

TEACHER PREPARATION FOR CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY:
PERCEPTIONS OF A UNIVERSITY-BASED EDUCATOR PREPARATION
PROGRAM

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TEACHER PREPARATION FOR CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY:
PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES

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DEDICATION

To my wife, DeWanda: I feel like your name should be on this dissertation next to mine because it would not be completed if not for you. Not only did you step up at home and with the girls so that I could attend classes and have time to write, but you were an incredible sounding board throughout the whole process. Thank you for taking a genuine interest in this work and for sitting beside me at the puzzle table every night while I wrote! Most of all, thank you for your constant support and encouragement, and for motivating me to push through when I was sick of writing. I love you more than I could ever put into words.

To my daughters, Rylen and Tate: As you embark on your own educational career in just a few short months, may you find as much joy in learning as I do. May you always dream big, set goals, and pursue your passions, whatever they may be. You will never know how much I appreciated your hugs and words of encouragement throughout this process. Thank you for your patience and understanding and for sacrificing our time together for me to follow through with my own dreams. I pray your future teachers will create a classroom environment where you always feel safe and valued. As biracial twins with two moms, society will tell you that you are different. Although some may perceive these characteristics as negative, I pray you know they are part of what make you beautifully and wonderfully unique.

To my parents, Jay and Cass: Thank you for instilling in me the belief that I can do anything I set my mind to. You have encouraged and supported me every step of the way, and I hope I have made you proud.

ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this journal ready dissertation was to identify effective strategies that educator preparation programs (EPPs) can use to prepare pre-service teachers (PSTs) to work with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students. This dissertation includes three separate studies. In Study 1, a systematic literature review was conducted to determine the most effective components experts recommend EPPs include in their program to establish a foundation of cultural responsiveness in their PSTs. Study 2 was an exploration of the perceptions of current middle school PSTs concerning their preparation to work with CLD students. In Study 3 was an investigation of novice middle school teachers' perceptions of their preparation to meet the needs of CLD students, as they reflected after having gained some experience as a full-time classroom teacher.

KEY WORDS: Cultural responsiveness, Cultural and linguistic diversity, Pre-service teacher, Educator preparation program, English Language Learners

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has reported that Texas public schools have encountered a significant and steady increase in the number of culturally and linguistically diverse students (2017a). Meanwhile, these same populations of students have continued to struggle within the traditional school structure (Intercultural Development Research, 2015). Consequently, educator preparation programs (EPPs) have been prompted to reconsider how well they are preparing teachers who are culturally responsive in effectively supporting the academic and social success of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students.

Researchers have emphasized the need for schools to acknowledge and address inequities in education and in the broader U.S. society to support students success, regardless of race/ethnicity or first language (Aronson & Laughter, 2015; Dover, 2009; Gay, 2010, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2006, Nieto, 2010). To do this, educators must embrace and encourage students' individual assets, interests, and cultural knowledge, even when they deviate from traditional, dominant cultural norms (Nieto, 2010). Furthermore, Nieto (2010) suggested that, although difficult, educators must engage in thoughtful conversations specifically about race in order to understand their own roles in providing multicultural education for the benefit of all students. Several researchers also have suggested that conversations about culture may also provide crucial opportunities for teachers to reflect on how their own cultural upbringing influences their interactions with others (Dover, 2013; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Robinson & Clardy, 2011).

Culturally relevant teachers establish safe environments in their classrooms, so that every student feels validated and every class member can be both a teacher and a learner (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2006). These teachers provide ample opportunities for students to communicate openly with one another, and they make a conscious effort to intentionally incorporate accurate portrayals of a variety of cultures and languages into their lessons on a regular basis (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2014). Most importantly, teachers who have been consistently effective in working with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students have demonstrated a genuine interest in students' success both in and out of school, and these teachers quest for social justice extends beyond the educational system (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2014).

