. The institution seeks to act justly and with kindness in all their endeavors. DeReef College believes in transforming their communities in the search for truth. Students and staff are expected to reflectively listen to themselves, God, and to the signs of the times in the world.

DeReef College has over 30 programs leading to a Master of Science in education degree and teacher certification. Teacher candidates are required to take one course in
cultural diversity before completing their education program. There is only one required
course in cultural diversity that is offered in the college catalog.

The most recent statistics illustrate that approximately 60% of the graduate
students were White, and 80% were female. Over 90% of the students resided in the
same state as the college. Its faculty's racial diversity was approximately: 80% White,
7% Black, 7% Latinx, 5% Asian, and 1% other. Also, education is one of the most
popular programs at this college. As of August 2020, the graduation rate was 74%.
There were 495 candidates; out of that number, 366 completed their requirements for
graduation. The graduation rates by race/ethnicity were as follows: White 79% (238/302),
Latinx 65% (53/82), Black 65% (32/49), Asian 72% (26/36), American Indian 50% (1/2),
Pacific Islander 100% (2/2), two or more races 100% (5/5), Unknown 53% (9/17).

Research Participants

The researcher used purposeful and snowball sampling to secure the desired
sample size of participants who met the demographic profile criteria. The recruitment
process included the alumni association at DeReef College forwarding an e-mail
(Appendix A) on behalf of the researcher to former School of Graduate Education alumni
who had completed their graduate program within the last 5 years. The researcher also
solicited assistance from elementary and secondary public school curriculum directors,
school principals, deans, and professors from the college to identify potential participants
who would be eligible for the study. The National Institute of Health provided the
guidelines, and ethical principles for research were followed. This research was
approved by the Instructional Review Board (IRB) of St. John Fisher College and DeReef
College. To ensure confidentiality, the participants' welfare and autonomy, pseudonyms were used for the study participants and the college.

Creswell and Poth (2018) stated that qualitative research enables the researcher to select participants purposefully to help the researcher understand the research problem and answers to the research questions. Purposeful sampling was employed for this reason. Snowballing is a method that involves participants making suggestions of others who would be interested in volunteering for the study. Purposeful sampling uses high-value participants relevant to the criteria that fit the research questions. A deeper understanding of the problem and focal occurrence was gained by selecting specific participants. For a narrative research study, Creswell and Poth (2018) suggest that one or two participants interpret an issue.

The targeted number of participants was 10. Initially, 16 potential volunteers responded to the researcher’s recruitment request through e-mail. The prospective participants who e-mailed the researcher of their interest in participating were asked to complete a demographic profile questionnaire to determine if they met the criteria. Participants were selected if they recently graduated from DeReef College, a school with a graduate program in education. Criteria for participants included their nontenure status as well as not having been supervised or taught by the researcher. In addition, they have taken the one required diversity course offered by DeReef College. Twelve of the 16 completed the initial demographic profile survey through Survey Monkey.com (Appendix B). Eleven of the potential participants met the specific criteria: (a) School of Graduate Education graduate, (b) graduated within the last 5 years, (c) had earned teaching certification, (d) currently was teaching, (e) had not yet earned tenure, (f) the

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researcher was not their instructor or supervisor, and (g) completed at least one diversity course at DeReef College.

After the initial contact and survey completion by the potential participants, the researcher forwarded the informed consent via e-mail to all eligible participants (Appendix C), outlining the descriptions and purpose of the research study and interview timeline. Interested participants were asked to return the informed consent after they had an opportunity to review the document. The participants were asked to return the informed consent by e-mail and provide tentative dates and times to schedule the semi-structured interviews via Zoom conference. Within 1 week from the initial e-mail invitation sent out by DeReef College, the researcher arranged interviews with participants. However, there were a limited number of potential participants that replied to the e-mail sent out by the college. Thus, the researcher then employed the chain referral strategy to secure participants. The interview process concluded in approximately 8 weeks. Participants of varying demographics were represented in this study. The researcher collected data from eight participants; two Black female participants, two Latinx participants – one female and one male, and four White participants – three female and one male.

Eight diverse participants met the criteria for the prerequisite process, including completing and returning the informed consent and scheduling their interview with the researcher. It is necessary to note that the names of the participants shown in Table 3.1 are pseudonyms. The participants were identified with a pseudonym to maintain confidentiality and privacy of the participants. The demographic profile questionnaire includes the eight participants whose ages range from 18 to 29. All except one
participant had 1-4 years of teaching experience. P7 (White female) was the only participant who had 5 years of experience teaching. The participants completed their graduate school of education program between 2017-2020. The researcher sought to include an equal number of teachers of color and White teachers. The racial makeup of the participants was evenly divided. There were four White participants (50%), two participants identified as multiracial (White and Latinx), and two participants identified as Black. Seventy-five percent of the volunteers were female, and 66% were White female teachers. Table 3.1 provides demographic information on the participants.

**Table 3.1**

*Participants/Pseudonym Demographic Profiles*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Year of Master’s</th>
<th>Years Teaching</th>
<th>Gender/Race</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Met Criteria</th>
<th>Informed Consent Received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>Female/Multi</td>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>Female/White</td>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>Male/Multi</td>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>Male/White</td>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>Female/White</td>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>Female/Black</td>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>Female/White</td>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>Female/Black</td>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The catalog course description of the course the participants took is as follows:
This course will initially approach multicultural education from a reflective, autobiographical, and learner-centered viewpoint, which focuses on birth through grade 2, grades 1 through 6, and grades 7 through 12. The meaning, necessity, and benefits of multicultural education will be explored by placing it in a socio-cultural context. The interaction of home, school, and community context, the teaching and learning process, and the content of instructional materials will also be examined from a multicultural perspective. Strategies for fostering intergroup understanding, awareness, and appreciation by students of the diverse ethnic, racial, cultural, and linguistic groups represented in schools and the general population will be considered. Specific cultures will be examined. The effects of students' home culture, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, and exceptionalities on the learning process will be explored utilizing case studies and snapshots and participants' own field experiences. (DeReef College, 2020, p. 150)

**Instruments Used in Data Collection**

Novice teachers in this study were initially surveyed utilizing the Demographic Profile Questionnaire (DPQ) (Appendix D) created in SurveyMonkey. It was to gather preliminary screening information of potential participants for the study. The researcher used the DPQ survey to obtain participant profile information to ensure the study’s criteria was satisfied. The DPQ survey link was distributed to the e-mail addresses provided by potential participants who responded to the initial invitation. The researcher received an e-mail notification each time a participant completed a questionnaire. The demographic questions included age, race/ethnicity, years of teaching, and gender.
The second phase of the study included the semi-structured interviews (Appendix E) conducted with all eight participants via Zoom conference. Unlike structured, rigid interviewing processes, a semi-structured interview created a conversation between the researcher and the participant by fostering an environment where the ideas and meanings are developed and further discussed, leading to a deeper understanding of the study. The semi-structured interviews, with open-ended questions, allowed the researcher to develop a comprehensive understanding of the novice teachers' perceptions of race and racism based on their lived experiences. The questions created were broad to include a range of experiences and opinions in the participants’ responses.

The interview protocol was employed to engage participants in a reflective process that explored their experiences with racially diverse learners and their values attributed to preservice diversity education. Also, a semi-structured interview protocol garnered an in-depth description of lived experiences that allowed the researcher to examine the novice teachers' perceptions of their teacher preparation program's impact on their readiness to teach culturally diverse students. The semi-structured format provided an opportunity to pose questions that allowed participants to tell their own stories. Open-ended questions allowed for honest narratives of the participants' lived experiences. The questions were developed to elicit information to answer the research questions. The interviewing questions were piloted with two secondary, untenured teachers who were not eligible to participate because they were subordinates of the researcher.

The researcher took handwritten observations of each participant's behaviors and attitudes during the interview (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The notes offered an opportunity for immediate feedback leading to improvement of the process. Also,
immediately following each interview, the field notes were reviewed while the information was current in the researcher's memory. The field notes gave an insight into questions that were not clear to the participants and new questions that might have surfaced due to the participants' responses. Finally, the field notes provided clarification during times of questionable interpretations presented in the transcripts.

**Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis**

A qualitative research design was used to examine novice teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to teach culturally diverse students. This study employed one-on-one semi-structured interviews (Appendix E). The researcher was cognizant of how each participant might perceive the researcher (Daly, 2007). Therefore, the researcher presented himself professionally. The participants were made to feel comfortable during the interview. The researcher used a calm and inviting tone, dressed semi-casually, used non-distracting backgrounds during the virtual interviews, removed personal opinions and testimony, and clarified questions to confirm statements ensure clarity.

Before interviews commenced, the researcher explained the process to be followed during the study and answered any questions the participant might have had. Participants were informed that their confidentiality would be respected by using fictitious names and not disclosing any descriptions that could indicate their identity. Participants were reminded that the entire interview was being audio recorded for analysis and later transcribed verbatim. Participants were given the right to ask that any part of their response or statement be deleted or not recorded. Also, upon request, the recording could be temporarily paused and resumed at their approval. They were
reminded that participation was completely voluntary. At any time, they could opt out of the interview without risk of any penalty, and they could decline to answer any questions.

The participants received no compensation for their participation in the study. The interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder and through the audio recorder feature in Zoom. Each interview was uploaded and stored in the iCloud personal laptop of the researcher and maintained on a password protected secured drive to ensure only the primary researcher has access to the information.

As expected, the interviews were lengthy, approximately 45 to 70 minutes; therefore, a transcription service was required. REV.com, a transcription service provider, transcribed the interviews. Data analysis in qualitative research requires the researchers to organize and construct data obtained during data collection for analysis. The researcher organized the participants’ responses digitally. After the participants’ responses were transcribed, the data was digitally organized and analyzed for themes through hand-coding.

Transcribed interviews were password protected and edited to remove identifiable information. The interview responses from each participant were collected into separate verbatim documents that were transcribed. Using an inductive approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), the researcher read through each transcript before starting the analysis process. This allowed the researcher to interpret the information and begin to think about how the interview transcript could be organized as there are multiple ways to code (Miles et al., 2014). This coding was a two-step process in which the researcher examined data and analyzed it to attach a label (Urquhart, 2013). Coding is a cyclical process that involves the assignment of a word or phrase that best reflects the essence of language-
based or visual meanings (Saldaña, 2016). The data was processed using primarily
descriptive coding, labeling a qualitative passage by a single word or short phrase as a
summarizer of the data. After reviewing each transcript for accuracy, the interviews were
revisited to add ideas for emerging themes in the margin. Transcripts were replayed and
reread to extract the data most clearly conveyed by the participants' experiences.