Awareness of what comprises culturally responsive education is an important first step for educators. However, educator preparation programs (EPPs) are charged with training teachers to meet the unique needs of CLD students, despite teachers' often minimal experiences with people from different backgrounds and the taboo nature of conversations about race (Nieto, 2010). Some researchers assert that cultural responsiveness is not simply something teachers do, but rather, a characteristic of who they are (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Milner, 2011; Scott & Scott, 2015). The focus of this dissertation is to review how educational researchers have conceptualized the key components of cultural responsiveness that EPPs should include in preparing teachers and to explore pre-service and in-service teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of a select university-based teacher preparation program. This dissertation comprises three separate studies including: (a) a systematic literature review; (b) an exploration of pre-service teachers' perceptions of how well a select educator preparation program is

preparing future teachers to be culturally responsive; and (c) an examination of how well in-service teachers', who graduated from the same EPP, believe that the select teacher preparation program prepared them to be culturally responsive classroom teachers.

Statement of the Problem

For decades, researchers have provided evidence that educational achievement gaps exist between White students and their peers who are identified as Black, Hispanic, or English Language Learners (ELLs) (Intercultural Development Research, 2015). Students of color and ELLs regularly perform poorly on standardized tests, are noted as less likely to be college-ready, are not proportionately represented in gifted and talented or advanced placement classes, and are much more inclined to drop out of school (Intercultural Development Research, 2015; TEA, 2017b). Additionally, these marginalized groups consistently are disciplined more regularly and more harshly (Eckford & Slate, 2016; TEA, 2017b).

Researchers have proposed that one possible explanation for these trends may be because, in a field of predominately White, middle-class women, teachers often lack empathy and understanding of the experiences of their students (Nadelson et al., 2012; Robinson & Clardy, 2011; Schellen & King, 2014). Consequently, teachers might fail to address students' various learning styles or misinterpret student behavior as defiant when students fail to conform to the traditional school structure (Guyton & Wesche, 2005; Nadelson, et al., 2012). Despite the significantly different student and teacher demographics, researchers suggest that a shift in teachers' approaches may be all that is needed to help these students feel more welcomed and successful (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2011).

Purpose of the Study

For this journal-ready dissertation, I conducted three unique studies that were all focused on discerning effective strategies for preparing pre-service teachers (PSTs) to work with CLD students. The purpose of the first study was to investigate the components of effective preparation of culturally relevant and responsive teachers based on the most prevalent recommendations provided by experts who have studied this phenomenon. The purpose of the second study was to describe current middle school teacher candidates' perceptions of the effectiveness of their teacher preparation program in helping them understand and implement cultural relevant and responsive classroom practice. In the final study, novice teachers reflected on their certification program and its effectiveness in preparing them to work with the culturally and linguistically diverse students they now have in their classes.

Collectively, EPPs could use these research studies to evaluate and improve their training of culturally responsive teachers. The information gathered in the systematic literature review provides a solid foundation for identifying evidence-based components of preparation programs that support the development of cultural responsiveness in teachers and essential aspects of program improvement that should be considered. Teacher preparation programs could also benefit from Chapter III and Chapter IV because the participants in these studies give insight in to their interpretation of the lessons learned in their courses and field-based experiences. Because the participants in Chapter III were completing their student teaching requirements at the time of this study, this culminating experience was their last opportunity to apply what they have learned to their day-to-day interactions with CLD students. As such, these PSTs' perceptions

represented some of their final thoughts on their preparedness during this unique stage of conflicting emotions. Conversely, the novice teachers in Chapter IV, who are now fully responsible for their own students' success, provided a different, more holistic perspective.

Additionally, administrators of university-based educator preparation programs (EPPs) might find the results presented in Chapter III and Chapter IV to be useful as models in making program improvements for gathering and analyzing data from their own teacher candidates and graduates, to evaluate their effectiveness. With sufficient time, preparation programs could follow similar methods applied in these studies but expand them as longitudinal studies in which researchers follow the same cohort group of student teachers into their first year as classroom teachers. Expansion of these studies could allow researchers to identify participants' changing perspectives (Yin, 1994).