Codes were organized according to interview questions and were adapted into
words and phrases. Codes were identified then grouped into small categories. Interview
questions were used to organize data during the coding process to ensure that the themes
remain relevant to the research questions (van Rijnsoever, 2017). Once the coding
process was completed, an analysis was conducted across the individual narratives, cross-
referencing the themes. Themes that appeared more than once were noted, and those that
only appeared once were regarded as insubstantial. The researcher employed a second
coder to ensure the validity of the research findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The data (digital audio recordings and transcriptions of interviews) were collected
and stored in a private, locked, and password-protected file and password-protected
computer, which is stored securely in the private home of the researcher. Files were
assigned pseudonyms names. The files do not include actual names or any information
that could personally identify or connect the participants to this study. The other data
materials, such as the hardcopy of the transcriptions, field and observation notes relating
to the data collection and analysis, were stored securely in an unmarked box, locked
inside a fire and theft-proof safe in the private home of the researcher. Only the
researcher has access to this data. The digital recordings, transcriptions, signed informed
consent forms, the researcher will keep survey results for 3 years following the
publication of this study as per the procedures established by St. John Fisher College. The electronic documents will be cleared, eliminated, and destroyed from all devices so that restoring the data is not possible.

Summary

The qualitative research design, the narrative study, was appropriately selected due to the literature that pertains to critical race theory and critical pedagogy. Qualitative research allows for the use of theoretical frameworks to explore the study of human or social problems through the collection of data, inductive and deductive data analysis, and the development of themes or patterns (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study’s participants were selected using purposeful sampling of novice teachers from DeReef College. The majority of the participants had graduated from the teacher education program within the last 2 years. The research relied on eight semi-structured, one-on-one interviews to report on their lived experiences with race, racism, and a diversity course (Anderson 2010; Nolen & Talbert, 2011; Percy et al., 2015). The process and design of this study helped to understand how the experiences of novice teachers helped to develop their perceptions of their preparedness to teach culturally diverse students.

Chapter 4 shares the findings of the study regarding the novice teachers’ perceptions of their preparedness to teach culturally diverse students. An explanation of the data analysis and presentation of the findings provide evidence for supporting the answers to the research questions of this study. Chapter 5 presents the researcher’s limitations, implications, and recommendation of the study.
Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore novice teachers’ lived experiences with race and racism and to record and examine their own perceptions of preparedness to teach culturally diverse students based on higher education teacher preparation program. Chapter 4 presents the findings of this narrative study based on data analysis of the eight research participants' responses to the semi-structured interview questions.

These findings provided insight as to what extent the institution had prepared its teacher candidates to teach culturally diverse students. The critical race theory and critical pedagogy were used to ascertain whether the institution's diversity course adequately helped teachers understand race and culture and how these tenets impacted plans and strategies for teaching. An analysis of the interviews based upon the semi-structured interviews was essential to understanding significant themes and patterns. The novice teachers appeared to be forthcoming, honest, and reflective regarding their responses. The methodology provided an in-depth analysis of the novice teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to teach culturally diverse students as a means to increased achievement of culturally diverse students (Akiba, 2011; Hughes 2010; Kumar & Lauermann, 2018; Zeichner, 2012). The researcher analyzed the interview data and connected emergent themes to the research questions and purpose.
Research Questions

The study aimed to address the following research questions:

1. What life experiences and interactions do novice teachers report as having influenced their understanding of race and racism?

2. What are novice teachers' perceptions about how their higher education classroom experiences have prepared them for teaching a culturally diverse student?

3. How effectively does a diversity course impact the understanding of race, culture, and differences, and influence plans and strategies for teaching?

Data Analysis and Findings

Each participant participated in a virtual one-on-one semi-structured interview via Zoom conference that lasted approximately 40-70 minutes. At the start of the interviews, participants were reminded that the sessions were being audio recorded. Data from each interview were transcribed using a transcription service, followed by descriptive coding. The researcher was able to develop codes and establish categories and themes. The categories, as seen in Table 4.1, reflected the ideas of most of the participants and were compared and combined to develop emergent themes. The researcher was able to analyze the findings to provide answers and an explanation to each research question.
Table 4.1

Novice Teachers’ Perceptions of Preparedness to Teach Culturally Diverse Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Segregated childhood</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of prejudiced</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of racial discrimination awareness</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altruistic behavior</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledged critical consciousness</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of effective pedagogy training</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elements of culturally diverse pedagogy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More pedagogy training</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise awareness</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient learning</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsequential</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 1

What life experiences and interactions do novice teachers report as having influenced their understanding of race and racism? Through the in-depth interviews and analysis of the interview data, six categories and three themes emerged. The identified themes, structural racism, catalyst for change, and self-reflective, represented the participants’ lived experience and interactions with race and racism before and while the participants became novice teachers. As noted in the research, without reflection and awareness of racial identity, preservice teachers are unable to explore their race, the implications of their race, institutional racism in the educational system, or the racialized experiences of their students (DiAngelo, 2020, Matias & Mackey, 2015). The participants were asked where they were from and what life was like for them growing
up. Responses to this question provided the researcher with an insight into the past of these novice teachers’ experiences and interactions with people from diverse backgrounds as they were growing up. Table 4.2 illustrates the codes, categories, and themes that emerged from the novice teachers' responses to the interview questions aligned to Research Question 1.

**Categories**

Six emergent categories identified from the interview responses regarding life experiences and interactions of the participants reported to have influenced their understanding of race and racism: segregated childhood, prejudiced experience, lack of racial discrimination awareness, savior mentality, and acknowledged critical consciousness.

**Segregated Childhood.** Segregated childhood tells a story of the participants’ lack of connection to others of culturally diverse backgrounds due to culture deprivation because of their geographical locations. Participants described their experiences growing up based on their neighborhood and school community. Five out of the eight participants (P1, White/Latinx female; P2, White female; P3, White Latinx male; P7, White female; and P8, Black female) were from affluent suburban neighborhoods. The other three participants (P4, White male; P5 White female; and P6 Black female) lived in diverse suburban neighborhoods and attended diverse schools. For the two Black female participants, P6 and P8, earlier childhood development took place in an urban setting. However, at young school ages, their families moved to suburban homes where they remained for the duration of the k-12 educational experience.
Table 4.2

*Codes/Categories/Themes – Participants’ Lived Experience*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structural Racism</td>
<td>Segregated Childhood</td>
<td>• not diverse at all entirely White (P3 White/Latinx, P7 White female),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• not much diversity in the school staff (P7 White female),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• predominantly White friends (P8 Black female),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• friends were mostly White, maybe one or two Black children and very few Latinos in class (P7 White female),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experience of Prejudice</td>
<td>• White Catholic community and middle-class (P2 White female),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• you speak well for being Black (P8 Black female),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• I am okay with you being Black, but my parents might not be,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>witnessed negative stereotypes and economic disparities (P8 Black female),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of racial discrimination awareness</td>
<td>• in high school, kids would say racial slurs as jokes, people make comments about her accent (P2 White female),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Racial Liberation</td>
<td>• I did not see racism in my suburban town, haven’t experienced racism personally (P2 White female),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Altruistic Behavior</td>
<td>• I saw a little that of it, I think (P7 White female),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• impact life (P1 White/Latinx female, P2 White female),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• wanted to help students of all ages or any student who had differences (P3 White/Latinx male),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• wanted to work with diverse learning needs (P5 White female),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• impacting other people’s lives and making other people’s lives better (P3 White/Latinx male),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
<td>Acknowledged Critical Consciousness</td>
<td>• easier being White (P7 White female),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• systemic racism – Black Lives Matter (P5 White female),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• superior vs. inferior race (P7 White female),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• treated differently due to skin color (P2 White female, P5 White female),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• biased against people of color, cultural value – what we look at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• not being afraid to get pulled over by the police (P7 White female),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• no consequences for being White, people do not acknowledge it is a thing (P8 Black female)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The participants who lived in predominately White neighborhoods had little to no interactions with others outside of their ethnicity and race. They formed no relationships with culturally diverse people from either their community or school, because they were raised in neighborhoods that lacked this diversity. Overall, the participants' responses provided an insight into the lack of cultural diversity they brought into the classroom. Here are some of the responses that assisted in answering Research Question 1 starting with P1.

P1 (White/Latinx female) said, “I grew up in an affluent neighborhood and both my parents are immigrants.” P1’s mother was from a country located in South America and her father was from a southern European country. P1 stated, “growing up first generation had an impact on me.” She goes on to say, “so I usually had to go to my sister for help with homework, so it was different that way because my parents were still learning the language” (P1 White/Latinx female).

P2 (White female) and P3 (White/Latinx Male) have similar experiences growing up. P2 (White female) described her life as “pretty typical.” She continued by stating:

I went to Catholic school my whole life and I went to a Catholic college, but growing up, I wasn’t, I don’t think it was very diverse for me to be honest. Maybe two or three African Americans that I only really saw or any other cultural diversity of that kind, it was really only strictly White American. I grew up pretty much in a middle-class Catholic town. (P2 White female)

P3 (White/Latinx male) expressed something similar:

So, I’m from Park Place [pseudonym] and that is a predominately White neighborhood as far as the diversity element. So, I can’t say that in my public
school experience I saw a great deal of diversity. I would say that Park Place, speaking . . . based on income is mainly a middle-class to the upper-class neighborhood, depending on where you are. You certainly can assume that there were no diverse teachers. I think all my teachers were White growing up if I’m not mistaken, if not predominantly, just to say the least.

P6 (Black female) and P8 (Black female), had childhood similarities, in that they both spent their pre-k years growing up in urban areas before relocating to the suburbs. P6 (Black female) recounted the following:

I was born in St. Charles City [pseudonym] but didn’t live out there very long. We moved to the Park Place [pseudonym] because my parents didn’t want us to go to school in the urban area. They wanted us to have better schooling than they did in the urban area.

P8 (Black female) went on to add to the narrative by stating:

I don’t think it was really until I got a little bit older and especially moved to the suburban [neighborhood] did I really see the disparity and we had been living and where I was from until I came to the suburbs . . . the predominance of my friends being White. I went to private school my entire life because my parents didn’t think the public school was up to their standards of education. I’ve always been in private school.

Most of the participants, six out of the eight, lived in all White middle- to upper-class neighborhoods and attended predominately White schools. P7 (White female) said:

Not at all, it was not diverse at all. It was almost entirely White, very, very few minorities in any of my classes. I actually was one of the only, in terms of
religions, I was one of the only Jewish families in the community. It was mostly White and Catholic. There was maybe one or two Black children, when I went to school. Very few Latino, Hispanic children when I went to school. Very few Asian children when I went to school. Staff, really, very little. I had a Black teacher in eighth grade for ELA. She left the district very quickly. She was there for maybe 2 years. And then, I didn’t see her again, very little diversity in the districts.

Experiences of Prejudice. There were four participants who identified as a person of color: P1, White LatinX female; P3, multiracial male; P6, Black female, and P8, Black female. P1, P6, and P8, (three out of four participants) admitted to having experienced firsthand prejudicial encounters. All three were female; two Black participants and one multiracial individual. P1 offered a perspective on how her mother experienced prejudiced comments due to her accent. P6 (Black female) reflected on her experience with race and racism as some of which she felt on the campus of DeReef College. P6 (Black female) stated:

Like when I was in school, I did well in school, graduated summa cum laude. But just doing really well in classes and people kind of questioning it, when, especially you’re the only Black person in the class. Also, I was the president of a bunch of organizations at DeReef College, and I’ve only had issues planning events for our African American Caribbean organization. And I was the president of the Chess [pseudonym] and Water [pseudonym] clubs, never had an issue, never missed due dates. Like anything, my stuff was always in on time. But for some reason the Black Club [pseudonym] like they always, “oh, we forgot to put
the order in or, they miss something, or I thought this was another day.” I was like, no, it’s been in the calendar for a month. So that was just, you know, difficult for me, personally.

P8 (Black female) shared several of her experiences with prejudicial experiences with race and racism:

I know it sounds a little weird, but growing up, to me I never really thought much of race. When I lived in – everyone looked like me. When I was in, well, there was nothing but diversity. When I came to the suburb, okay, yeah, there were economic disparities so like looking at my house versus someone else’s house. Someone told me I speak well. I’ve had issues with friends where they’re okay with being Black, but then when it comes to like, “oh, you’re going to a mall. Well, maybe I’ll see you there. I’ve had some friends go like, “I’m okay with you being Black. But like, my parents might not be. I’m like, so I shouldn’t go to a mall because your parents are racist.

P8 (Black female) provided another example of how her background helped her relate to students of culturally diverse background:

I have this one student and I just remember we were talking about something about families, and it related to science. All of a sudden out of nowhere he goes, oh yeah, my mom and her sandals, oh the chancletas. He goes, yeah, her shoe game is on point. I was like. I have the grandma who will take out a spoon, give you a beating and then cook like nothing ever happened to you and then like, why are you crying? What happened? He was like, you did grandma, but really, you’re standing there.
P8 (Black female) continued:

Yeah, my mom used to do this nose wrinkle thing. I would be like; I need to be anywhere that’s not here. I feel people feel a little bit more comfortable [with me]. They’re able to open up and relate a little bit more because of that. They don’t always feel they have to put up a pretense or an air.

The other White participants commented they had no experiences with prejudicial interactions with race and racism or anything relatable to race and racism. P2 (White female) expressed witnessing some prejudice as a teaching assistant in a diverse community that included Hindu or Buddhist, African American, and students from Japan and China who did not know how to speak English. P2 stated that other students would make fun of them or not have enough patience for them because they were new. Then P2 went on to add, “I really did not see racism that much in Jamestown [pseudonym] or the school that I was in.” P3 (White male) said, “Like I had stated, it is a predominately White neighborhood. So, there weren’t a lot Black, Hispanic, and Asian students that I grew up with.”

P4 (White male) made a statement that revolved around this statement, “unique experiences, I would say within the past 2 years with everything that’s going on in the world, students want to talk about it.” P5 (White female) did not provide an experience regarding prejudice but rather mentioned that she had a culturally diverse second grade classroom and that they talked on Zoom about what was going on concerning George Floyd one day. During this time, a second grader came to the computer and mentioned that a protest was going on outside their house. The mother of the second grader asked P5
to explain to her child what was happening. P5 never stated what her response was to the parent or second graders, but this is what she said:

Even in their eyes as young as what’s happening, the younger generations are growing up with this awareness. And it’s there for them and it’s real. And being able to talk about it and have a safe space for all of them was really important.

P7 (White female) also stated that she had not experienced race and racism. However, she did say,

To me, personally, really, the most that I really could ever think of its just being one of the only Jewish families where I grew up. But aside from that, I really can’t think of any time that I faced it at all. I grew up in a community where everyone was just boringly exactly the same. So, it wasn’t something that I experienced personally. I definitely heard in high school, especially just kids saying things that they had no idea about, whether they hear racial slurs like a joke. (P7)

**Altruistic Behavior.** Altruistic Behavior is another emergent category related to Research Question 1. Four out of the eight participants (P1 White Latinx female, P2 White female, P3 White/Latinx male and P5 White female) note altruistic behaviors as their reasons for becoming a teacher. The participants identified wanting to impact students’ lives and making it better for them. For example, P3 (White/Latinx male) said, “anything that I can do to help these young men and women in front of us become better individuals. I think that is such a great opportunity.” P1 (White/Latinx female) stated “I love seeing students grow throughout the year, because you have them from September to June, so you can really connect with them and help them grow in just a year.” Also, P2
Three out of the eight participants (P4 White male, P6, Black female, and P7 White female) stated their own experience as high school students inspired them to become teachers. For example, P4 (White male) stated,

Mr. Rainey (a teacher - pseudonym), he really took me under his wing. Molded me, helped me get through that difficult time in my life. And I wrote my college essay about him, how a teacher is more than a teacher . . . teachers are just more than a teacher.

P6 (Black female) said, “One thing I was involved in was the Math honor society. Through the honor society, we did tutoring, which I also really enjoyed.” Also, P7 (White female) stated, “I was definitely interested probably around eighth-grade. I had a really incredible teacher when I went into high school, who solidified it for me that I would want to be a music teacher.”

**Lack of Racial Discrimination Awareness.** Lack of racial discrimination awareness was an emergent category related to Research Question 1. Participants were to describe their unique experiences with race and racism. The research reports preservice teachers’ lack of racially diverse experiences and interactions affect how preservice teachers can engage culturally diverse students in the classroom (Nelson & Guerra, 2014; Segall & Garrett, 2013; Vaught & Castagno, 2008). Three (P2 White female, P3 White/Latinx male, and P4 White male) out of the eight participants report as not having any racial experiences. P2 (White female) said:
Racism, I didn’t . . . I saw a little of it, I think in Noord [pseudonym], but not-not too much. It was more so that students who didn’t speak English as a first language or they dress differently because of their culture, some students, you know, would kind of make fun of them or not give them enough patients to see, that they’re really trying and they’re struggling because they’re in a new world for them. But, other than that, I really didn’t see racism that much in Noord [pseudonym] of the school that I was in.

P3 (White/Latinx male) said, “so there weren’t a lot of Black, Hispanic, and Asian students that I grew up with. That was just the reality.”

P4 (White male) stated: “unique experiences, I would say within the past 2 years with everything that’s going on in the world, students want to talk about ‘it.’”

Acknowledged Critical Consciousness. Acknowledged critical consciousness was another emergent category related to Research Question 1. Participants were asked to discuss what they knew about the term White privileged as it related to race and racism. All the participants verbalized a commonality of an acknowledgment of the term White privilege and what it meant. They were able to provide an insight. P7 (White female) offered her perspective on the term:

I think that it is easier because of being White. There’s big things and then there’s things that may appear a little but they’re not little either, like going into 7-Eleven and not being stared at. White privilege is such a hard thing to explain, but that things that are just easier for White people, whether it be social. Also, when it comes to getting a job, that someone’s name on their resume might immediately deter someone from getting an interview by other people when a Black person
walks into a store such as 7-Eleven. Or the fear that takes over when a Black person is pulled over by the police.

P8 (Black female) shared her understanding of the term as,

I literally think White privilege it’s this thing that exists that a lot of people don’t acknowledge as a thing. But then I also on the other hand, sit here and go, well, how can they, if they know nothing else. If they walk into an interview, they do their hair and they’re just like, “I’m here for an interview.” Whereas I walk into an interview and I’m like, “Is my natural hair going to be a problem?” Do I make a mistake already by not straightening it emphasizing the treatment a White person is given because they are simply White?

When asked the question P2 (White female) started to cough and clear her throat as she started to respond to what she understood about White privileged. This was her response,

So, the term right, White privilege is where, you know, as a White person, we believe that, or not me, but others believe that, you know, we have an advantage over other, races and we think, White privilege, White males or White females think that they have an advantage over others. So, they believe that [they] may get treated differently than other races. (P2)

Themes

The emergent three themes, structural racism, a catalyst for change, and self-reflective related to Research Question 1, were based on the participants’ responses and interpretation regarding their lived experiences as they related to race and racism and how interactions (or lack thereof) have influenced novice teachers’ preparedness to teach culturally diverse students. Analyzing and understanding these aspects is significant as it
provides a connection to teacher beliefs that teachers bring into the classroom unconsciously or consciously.

**Research Question 2**

*What are novice teachers' perceptions about how their higher education classroom experiences have prepared them for teaching a culturally diverse student?* The researcher asked the participants six interview questions to describe their perceptions of how well the college had prepared them to teach culturally diverse students. As noted in the research, the public education system is diversified, but the system continues to fail to support all learners (Anthony-Stevens et al., 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2006). Therefore, it is important that novice teachers feel prepared to teach all learners, including culturally diverse students. Participants were asked about their understanding of the institutional concept of racism as one of the six questions. As noted in the research, this having a context of race helps to eradicate the history of the consequences of racism that have permeated institutions (Neville et al., 2000; Peters et al., 2016). Analysis of the participants’ interview data revealed three categories and three themes. The identified themes included, contributes to inequalities, culturally responsive teaching, and diverse practicum opportunities. Table 4.3 illustrates the codes, categories, and themes that related to Research Question 2.