Significance of the Study

Overall, researchers agree that teachers may need to adjust their teaching practices or general educational philosophy to meet the needs of CLD students (Aronson & Laughter, 2015; Dover, 2009; Gay, 2010, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2006, Nieto, 2010). In Chapter II, by conducting a systematic review, I sought to identify how other researchers have described the best practices of culturally responsive teachers. Ideally, with this information, those who prepare teachers can raise in-service teacher awareness and ensure that culturally responsive curriculum and methods are an integral part of preparation program practices. The original intent for conducting this systematic literature review was to provide empirical information to enhance initial teacher preparation. However, in-service teachers may also benefit from professional

development on the culturally relevant and responsive practices identified and described in Chapter II.

Despite a general consensus on the need to equip teachers to work with culturally and linguistically diverse student populations, EPPs continue to struggle to evaluate their effectiveness in preparing culturally responsive teachers (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Other than The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation's (CAEP) thorough investigation of each EPP every seven years, EPPs do not have explicit evaluation structures to follow. Program administrators of university-based teacher preparation programs might recognize descriptions of their own program components through the reflections of the participants in Chapter III and Chapter IV. Additionally, teacher preparation programs might elect to replicate Chapter III and Chapter IV with their own teacher candidates and recent graduates to conduct self-studies for accreditation and program improvement as an added component to program evaluations.

Theoretical Framework

This dissertation was based on the framework of cultural responsiveness. Cultural responsiveness relates to the notion that students are most likely to succeed in school when their cultural and linguistic identities are acknowledged and integrated into the learning experience (Nieto, 2010). In its mission statement, the United States Department of Education (2011) committed to providing quality education for every child, regardless of their demographic classification or cultural background. Gay (2002, 2010, & 2013) and Ladson-Billings (1995, 2006, 2011, & 2014) proposed teachers must be intentionally trained to work with culturally and linguistically diverse students in their classes and attempt to meet every student's needs. Specifically, these researchers

recommended that teachers learn specific characteristics of the various cultures and languages of the students and communities they serve, be reflective of their own cultural identities, and be trained to create safe classroom environments that promote student collaboration.

In addition to the framework of culturally responsiveness, the systematic literature review in Study 1 also incorporated the Search, Appraisal, Synthesis, and Analysis (SALSA) framework for a systematic search and review of the extant research (Grant & Booth, 2009). By using this guiding framework, I conducted an exhaustive search for relevant peer-reviewed research articles published within a 10-year period (questions between 2007 and 2017) and determined which studies were most appropriate to address my research questions. Then, I synthesized the findings to identify common themes and recommendations for best practices.

Definition of Terms

Educational systems across the United States do not always use the same terminology. To help clarify the meaning of some terms used in this study, I have provided definitions to these key words. Some of these definitions also provide Texas-specific descriptions and details.

Alternative Teaching Certification

An alternative teaching certification is a route for aspiring teachers who already have a Bachelor's degree, to obtain their teaching certification. These types of teacher preparation programs initially were developed as a way to expedite the certification process in response to a shortage in the profession (Fox Garrity, 2014). In Texas,

approximately half of all new teachers received their preparation through an alternative certification program (TEA, 2017c).

English Language Learner

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) described English Language Learners (ELLs) as “students whose native language is other than English and who are in the process of acquiring English” (2012, p. 10). In Texas, Spanish is the most prevalent native language of ELLs with over 900,000 students in this category. Other than Spanish, Texas ELLs represented 130 different languages in 2017 (TEA, 2017d).

Field Experience/Clinical Experience

The terms *field experience* and *clinical experience* will be used interchangeably to describe the opportunities PSTs have to spend within an actual classroom. TEA requires EPPs to provide at least 30 hours of field experiences and an additional 14 weeks or more of all-day *clinical teaching*, also known as *student teaching*. Although TEA does not explicitly describe what PSTs should be doing during this time, the agency does specify PSTs should interact with diverse student populations (TEA, 2017e)

Texas Middle School Teacher Certification

In this study, middle school teachers refer to those who teach Grades 6-8 because the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills identify these grades as such. Most Texas school districts’ middle school campuses include these grades, but some districts also use the term *intermediate school*. Despite this generally accepted definition, the Texas middle school certification standards include Grades 4-8. Adding to the confusion for EPPs, secondary certifications vary based on subject. For example, the secondary Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies certifications are for Grades 7-12, whereas

English Language Arts and Reading certifications could be either Grades 7-12 or Grades 8-12. Certifications for elective courses, such as Health Science and Agriculture courses, are for Grades 6-12.