**Categories**

The three categories emerged based on the interpretation of the participants’ responses as they described their perceptions of what they learned from their higher education diversity course, and what they thought was beneficial. The categories include lack of effective pedagogy, components of pedagogy, and pedagogy training.
Table 4.3  
*Teachers’ Perceptions of their Higher Education Classroom Experience*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Contributing to        | Lack of effective pedagogy                    | • average college student it’s not enough, scratching the surface (P7 White female)  
• one short chapter on multiculturalism (P1 White/Latinx female) nothing really prepared me about any of the things that I see in school; institutional racism was never touched upon (P7 White female)  
• nobody prepared me for the harshness of what some of my students might go through (P8 Black female)  
• I definitely did not receive any skills or training, there’s not a textbook for every scenario that’s going to come up (P2 White female)  
• really spoke about their culture and what they wear and how they represent their culture in school. But it didn’t really go in depth…(P4 White male)  
• I don’t personally feel like I learned much about characteristics (culturally diverse students); I really learned much more of the autism spectrum (P6 Black female)  
• I really learned more about ESL students and how they need to, you know, they’re brought in the US (P4 White male)  
• relationship building (P3 White/Latinx male)  
• culturally responsive learning (P2 White female)  
• taught how to be in a diverse setting (P6 Black female)  
• stressed promoting equity (P4 White male)  
• focus a lot on equity and equality (P5 White female)  
• bring their culture in the academics, learned more about ESL students (P8 Black female) |
|                        | Elements of culturally diverse pedagogy       |                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Diverse practicum      | Various pedagogy training                     | • student teaching (P1 White/Latinx female)  
• professional development opportunities (P2 White female)  
• I had two classes where the professors actually did some teaching in a high school or something like that (P8 Black female)  
• I can’t recall that many specific strategies, but I do remember creating a consistency, a routine and rapport with students (P3 White/Latinx male)  
• you do not truly learn until you get up and you do it (P5 White female)  
• when one doesn’t teach in a very diverse setting, it’s hard to teach others about teaching in a diverse setting (the professors at DeRelf College) (P8 Black female)  
• you have to go and experience it firsthand (the cultures) (P4 White male) |
|                        | opportunities                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

**Lack of Effective Pedagogy.** Five out of the eight participants expressed this category as it demonstrated what the participants found beneficial in their instruction from their higher education experience in preparing them to teach culturally diverse
students. It is necessary to note that some of the participants stated they had a favorable experience at DeReef College. P3 (White/Latinx Male) said:

DeReef College [pseudonym] really did well in preparing myself and a lot of other graduates, to be sitting here in this desk as a first-year teacher is proof. I’d probably say that the main thing frankly that I learned, was the achievement gap and what can we do as educators to shrink it. A big topic of discussion at DeReef College [pseudonym] whether it be in special education or culturally responsive teaching, would be differentiation of instruction.

Continuing on, P7 (White female) said: “DeReef College [pseudonym] was really an outstanding school; I do have a couple reservations about the way it worked.” Then P7 went on to say, “I love DeReef College [pseudonym], I enjoyed going there, but I don’t know how much we were graded on necessarily, how culturally responsive we were if that makes sense?”

According to the research, care and empathy were noted as being positive influences in preservice teachers, especially when teaching students from diverse backgrounds (Valenzuela, 1999). P2 (White female) shared the following account of her experience with diverse students:

So, I really learned more, I think would say an aspect of ESL and how students you know, they are coming here, they’re very uncomfortable, they’re scared. They want to, you know, trying to fit in and they know one language and their family at home knows one language, so they’re really under pressure. So, what I learned. And that’s really kind of it, it gave me more compassion for those students and how I would, of course, want to help them. (P2)
Lack of pedagogy was also noted in two male participants (one White male and one White/Latinx male) who discussed the concept of institutional racism being taught, but not in the diversity course. They said it was discussed in their content area course for their social studies certification. The other participants shared the following, P7 (White female) said:

I think it [institutional racism] was talked about. But it was like . . . the surface was scratched. If it was, I don’t think I had enough life experience at that time to be able to really embrace the best of the conversation, if it was touched upon. I learned . . . even saying it sounds silly because it’s just, I don’t know. It’s not necessarily reality. I learned that I should have worksheets available in two languages, which is great. But to me, I feel like there’s way more than that.

P8 (Black female) went on to say:

No, I don’t think we’ve ever talked about institutional racism. I have to be honest; I don’t think that I completely understand it myself. Ok, I definitely did not receive any skills or training, but it is great that I have that diploma. Nobody taught me how to deal with kids who were in gangs. School doesn’t really prepare you for that. Now school can’t prepare you for everything, but a lot of that stuff has never been a conversation.

Some participants expressed opposite views than the previous participants. P3 shared:

I would say pretty well [preparedness]. I had a very good professor [for the diversity course] . . . and I would say it prepared me very well. Now I do think that there’s a distinct difference between in practice and in theory, I think we
definitely know that, but I think a lot of what was taught was valuable. Oh yes, I would say we definitely discussed it [institutional racism], how extensively, I’m not sure. Could it maybe be incorporated a little bit more? I would probably in all honestly say yes, but it was discussed and discussed enough where we could develop an understanding of it.

Elements of Culturally Diverse Pedagogy. Elements of culturally diverse pedagogy was noted as an emergent category as it relates to what the participants valued as being beneficial during their higher education classroom experience in the diversity course. Their pedagogy preparation experience described what they learned in the course. P3 (White/Latinx male) first stated that he could not recall many specific strategies taught, but then emphasized his learned experience as the following:

I remember a number of specific strategies that you could use in your classroom that would be effective to cultivate a good community, that safe space that I spoke of in my last answer, along with creating a consistency, a routine and rapport with your students and making that environment fun and culturally responsive.

P1 (White/Latinx) shared her reflection. “I think one big thing we talked about was culturally responsive teaching, which I think about a lot” (P1). P4 (White male) contributed to the discussion by adding, “But for diversity, the disposition is really focused on how to differentiate your class and use different modes of instruction and teaching and different strategies where you always had to reflect back to them and pick.”

P6 (Black female) was the only participant who believed her teacher preparation training was both lacking in pedagogy and had elements of culturally diverse pedagogy. P6 (Black female) stated the following regarding the lack of pedagogy:
I personally don’t feel like DeReef College prepared me to work with culturally diverse students. The majority of my students [at current school of employment] are from like Asian descent. So like I’m getting to know their culture because I know nothing about, you know, their culture specifically on, so I’m really trying to navigate my own way. I just don’t feel like, you know, we touch that much upon it at DeReef College. I don’t personally feel like I learned much about characteristics, you know, diverse students.

P6 (Black female) concluded with her perception of DeReef College:

I don’t think we discussed them [institutional racism]. In terms of institutional racism. Again, I think of things like a diversity quota. Whereas they’re just trying to check a box like, oh we have all these diverse students. You know, and that was like the thing, like with posters at our school, at DeReef College, especially like of events that we’ve had, and then going to school and you’re looking at these banners like, oh, wow, like they have a diverse group here. And then when you get to the school, you see that it’s the complete opposite. So just, you know, I don’t know, in a way like using us as attraction. What I have learned is from taking workshops from not my school per say, but, uh you know, through my school [work].

P6 made some observations about her experience at DeReef College, saying:

I feel like the only thing that was really stressed in our classes was promoting equity. And that was in each of the classes. But I feel like their main focus in that class was students, like on different spectrums, like diverse in terms of their
learning level and understanding the different disabilities and how they can kind of impact students.

**Various Pedagogy Trainings.** Trainings were noted as an emergent category as it pertained to the type of preparation received by new teachers so that they were equipped to teach all students. Participants expressed their learned knowledge was attributed to their student teaching experiences and school related workshops. The one diversity course required for the program was not mentioned as an attributing factor. Some of the participants specifically expressed that their training provided them with the memorable experience. P1(White/Latinx female) expressed her remembrance of a presentation she attended, stating:

I think one big thing we talked about was culturally responsive teaching, which I think about a lot. I think it’s so important. And I remember even, Dr. Emdin, I believe – spoke about it as well. I think it’s really important to consider that when you’re teaching.

P1(White/Latinx female) went on to state:

I think my placement at City High School [pseudonym] was really beneficial because I was working with diverse students. The teacher I was working with was Hispanic as well, and I loved the working with those students and you really get to see, you really have to consider, the other issues that they have outside of the classroom.

P5 (White female) went on to express:

You can learn all the textbook, understanding you can read all about it. You can do everything to gain experience, and you’re prepared by doing. Teaching is not
one that you can jump in and just say, “oh, yeah, I read that textbook. I read this textbook, I’ve read all of the readings in the multicultural diverse course. I’m good to go, I’m a culturally aware teacher.” It is something you have to do by . . . like you have to learn and gain knowledge and take everything as a learning opportunity.

P8 (Black female) stated:

I personally feel you’re taught to be inclusive, and you’re supposed to think about all different types of students and backgrounds that they might come from racially, religiously how they identify their sexuality, gender. You’re taught to keep an open mind, everything that you experienced in your classroom, or you might come across in your career. But I feel it’s all cookie cutter, very nice everything’s perfect. You’re not really going to run into issues as long as you follow these tips.

**Themes**

The themes were based on an interpretation of the participants' responses, explaining their perceptions of how their higher education classroom experiences prepared them for teaching culturally diverse students. Analyzing and understanding what was covered in a teacher preparation diversity course is significant in addressing the importance of teachers being trained to teach in diverse classrooms. It is connected to disparities in the educational experiences of students of color. The two themes that emerged were contributes to inequalities, and diverse practicum opportunities.

**Contributes to Inequalities.** Lack of effective pedagogy was seen as what contributed to inequalities. This provided an insight as to what happens as a result of
insufficient information as it pertains to teaching culturally diverse students. Lack of sociological awareness was an important aspect of the perception of the higher education classroom experience. Five out of the eight participants were identified as being connected to this category. The participants acknowledged that the instruction they received as it was related to institutional racism and culturally diversity was either omitted for the curriculum or there was not adequate information provided. However, some participants acknowledged that their training did provide the knowledge of what needed to be included in teaching in culturally diverse classrooms, which is further discussed in Chapter 5. Two out of the eight did not believe there were inequalities. For example, P3 (White/Latinx, Male) was satisfied with his course. P3 said:

I would say pretty well, I had a very good professor by name Harold James [pseudonym] just a couple of years ago and his course was actually the diversity course at DeReef College [pseudonym], and I would say it prepared me well.

P5 (White female) went on the say,

That one course really stuck out because we did see how just the little things are so different in culture and how teachers have to become aware that their classroom of students, however many students, whether I work with six or nine students in a classroom, or I am in a gen ed [general education] class of 25, 30 students, they’re going to all have different cultural values, cultural backgrounds, that you have to kind of be accepting and tolerant and understand them before you jump to conclusions.

P5 (White female) went on to say:
We did a lot of . . . the professor had a wide array of teaching experience. Different places, different parts of the United States. And so, he would give us small experiences or snapshots of what would happen in a classroom. And he would kind of pose it like, what’s going on here. And just kind of throw it out there, like the student of not looking in the eye, or the student only, would come to school certain days or be late coming to school, because they were out working the field to then come into the classroom.

**Diverse Practicum Opportunities.** During the interviews, several participants described what they learned while taking the diversity course. Therefore, integrating cultural diversity learning throughout the program rather than being confined to a single diversity course, as noted in the research, can provide preservice teachers multiple opportunities with many forms of diversity (Whitaker & Valtierra, 2018). Some participants found student teaching and the workshop with the presenter to be beneficial in preparing them to teach culturally diverse students. P7 (White female) and P8 (Black female) went as far as to question the experience of the professors when teaching cultural diversity courses. P7(White female) said,

> And there are professors at DeReef College [pseudonym] who 100% have taught in a diverse setting. I did have some teachers who I know that didn’t, they were teaching how to be in a diverse setting, but it is very, very different.

P8 commented:

> I would say that I also personally feel at least in DeReef College [pseudonym], I teach secondary education. I also think a lot of my professors, I think I only had
two classes where the professors actually did some teaching in a high school or something that. A lot of my professors, they taught elementary.

**Research Question 3**

*How effectively does a diversity course impact the understanding of race, culture, and differences, and influence plans and strategies for teaching?* The participants responded to the interview questions asking to examine the impact a diversity course had on understanding race, culture, and differences, and how they influenced plans and strategies for teaching. Some research indicated that there is little evidence that taking a diversity course prepares teachers to teach culturally diverse students (Milner, 2011; Reiter & Davis, 2011). The interview data was separated into three categories and two themes. Table 4.4 displays the codes, categories, and themes associated with the interview data based on the participant responses aligned with Research Question 3.

**Categories**

Three categories were identified based on the participants’ responses to the efficiency of the diversity course as it pertained to understanding race, culture, and differences and how they influence plans and strategies for teaching. The categories were raise awareness, insufficient learning, and inconsequential.

**Raise Awareness.** The researcher thought it was important to get the participants’ perceptions on the purpose of the diversity course to answer the related Research Question 3. The participants provided responses such as P1 (White/Latinx female), “Bring awareness that our students come from different backgrounds, different cultures. Prepare teachers for teaching in a diverse area.” P3 (White/Latinx Male)
emphasized the following, “To enlighten and to educate on the principles of diversity and how you could be culturally responsive in your classroom and school community.”

**Table 4.4**

*Impact of a Diversity Course on Understanding Race, Culture, and Differences*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Codes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To Make Culturally Competent</td>
<td>Raise Awareness</td>
<td>• bring awareness that our students come from different backgrounds, different cultures (P1 White/Latinx female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• prepare teachers for teaching in a diverse area, enlighten and to educate on the principles of diversity (P3 White/Latinx male)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• diversity course purpose is to become more aware (P4 White male),</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• cultural diversity student seems to struggle more (White female),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• we must come together as one to understand each diverse culture (P6 Black female),</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• made mistakes when it came to addressing behavior problems (with diverse students) in the earlier stages, never anything major (P7 White female),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant Improvement</td>
<td>Insufficient Learning</td>
<td>• so it is enough to kind of whet your appetite (P1 White/Latinx female),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• it was one class out of the whole semester (laughs), just hearing like, “don’t be prejudice, don’t do this (P6 Black female),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• it is really up to the individual to seek further knowledge; the course should be revamped (P4 White male),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• we had to memorize things from out of a textbook (P5 White female),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• diversity is a huge umbrella, it’s tremendous, just because something happens in one building does not mean it’s going to happen in another or a community (P7 White female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsequential</td>
<td></td>
<td>• it was not a priority (the diversity course) (P1 White/Latinx female),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• I think it was a priority but not as high as it should have been (P5 White female),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• I don’t think it was a priority (the diversity course) (P6 Black female),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• I think for them it was just a requirement. (P7 White female)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, P8 (Black female) elaborated on the point of raising awareness by stating:

I feel the purpose of the diversity course is to bring awareness to people without necessarily pointing a finger at someone saying like, “Oh, you feel this way.” I feel it’s supposed to raise a curtain and show people, no, this is diversity. Or
maybe you have some biasness to you. Maybe you have these racist feelings, or maybe it’s just something that was taught or ingrained at you from a young age. I think the purpose of a diversity course is more so to shine a light on yourself. I think it’s supposed to help you reflect and point out what’s going on. Maybe things that you feel that you may not want to admit, or you might not even know. I think that is the purpose of it. I don’t really think that’s how it always goes over.

**Insufficient Learning.** According to Akiba (2011), Shockley and Banks (2011), and Matias and Mackey (2015) the topics discussed in a diversity course are relevant to the impact of understanding race, culture, and differences. Most of the participants expressed their higher education classroom experience was inadequate as it pertained to issues of race and racism and social injustices. Five out of the eight stated they were able to take some notable learned information from their culturally diverse course, although all eight participants felt that the one diversity course was not sufficient. Their responses noted the opinion that more discussion was needed related to the issue of teaching in a culturally diverse classroom. P2 (White female) and P5 (White female) said the following. P2 (White female) stated:

I don’t think it was, I don’t think it was that, I mean, they talked about racism, they explained what it is even though we all were aware of racism and race, but I don’t think they really prepared us for what would happen in a, in a situation if a student was, you know, racist to another student or was calling out another race to another student. I don’t think it was very, like, we weren’t really prepared for that. They did explain that, I think they could have maybe gone in more detail with it, but they definitely were explaining that it could be more sensitive if you
say one thing or act out in a way they may not like that, and they find that
disrespect.

P5 (White female) had a similar but different perspective to specific issues tied to
race, racism, and social injustices:

How much? Not enough. It was not enough. But it was really up to the
individual to seek further. We did all the reading; we did all the experience. And
if you didn’t use that as a springboard, you might lose it kind of if you don’t use
it, you lose it kind of idea. But it was a great foundation, and then it’s up to the
individual to continue that because it’s something that’s always evolving and ever
changing, just like education itself is always evolving and changing. You can’t
just say I took a course, back in 2013, or 2014, whatever year you took the course,
2018. I took a course, yeah, well, now it’s 2021, things have changed. So, it is
enough to kind of whet your appetite. But it is something that perhaps more than
just a course or two courses are needed to kind of, should be an ongoing dialogue,
ongoing professional development, whatever you want to call it something
ongoing.

P5 (White female) concluded with, “briefly touched upon it (social injustices).
Wouldn’t say it was something we didn’t touch. Not a great deal of time was spent on
that. But it was touched upon.”

Inconsequential. Five out of the eight participants expressed that preparing them
to be racially competent teachers was not a priority in their teacher preparation program.
P1(White/Latinx female) and P8 (Black female) felt the college lacked commitment in
preparing teachers to be racially competent. P1(White/Latinx female) said:
Wow. I don’t think it was a priority for them. I think it was just a requirement. And even for the students taking the course, they kind of just saw it as a requirement that they had to take the class. But I feel like there should have been more, emphasis on the course. I felt like, you know, being that most of the students in the class were White and, you know, they had to kind of prepare to work in, you know, schools with diverse student populations. I felt like they maybe should have, you know, taking the class more seriously or maybe they should have made it a two-semester course.

P8 (Black female) response was similar:

No [racially competence was not seen as a priority]. Actually, I think honestly the program is focused more on students with special needs in terms of IEPs and 504s and meeting the needs of those students than it really did on race. But then again, I also said before, I think the idea is when you start talking about race, people get uncomfortable. I think if you preach inclusivity and you just put a few keywords here saying we want to smatter this across the board to everything. I guess in a way it gets you covered, but never straight on race.

The researcher asked a follow-up question. When inclusivity is mentioned who are they mainly focused on; students with disabilities or students from culturally diverse background? P8 (Black female) responded with:

No. It had more to do with students with disabilities and how we just need to be more respectful. Most people don’t even say culturally diverse backgrounds. They just say you might have different students in your classroom, but nobody really talks about it. I find it crazy. Nobody really talks about it. But then I also
sit here, and, in my experience, how many Black teachers are there really? Part of me also wonders is it well, I know it’s an awkward topic for a lot of people, but then I also wonder do we cater this to a non-colored demographic because we don’t have that many culturally diverse teachers? I wonder that as well.

The other three believed that the college saw the cultural diversity as a priority. P3 (White/Latinx Male) stated:

Absolutely. Yes, I do think so. Absolutely, I think we could always see improvements and seek out areas where we can grow. But I would say yes, I would say yes. I do think that I was educated on these issues [social injustices, race, and racism] to a pretty good degree in a number of courses, not just in the diversity course but in the other courses, from really good people who have been in the trenches if you will. Who’ve taught in schools, who’ve maybe been administrators. Like for example I had an assistant principal that was one of my teachers, people who could speak about it, people who could help you put it into practice and people who could give you the fine details, the fine print of what goes on and what we can do especially being the new crop of educators to create that culturally responsive environment and good, solid teaching practice.

P4 (White male) said:

From the onset for me, I think, yes. But I think they can improve. Every program obviously needs a revamping over time due to injustices and educational. because moving to 21st century, I think they can improve. But I think that’s also what you may get out of the program, what you want to be involved in and how you want to
take it and apply it into your classroom or your teaching practices on your philosophy.

Themes

The themes were based on an interpretation of the participants' responses, examining the impact the diversity course had on understanding race, culture, and differences and how it influenced plans and strategies for teaching. Analyzing and understanding what was discussed in a teacher preparation diversity course is significant in identifying the novice teachers’ perception as useful pedagogy instruction necessary to reach culturally diverse students (Akiba, 2011; Matias & Mackey, 2015; Shockley & Banks, 2011). It is connected to teacher beliefs of culturally diverse students and the disparities in the educational experiences (Jacoby-Senghor et al., 2011; Warikoo et al., 2016). The two emergent themes were racial awareness and significant improvements.

Racial Awareness. Racial awareness provided an insight to determine if the participants understood the reason for taking the diversity course. Self-reflection was a necessary aspect of the perception of the higher education classroom experience. It allowed the researcher to analyze the participants’ level of understanding to take the diversity course. Seven out of eight participants were connected to this category. Those participants were able to formulate a sense of purpose for taking a diversity course.

Significant Improvement. Significant improvement emerged as a theme based on the interviews. Several participants described that taking the one-semester required course within 10 weeks was not enough time to cover what should be infused into the diversity course, while some felt that other courses they took gave them more insight into diversity. Also, the diversity course was not seen as a priority but as a requirement. As
one participant stated, “the box was checked.” It was evident from the participants’ responses that they wanted more out of the diversity course; however, the quality fell short for most novice teachers.