Cooperating Teacher

Cooperating teachers are certified classroom teachers who work collaboratively with the university supervisor to model and support effective planning, classroom management, assessment, and instructional practices. In Texas, cooperating teachers are required to attend a training with the EPP prior to working with the PST during their clinical teaching (TEA, 2016). TEA further requires cooperating teachers to have a minimum of three years successful teaching experience, as determined by student success.

Pre-service Teacher

In this study, the term *pre-service teacher* (PST) will be used to describe an aspiring teacher who is currently enrolled in an approved teacher preparation program. PSTs include all stages of the program, including coursework, clinical experiences, and student teaching. Some researchers may also use the term *teacher candidate* to refer to PSTs.

Educator Preparation Program

The terms *educator preparation program* (EPP) will be used to describe a program that has been approved by TEA and the State Board for Educator Certification to train aspiring teachers. According to the Texas Administrative Code (2016), all EPPs are required to follow a set of standards and provide coursework and field experiences for all

PSTs. Upon successful completion of an EPP, teacher candidates must also pass multiple state certification exams prior to applying for certification.

Traditional Educator Preparation Program

Traditional EPPs are university based programs, in which students are receiving a degree in addition to their teaching certification. PSTs who attend a traditional EPP will complete a bachelor's or master's degree, along with specific education coursework and student teaching. The number of Texas PSTs who obtain their certification through a traditional EPP has been steadily decreasing since 2011, and in 2017, only 32% of new teachers had completed this type of program (TEA, 2017c).

University Supervisor

A *university supervisor* is an employee of an EPP who observes and evaluates PSTs. University supervisors provide feedback regarding PSTs' effectiveness as a teacher. In Texas, EPPs have both *field supervisors*, who oversee candidates' overall progress through the program, and *site supervisors*, who observe and evaluate PSTs' effectiveness during their clinical experiences (TEA, 2016).

Delimitations

With increased global connectedness, high enrollments of CLD students attending U.S. public schools, and an increasingly sensitive political climate in the United States, educators' approaches to culturally responsiveness likely differs from those a decade ago. As such, the research included in Study 1, the systematic literature review, were delimited to articles published after 2007. All articles identified and included were peer-reviewed.

Study 2 and Study 3 were delimited by the context of one select university-based teacher preparation program in Texas. Although this select university can benefit directly from the results and implications of these studies, findings may not be applicable to other university-based programs. This restriction potentially could be even more evident delimiting implications for alternative teacher certification programs. Furthermore, because Texas has a high Hispanic population, Spanish is historically the most common home language spoken by English language learners (ELLs). Educators in areas with large populations of students who speak languages other than Spanish may have different experiences.

Additionally, because the sample of select participants are different in Study 2 and Study 3, their responses might reflect personal development or transformations that are unrelated to their preparation. Participants might have been influenced by life experiences they had prior to participating in teacher preparation, their values and dispositions, or variations in additional training received before or after graduation. These factors cannot be controlled, so readers should be cautious in making comparisons between Study 2 and Study 3.

Limitations

Because Study 2 and Study 3 were dependent on the qualitative responses of participants, these studies may both be limited by the assumption that the participants were being open and honest in sharing their perceptions. Participants in both studies may have provided politically correct responses due to the sensitive nature of language, race, and ethnicity conversations in the United States. Study 2 participants might also have

been cautious in sharing their genuine reflections on the program while they were still enrolled.