**Summary of Results**

This qualitative narrative study was designed to examine novice teachers’ perceptions of their preparedness to teach culturally diverse students. The focus of the study was on the lived experiences and higher education classroom experiences of eight participants. The researcher used three coding cycles to develop categories and themes based on the participants’ responses to the semi-structured interview questions used to answer the study’s three research questions. The main finding illustrated the limited diversity that is reflected in the diversity course at DeReef College. There was a lack of conversation surrounding race and racism when most of the participants themselves were White and had little to no lived experience of race and racism, but were expected to teach culturally diverse students. The findings did reveal that the participants shared some similarities and differences as illustrated in Table 4.2, providing varying points of view on the subjects. In summary, the data determined that more discussion was needed in the diversity course even though some participants felt that they discussed this topic in more depth in other related courses.

Chapter 5 provides an overview of the research problem, a summary of the study’s major findings, the implications of findings, the limitations of the research, and recommendations for future research and practice.
Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

Racism and inequalities persist in the United States educational system (Hughes, 2010; Kohli et al., 2017). The recent COVID-19 health crisis has exacerbated these problems in education (Cox, 2020; NYASP, 2021). The educational system must address these social injustices by properly preparing preservice teachers to teach to all students. Unfortunately, teacher preparation programs are not fully equipped to prepare preservice teachers to teach culturally diverse students (Anthony-Stevens et al., 2016; Darling-Hammond, 2011; Goldhaber, 2019; Green & Edwards-Underwood, 2015; Hossain, 2015; Milner, 2011). In this chapter, the researcher briefly (a) discusses the research study's major findings, (b) discusses how the findings are related to the body of literature, (c) highlights implications for the findings, (d) acknowledges limitations (e) and provides recommendations for further study. It provides an in-depth insight into the lived experiences and interactions of novice teacher participants with their college experience in a diversity course, and their preparedness to teach in a culturally diverse classroom. This researcher hopes that the findings in this study will positively impact teacher development practices, teacher education programs, and students' learning. This study is also significant in leading educators to explore their own biases in contributing to positive student outcomes. This chapter also includes the limitations of this study and recommendations for future research based on the findings. The research questions
explored the level at which a college's teacher preparation program prepares its preservice teachers to teach culturally diverse students. Using a qualitative approach, the results of the research study answered the following research questions:

1. What life experiences and interactions do novice teachers report as having influenced their understanding of race and racism?

2. What are novice teachers' perceptions about how their higher education classroom experiences have prepared them for teaching a culturally diverse student?

3. How effectively does a diversity course impact the understanding of race, culture, and differences, and influence plans and strategies for teaching?

The categories and themes that emerged from this study were discussed in Chapter 4. The 11 categories are: segregated childhood, prejudiced experience, lack of racial discrimination awareness, savior mentality, acknowledged critical consciousness, lack of pedagogy training, elements of culturally diverse pedagogy, more pedagogy training, raise awareness, insufficient learning, and inconsequential. The seven themes include structural racism, racial liberation, self-awareness, contributing to inequalities, diverse practicum opportunities, to make culturally competent, and significant improvement. The categories and themes answered the study’s research questions. The researcher hopes that data from this study can improve teacher preparation programs to equip preservice teachers with the knowledge required to teach culturally diverse students. As noted in the qualitative data obtained, there is a critical need to reform the diversity course in DeReef College to meet the needs of teacher candidates.
This chapter discusses the three major findings connected to the research questions. The three major findings are provided along with implications.

**Major Finding 1**

*Many participants lacked lived experience with race and racism and have not discussed social justice, White privilege, institutional racism, systemic racism, or culturally diverse courses.* Freire (1970) stated that lived experience is essential to engaging and liberating all students. Bell's (1980) critical race theory framework allowed the research to challenge the dominant narrative related to race experiences and how racism contributes to inequalities.

Due to where the participants lived, they lacked the knowledge of other diversity. Many participants lacked lived experience with race and racism, which are vital elements to how a diversity course is taught without compromising their classroom experience. Six out of the eight participants (all but the two Black, female participants) had no concept of race and racism in their lived experience. Those participants recount never attending school with any Black students, but possibly a few Latinx students. Five out of the eight participants were raised in affluent neighborhoods, where most, if not all their neighbors were White and Catholic. The participants had limited to no interactions with non-White people. When participants were probed on their school experience with having a culturally diverse staff and students, most participants could not recall their schools being culturally diverse with staff or students.

This type of upbringing does not provide an opportunity for the participants to know but one perception and narrative regarding cultural diversity. In comparison, the two Black female participants experienced race and racism within their lived experience.
Most of the participants have only interacted predominately with White people in White communities. These participants will typically lack the confidence to teach culturally diverse students (Henfield & Washington, 2012). Exposure to racism has been acknowledged more frequently in the news with the death of George Floyd through police brutality and the insurrection of the Black Lives Matter movement, thus bringing greater awareness to the importance of equality and lack of prejudice; two important factors necessary in creating a culturally positive climate in the classroom. As noted in the research, teacher education programs value instituting cultural diversity education in their programs, but they want it without confrontation. They are conducting lessons without having the uncomfortable dialogue taking place in the classroom.

This study's findings reveal that the majority of the teachers who enter the profession will continue to be White, predominately female, with no lived experience with race. Also, the findings illustrate that the teacher education program the participants attended has a Whiteness structured program. As supported by the theoretical frameworks of the critical race theory and critical pedagogy theory, social justice, race, racism, White privilege/White identity must be part of the teacher preparation program to address inequalities in education. The program cannot focus solely on culturally diverse exoticism (making it look nice). Therefore, the research showed that it becomes the responsibility of the teacher preparation programs to include shelter students from the reality of life. When preservice teachers become teachers with no concept of race and racism, it does nothing to bridge the gap between equality and academic achievement.
Major Finding 2

The quality of preparation for teachers teaching culturally diverse students was seen as inadequate. The findings from this study illustrate the importance of the teacher preparation program to explore race as it relates to cultural diversity in the classroom that contributes to alleviating inequities in schools (Demers, 2016; DiAngelo, 2020; Green & Edwards-Underwood, 2015; Matias & Mackey, 2015). The research demonstrates that preservice teachers who are not prepared to teach culturally diverse students will become ill-equipped to develop skills to navigate diversity in educational settings (Anthony-Stevens et al., 2017). Making a conscious effort to alter culturally diverse instruction will increase preservice teachers' preparedness (Kumar & Hamer, 2012). A few of the study's participants described the culturally diverse course content as "cookie-cutter" and "scratching the surface," meaning that their culturally diverse class is not adequate.

As noted in the research, failure to recognize the pervasiveness of racial inequities and not reflecting on our cultural being interferes with the development of cultural competency (Castro, 2010; Kondor et al., 2019). For example, preservice teachers perceived their cultural diversity course lacked depth (not long enough) and not enough information regarding diversity, race, and racism. For example, P6 (Black female) stated that the make-up of her diversity course lacked diversity. She mentions how her friends attend HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) and were having conversations surrounding race and racism in their courses. P6 said having only White students in the culturally diverse class seems to impact the conversation level because she was the only Black student in the class. P8 (Black female) stated,
I think the idea is when you start talking about race, people get uncomfortable. I think if you preach inclusivity and you just put a few keywords here saying we want to spatter this across the board to everything, I guess in a way it gets you covered, but never straight on race.

P7 (White female) said,

I don't think they really talked. They need just to say it how it is because progress happens once we start identifying some of the problems. It was more that we had to pick pieces of what was being said, if that makes sense. No one has said that Black students had less than White students. No one necessarily said that far. It was more like, Oh, high-needs, they lack access. Make sure you write down on your midterm the word access. That has to be there, access, access, access. But they don’t know what exactly does access means.

Research shows that when the conversation surrounding the rights and treatment of minorities in higher education happens, their emotions and deep-seated beliefs cause them to reflect on themselves (Taylor et al., 2016). Also, Sleeter (2010) stated that taking a single course on cultural diversity will not address the problem among preservice teachers' cultural diversity learning if it does not infuse democratic ideals of justice, equality, and freedom (Kumar & Lauermann, 2018). There is a reluctance to engage in a critical substantive discourse on race and racism. Teacher preparation programs must strategically prepare to provide quality opportunities (Allen & White-Smith, 2015; Bryan, 2017; Losen, 2013; Matias, 2013; Milner, 2011). As per the research, quality opportunities can include dialogue centered around teachers' biased beliefs on students' academics, social, and psychological development. Through personal and professional
engagement of self-reflection, preservice teachers can better understand who they are and who their students are as racial and cultural beings (Baggett & Simmons, 2017; Kumar & Lauermann, 2018; Schellen & King, 2014; Siwatu, 2011; Whitaker & Valtierra, 2018).

Even though teacher education programs include culturally diverse courses, they do not interrogate how "whiteness" in teacher preparation programs has failed to diversify perspectives and experiences. Cultural awareness is crucial to the teaching profession and for improving students' achievement. It is concerning that even after taking a cultural diversity course, preservice teachers are still lacking culture diversity and it is because they are unable to explore race critically (DiAngelo, 2012; Matias & Mackey, 2015).

Therefore, curriculum including White privileged, institutional racism, and the history of oppression in America is imperative to their preparation to teach all students. Several of the participants were raised in White, and Catholic communities in the suburbs, limiting their exposure and understanding cultural diversity. The research conducted by Kumar and Lauermann (2018) suggests that dialogue needs to happen regarding race to develop effective instructional practices in diverse settings. These researchers note that for teacher preparation programs to prepare their preservice teachers, they need to be allowed to become increasingly aware of their prejudice and stereotype beliefs in this ever-changing world of diversity. These researchers conclude that these conversations need to permeate throughout all classes. The participants alluded to the idea throughout the interviews that one class in one semester was not enough and there needed to be an opportunity for deeper learning.

P6 (Black female), P7 (White female), and P8 (Black female) discussed that they believed that the professors are not equipped to teach the culturally diverse course due to
the lack of exposure to race, racism, and what the school environment looks like with culturally diverse students. These participants believe that their professors have no connection to the elementary and secondary structure and the learning environment, making them unprepared to teach preservice effectively. The participants feel they are being given textbook learning with no real context to teaching culturally diverse students. Also, the participants believe the course is only offered to check a box that a cultural diversity course was given. The participants believe they are being given generic information, and the students taking the course are not putting forth any real effort to understand culturally diverse students. For example, participants P2 (White female) and P5 (White female) stated they thought they were receiving textbook information instead of information based on their experiences.

However, the preservice teachers learned what to say and do to seem like they have learned something in the course. One of the participants even stated that the college pretended to be inclusive and diverse because the DeReef College brochure illustrates students from various backgrounds. However, when a person arrives at the college, there are very few people of color. For example, Black participants stated that they were the only Black people in their graduating class. They also added they were the only Black individuals in the cultural diversity class and other classes. Therefore, a scholarly lecture on race, racism, White privilege, institutional racism, and social injustice is difficult, especially given the class make-up. The majority of the participants stated race, racism, poverty, and linguistics play a role in students' academic achievement. Therefore, it is important to ensure these topics are discussed to increase student achievement.
Major Finding 3

*Extending diversity practicum training is warranted due to the insufficient learning from one diversity course and one semester of student-teaching.* Based on the participants' responses, there is a need for an increase in practicum training. Six out of the eight participants believe the design of the teacher program as it is now does not allow for more hands-on interaction. The research supports that culturally diverse classes are ineffective (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Reiter & Davis, 2011). Also, there is no evidence that there is a relationship between completing a course and preservice teachers being prepared to teach culturally diverse students ((Reiter & Davis, 2011; Milner, 2011). Amos (2011) stated that a cultural diversity course should encourage preservice teachers to question what they know about diversity.

In the culturally diverse class the participants took, this is what a few had to say about what they learned: P1(White/Latinx female) said, “culture responsive teaching,” P2 (White female) stated, “how different cultures are taught in such places as Mexico, Spain, however, places like Caribbean were not included.” P5 (White female) said she learned the following:

- Struggles of diverse students, we looked at how even their perceptions or how they in their cultures have small society, systemic group, how they are perceived and how they take on that perception and to never judge a book by a cover.

Extending diversity practicum training is warranted due to the insufficient learning of one diversity course and one semester of student-teaching. All the participants except for P5 (White female) mentioned that more training would be beneficial in preparing them to teach culturally diverse students. The training would
include professional development, guest speakers, and student teaching opportunities in the city areas. P1 (White/Latinx female) and P6 (Black female) commented that they received more teacher preparation from workshops and guest speakers. P4 stated that the experience should be firsthand. P7 said, "DeReef College [pseudonym] is not super far from the city school as far as that I mean, I haven’t been in every state district by any means, but I know that where I am is significantly different.”

**Implications of Findings**

This research presents implications for leaders in higher education teacher preparation programs to examine, improve, and develop training and curriculum to provide the strategies and training necessary to develop novice teachers’ cultural competency. This research study used the definitions of culturally diverse courses and diversity as a metric to examine novice teachers' perceptions of their teacher preparation program preparedness to teach culturally diverse students. Nearly all the participants mentioned that the current state of their teacher preparation program's culturally diverse course was insufficient, although those who pointed out positive aspects of the total school programs filled in the gaps. In reviewing the data collected from this study and the theoretical framework used, critical race theory and critical pedagogy theory, the following analyses can be concluded.

The critical race theory framework used for this study is Whiteness as property through storytelling. Whiteness as property explains the shaping of assumptions and exceptions on issues. It influences access to knowledge and perceptions. The data analysis, through critical race theory, revealed the participants' narratives were an insight into the need to have more of a conscious effort to bring race and racism into the
conversation in teacher preparation programs. In discussion, not confronting and exposing the property interest such as racism, social justice, and White privilege is an example of the Whiteness of property (Harris, 1993). The nature of the cultural diversity course is delivered more of assimilation on the idea of cultural than on emancipation, limiting the influence within teacher education program that provides necessary pedagogy for teacher culturally diverse students. For example, several participants explained their culturally diverse course "as going through the motions." For example, P6 stated: "I think of things like a diversity quota, where they are just trying to check a box." P7 (White female) stated that higher education experience of race and racism was just scratching the surface. (White female) stated her insight on the course: The lack of understanding of race contributes to racism (Matias & Zembylas, 2014). Some of the participants went on to say that Freire (1970) stated that critical consciousness started with an awareness of self and our society's strengths, weaknesses, and challenges. According to critical pedagogy, through the process of dialogue with others, people will develop a critical view of the world (Freire & Macedo, 2016). In this study, the novice teacher participants lack the dialogue in their culturally diverse course. The study affirms a gap in content learned for these novice teacher participants through the participants' narratives.

When participants were asked whether their cultural diversity course was tied to race and racism, or if the program assured them that they were the racially competent and aware candidates, some of the participants believed the course to be inadequate. In reviewing the course and its connection to teaching cultural diversity, six out of the eight participants felt that this was not a priority in the course. However, the two male
participants (P3, White/Latinx and P4, White) thought differently. In many cases, required courses in teacher preparation programs only scratch the surface of what preservice teachers should know about cultural diversity. Other participants suggested that the English as a new language (ENL) student were the primary focus in the cultural diversity course. Also, most of the participants agreed that race, racism, poverty, and linguistics are connected to culturally diverse students’ academic achievement. However, these topics were barely mentioned during their class discussions.

Based on the participants experience from taking their culturally diverse course the teacher preparation programs must increase field experience opportunities to appreciate context-specific understanding and practices (Kumar & Lauermann, 2018; Schellen & King, 2014). To alleviate the disparities in education, teacher preparation programs need to offer a curriculum to address racial issues that contribute to schools' inequalities (Green & Edwards-Underwood, 2015). One culturally diverse course is not enough to diminish the inequalities in education.

Limitations

This section of the study outlines the limitations. Several elements may have impacted the results of this qualitative study. This study was limited to willing participants and confined to one geographic setting (a private, Catholic college).

In total, there were 13 potential participants. However, one of those potential participants (White male) became ill with COVID-19 and was unable to sit for the interview. Another potential participant (White female) refused to be recorded; another potential participant (Black female) would not respond to the researcher’s request to complete the informed consent. Also, two potential participants did not follow through
after their initial contact. Therefore, that left eight participants willing to participate in this study. This researcher suggested at least 10 participants for this study. This resulted in a limited perspective. The study would have benefited from having a more diverse group of Asian/Pacific Islander/Latinx participants. Two multiracial participants identified as White/Latinx, however, perspectives and experiences may differ from those identified as only Latinx.

It was difficult to recruit participants for this study. The researcher had to solicit assistance from various people in education. Those who decided to volunteer to participate were most likely doing a favor for the solicitor and not because the study interested them. That could result in the participants not being truthful or forthcoming in their responses. Also, while this study’s research questions investigated the perceptions and experiences of the participants, absent from the study are the professors from the teacher preparation program, specifically the professors who teach the culturally diverse course.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews could not take place in person. All interviews were conducted virtually using Zoom. The use of Zoom limited what could be observed from the participant's full body language. The researcher had to focus more on changes in voice tones, facial impressions, head and eye movements, and to listen for nervous coughs and giggles.

**Recommendations**

The results of this study lead to recommendations for higher education administrators to improve practice and conduct further research. These recommendations
will increase preservice teachers' preparedness to teach culturally diverse students. There are three recommendations:

1. Higher education administrators need to consider including a social justice course as a requirement in the teacher preparation programs,
2. Implement mandatory student teaching in urban school districts, and
3. Institute policies to support professional development to increase cultural competency.

**Recommendations for Improved Practices**

It is recommended that teacher preparation programs refine their program’s curriculum to include a social justice course. Preservice teachers would have an opportunity to learn specifically, about the historical oppression of education in America and how it continues in the present day (Du Bois, 1935; Irons, 2002; Kohli et al., 2017; Spring, 2016; Woodson, 1933). This study has shown that although the participants have taken their cultural diversity course, they have no exposure to racism – institutional, or systemic racism. Preservice teachers need to discuss those topics as they have been deeply rooted in American culture and instruction. A social justice class would focus the discussions on race, racism, and institutional or systemic racism.

It is recommended that preservice teachers dedicate one full year working in urban school districts. The responses from the participants indicated the desire to learn more from culturally diverse students by spending enough time with them in their learning environment. For example, P5 stated, "you're prepared by doing."

It is recommended that professional development is incorporated to develop or enhance continuing education for teachers in service. Based on the results from the
study, most of the participants agreed that one culturally diverse course is not sufficient preparation for teaching culturally diverse students. With the cultural divide, teacher preparation programs are important in preparing teachers to become culturally competent to improve outcomes for culturally diverse students. When a teacher enters a learning environment and is not fully equipped, it becomes the responsibility of the elementary and secondary school to close the gap in the preparation.

It is recommended that k-12 education should institute African American studies. Due to the number of novice teachers’ participants who had limited exposure to other cultures other than the White community, African American studies must be included for all students to learn. This leaves the teachers ill-prepared to teach culturally diverse students due to their lack of familiarity with diverse students (Gay & Kirkland 2003; Henfield & Washington, 2012). Therefore, instituting African American studies into the curriculum could alleviate the racial inequalities in education. Also, some of the participants seem to reference the recent unrest our nation brought on by the murder of Mr. George Floyd, reigniting the Black Lives Matter movement, as if this were the only account of racism and evidence of racial discrimination in the United States.

**Recommendation for Future Research**

There are implications for future research in the area of preparing preservice teachers to teach culturally diverse students. Six of eight participants in the study expressed that their cultural diversity course provided insufficient learning in cultural diversity. Therefore, future research could focus on culturally diverse students’ perceptions of their novice teachers' preparedness to teach them. Also, future research
could examine the professors of these cultural diversity courses and analyze their lived experiences with cultural diversity, race, and racism.

Based on a few of the participants' responses, some professors may not be qualified to teach a culturally diverse course due to their lived experiences. Therefore, future research should examine the professors who teach this cultural diversity course and analyze their lived experiences with cultural diversity, race, and racism.

Conclusion

A qualitative design analyzed novice teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to teach culturally diverse students. This study provided a glimpse into the sense of preparedness from eight Northeastern regional, private Catholic college participants. The analysis of data collected included various coding approaches. This study addressed three research questions relating to examining the perceptions based on the participants' lived experience and their perceptions of the culturally diverse course they took in college.

1. What life experiences and interactions do novice teachers report as having influenced their understanding of race and racism?

2. What are novice teachers' perceptions about how their higher education classroom experiences have prepared them for teaching a culturally diverse student?

3. How effectively does a diversity course impact the understanding of race, culture, and differences, and influence plans and strategies for teaching?

The findings of this study present new information, adding to the research literature on the lived experiences of novice teachers’ perceptions of preparedness to
teach culturally diverse students. This study found that novice teachers’ perceptions of preparedness to teach culturally diverse students based on their lived experience and the culturally diverse class lacked substance in content. Many novice teachers lived segregated lives in all-White communities and schools, which sheltered them from race and racism. The culturally diverse course did not discuss race, racism, institutional racism, or social justice issues. This supports the literature that taking a culturally diverse course does not mean it is preparing teachers to teach all students (Amos, 2011; Banks & Banks, 2012; Demers, 2016; Green & Edwards-Underwood, 2015; Milner, 2011; Reiter & Davis, 2011; Zeichner, 2012).

The researcher used lived experiences through storytelling in CRT and CPT to explicitly detail the personal narratives and perspectives of the participants as it pertains to social justices, race, and racism (Addleman et al., 2014; Bell, 1980; Delgado & Stefancic, 1998, 2011; Freire, 1970, 1973; Hughes, 2010; Kempf, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2006; Love, 2004; Shih, 2018; Smith et al., 2007; Solorzano & Yosso 2001; Stinson, 2008; Taylor, 1993; Yosso et al., 2004). Based on the findings, the novice teachers want more substance from their culturally diverse course. This study indicates a need to reform teacher preparation programs to improve teachers' preparedness.
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Appendix A

Potential Participant Email

Dear DeReef College, Graduate Education Alumni,

My name is Robin Small, and I am a doctoral student in the executive leadership program at St. John Fisher College. Also, I am a secondary school administrator with over 20 years’ experience in K-12 learning, and I am an adjunct professor at Molloy College. I am conducting a qualitative study to examine novice teachers’ perceptions of their preparedness to teach culturally diverse students. The research questions driving this study are: 1) What life experiences and interactions do novice teachers report have influenced their understanding of race and racism? 2) What are novice teachers’ perceptions about how their higher education classroom experiences have prepared them for teaching a culturally diverse student? 3) How effectively does a diversity course impact the understanding of race, culture, and differences and influence plans and strategies for teaching?

Therefore, I am seeking volunteers who graduated from DeReef College’s School of Graduate Education to participate in my study. Participation in this study would include one interview that will last for approximately 60-90 minutes on a mutually agreed upon date. The college’s identity and your responses to the interview questions will be kept confidential.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be required to sign an informed consent form. Please let me know if there are any questions or concerns about this study that I may address for you. Participation is entirely voluntary; if you do not volunteer,
you will not be contacted again regarding this study. Please email me at rs09164@sjfc.edu.

Thank you for your consideration. I am very much looking forward to working with you on this project.
Informed Consent

St. John Fisher College Institutional Review Board

Statement of Informed Consent for Adult Participants

Examining Novice Teachers’ Perceptions of Their Preparedness to Teach Culturally Diverse Students

SUMMARY OF KEY INFORMATION:

• You are being asked to be in a research study examining novice teachers’ perceptions of their preparedness to teach culturally diverse students. As with all research studies, participation is voluntary.

• The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions and beliefs of teachers who complete the graduate teacher education program in a Northeastern Regional private college about their ability to educate culturally diverse students effectively.

• At least ten (10) people will take part in this study. The results will inform the existing body of literature discussing teachers’ perceptions of their preparedness to teach culturally diverse students. I am interested in learning about what novice teachers’ lived experiences have been with cultural diversity and the type of preparation received in their School of Graduate Education program. This study may lead to the development of study programs that result in positive social change for teachers and increase culturally diverse students’ academic achievements.

• If you agree to participate in this study, you will be involved in this study for one (1) zoom interview session that will last approximately 60-90 minutes.

• If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete a demographic profile questionnaire through Survey Monkey. You will also agree to be interviewed via Zoom and be audio recorded during one (1) meeting session lasting approximately 60-90 minutes.

• Risks: We believe this study has no more than minimal risk. There are no inherent risks in participating in the study other than being transparent about your
professional and personal experiences related to your preparation to teach culturally diverse students.

• Benefits: You will not directly benefit from this research. However, this research's potential benefits will be to improve teacher preparation programs in preparing their preservice teachers to teach culturally diverse students. That could lead to the increased achievement of culturally diverse students.

St. John Fisher College IRB
Approval Date: January 20, 2021
Approved: January 20, 2021 / Expired: January 20, 2022

DETAILED STUDY INFORMATION (some information may be repeated from the summary above):
You are being asked to be in a research study examining novice teachers’ perceptions of their preparedness to teach culturally diverse students. This study is being conducted online using SurveyMonkey.com to obtain demographic profile information, and the semi-structured interviews will be conducted via Zoom. I, Robin D. Small, is the principal investigator working under my faculty supervisors’ guidance, Dr. Frances Wills, Chair, and Dr. Jennifer Schulman, co-chair in the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr School of Education, Executive Leadership Program at St. John Fisher College.

You were selected as a possible participant because you graduated from the School of Graduate Education program at Molloy College within the last five years.

Please read this consent form and ask any questions you have before agreeing to be in the study.

PROCEDURES:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following:
1. Sign the Informed Consent form.
2. Complete a demographic questionnaire through SurveyMonkey.com. The questionnaire's data will ensure if the participant meets all necessary criteria before the semi-structured interviews commence.
3. The participant will be invited to one (1) agreed upon Zoom meeting to conduct the interview. During this meeting, approximately 20 semi-structured questions will be asked.
4. The one (1) interview session will last between 60-90 minutes and be audio recorded. If the participant declines to be audio recorded, the principal investigator will thank the participant for their time and end the interview session.
5. The participant can decline to answer any question(s) and end the interview session at any time.
6. Observations notes will be taken during each interview session.
7. All audio recordings of each interview session will be professionally transcribed.

**COMPENSATION/INCENTIVES:**

You will not receive compensation/incentive.

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**CONFIDENTIALITY:**

The records of this study will be kept private, and your confidentiality will be protected. In any sort of report the researcher might publish, no identifying information will be included. Click or tap here to enter text. Identifiable research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher(s) will have access to the records. All data will be kept secure by storing data in a laptop that is password protected by the principal investigator. The laptop will be stored in a combination locked safe at the home of the principal investigator. All study records with identifiable information, including approved IRB documents, tapes, transcripts, and consent forms, will be destroyed by shredding and deleting after three years.

**VOLUNTARY NATURE OF THE STUDY:**

Participation in this study is voluntary and requires your informed consent. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with St. John Fisher College or Molloy College. If you decide to participate, you are free to skip any question that is asked. You may also withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.

**CONTACTS, REFERRALS AND QUESTIONS:**

**Name of Researcher:** Robin D. Small, Ed.D. Candidate. Contact information: phone 917-9231387 or email: rs09164@sjfc.edu.

**Faculty Supervision Chair:** Dr. Frances Wills. Contact information:

The Institutional Review Board of St. John Fisher College has reviewed this project. For any concerns regarding this study/or if you feel that your rights as a participant (or the rights of another participant) have been violated or caused you undue distress (physical or emotional distress), please contact the SJFC IRB administrator by phone during normal business hours at (585) 385-8012 or irb@sjfc.edu.
STATEMENT OF CONSENT:

I am 18 years of age or older. I have read and understood the above information. I consent to voluntarily participate in the study.

I agree to be audio-recorded/ transcribed _____ Yes _____ No If no, I understand that the researcher will not be able to use me as a participant in the study.

St. John Fisher College IRB
Approval Date: January 20, 2021
Approved: January 20, 2021 / Expired: January 20, 2022

Electronic Consent: Clicking on the “Agree” button below indicates that:
- I have read the above information.
- I voluntarily agree to participate.
- I am at least 18 years of age.

If you do not wish to participate in the study, please decline participation by clicking on the “Disagree” button below.

☐ Agree ☐ Disagree

Please keep a copy of this informed consent for your records.
Appendix C

Demographic Profile Questionnaire

1. Are you a DeReef College School of Graduate Education graduate? ___ yes ___ no

2. What year did you graduate? ___

3. Have you ever completed at least one diversity course at DeReef? ___ yes ___ no

4. Do you have your teaching certification? ___ yes ___ no

5. If yes to question 3, what is your teaching certification? ___

6. Are you currently teaching? ___ yes ___ no

7. If yes to question 5, how many years have you been teaching? ___ 1-4 years ___ 5 – 7 years ___ 8+ years

8. Have you ever earned tenure in a public-school district? ___ yes ___ no

9. ___ Female ___ Male

10. Race/Ethnicity: ___ Black ___ White ___ Latinx ___ Asian ___ Other (specify) ___

Appendix D

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

RQ1 What life experiences and interactions do novice teachers report have influenced their understanding of race and racism?

1. Tell me about where you are from and what life was like for you growing up?
2. Why did you become a teacher?
3. In terms of race and racism, what are some things that come to mind?
4. What are some unique experiences you have with race and racism?
5. Discuss what you know about the term “White privileged.”

RQ2 What are novice teachers’ perceptions about how their higher education classroom experiences have prepared them for teaching a culturally diverse student?

6. Explain how your teacher preparation program prepared you to teach culturally diverse students?
7. Describe some of the things that you learned while taking the diversity course.
8. What aspects of your preparation program have prepared you to work with culturally diverse students? What was the most beneficial?
9. What did you learn in your course work about the characteristics of culturally diverse students? What can you determine are the struggles of diverse students?
10. What is your understanding of institutional racism? Have you discussed this topic in any of your diverse courses?
11. Discussed how you know you have gained the skill and training needed to teach all students besides the fact that you earned your certification and graduated with a master’s in education?
RQ3 How effectively does a diversity course impact understanding race, culture, and differences and influence plans and strategies for teaching?

12. In your opinion, and based on your experience, what do you think is the purpose of a diversity course?

13. Tell me about how your teaching has evolved since teaching culturally diverse students.

14. How do you perceive that your beliefs toward cultural diversity affect students’ classroom behaviors?

15. What roles do race, racism, poverty, and linguistic play on culturally diverse students’ academic achievement?

16. In your opinion, is there a recognizable systemic difference in academic performance between White students and culturally diverse students?

17. How much of the diversity course you took is specifically tried to issue of race and racism?

18. Discuss how your teacher education program, including courses in diversity, has prepared you to teach culturally diverse student populations. Did they discuss the social injustices that diverse students face compared to White students?

19. How did your teacher prep program assure that graduate preservice teachers are racially competent and aware teacher candidates? Did you see it as a priority in the program? Probe if necessary.

20. Closure Question: Is there anything you wish I would have asked you, but I did not. Is there anything that you would like to share?