Researcher bias is another factor that may limit the results of these three studies despite my best efforts to monitor it (Onwuegbuzie, 2003). Having obtained my own middle school teaching certification from a different Texas university preparation program than the one under study, I likely had some preconceived notions of what the essential components of effective preparation for culturally responsive teachers might be. These biases might have influenced in the data gathering and analysis stages of any of the three studies. Additionally, although I did not attend the specific teacher preparation program of focus in Study 2 and Study 3, I was conscientious of biases due to my connections to the university. To monitor my own beliefs and perceptions about cultural responsiveness and teacher preparation, I maintained a reflexivity journal and audit trail throughout the research.

Organization of the Study

This five-chapter dissertation includes three journal-ready articles that study the preparation of pre-service teachers to work with culturally and linguistically diverse students. Chapter I provides an overview of the three studies, including some background information, the statement of the overarching problem, and the purpose of the studies. The first chapter also describes the educational significance, limitations, and delimitations of the general study. Chapter II details the purpose, methodology, and conclusions of the systematic literature review that comprises Study 1. In this study, I delved into the studies conducted within the last decade to offer a thorough description of what researchers recommend educator preparation programs can do to most effectively

prepare culturally responsive teachers. Chapter III is comprised of Study II, in which I investigated one traditional program's current cohort of middle school PSTs' perceptions of their preparedness to work with CLD students. In Chapter IV, Study III, I followed a similar methodology to examine the reflections of recent graduates of this same program, once they are in their first few years of classroom teaching. Chapter V wraps up the dissertation with a discussion of the findings from all three studies and their contributions to the available literature. Additionally, Chapter V includes implications for policymakers and practitioners, as well as recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II

PRE-SERVICE TEACHER PREPARATION FOR CULTURALLY RELEVANT AND RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM PRACTICE: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE FROM 2007-2017

This dissertation follows the style and format of *Research in the Schools (RITS)*.

**PRE-SERVICE TEACHER PREPARATION FOR CULTURALLY RELEVANT
AND RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM PRACTICE: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF
THE LITERATURE FROM 2007-2017**

For decades, researchers and educators have recognized the obligation for teachers to meet the needs of all of their learners. These needs can vary drastically, based on a number of different factors, including students' preferred learning styles, motivating factors, learning disabilities, background experiences, and parental involvement/home life. Many researchers have also acknowledged the effect that a student's culture and language can have on their success in school (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2011). Although the number of culturally and linguistically diverse students in the Texas has been steadily growing over the last decade, the field of education continues to be dominated by white females (Texas Education Agency-TEA, 2017a). Researchers argue that this discrepancy may account, at least in part, for the gap in academic achievement (Intercultural Development Research, 2015), the over-representation of Black and Hispanic students in special education and disciplinary settings (Eckford & Slate, 2016; TEA, 2017b), and the under-representation of Black and Hispanic students in advanced courses (Intercultural Development Research, 2015; TEA, 2017b).

Teachers who cannot empathize with the obstacles culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students face in the traditional educational system must be trained to respond appropriately to their needs so that students can be successful within the public school structure. Educator preparation programs (EPPs) are challenged with the task of ensuring their pre-service teachers (PSTs) are trained to be responsive to the unique demands of CLD students. However, researchers are not explicitly clear in describing the

specifics of what this training looks like or evaluating the effectiveness of this training. This systematic review of the literature aims to compile the effective practices that EPPs may need to consider when reviewing their course requirements. Although researchers and teacher educators generally accept the need for culturally relevant and responsive classrooms (Aronson & Laughter, 2015; Dover, 2009; Gay, 2010, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2006, Nieto, 2010), a comprehensive review of available research may provide more clarity in how to best prepare teachers to meet the needs of their CLD students.

Background

This systematic literature review was focused on how cultural relevance and responsiveness has been discussed in the literature on university-based teacher preparation programs. Systematic literature reviews are designed to provide an in-depth summary and synthesis of the available research on a specific topic (Booth, Papaioannou, & Sutton, 2012; Umscheid, 2013). Systematic literature reviews, unlike general literature reviews, are focused on answering a particular question by gathering evidence from several studies and by following a precise methodology to collect and analyze the data (Booth, Papaioannou, & Sutton, 2012; Umscheid, 2013). These types of reviews can also help identify both effective and non-effective practices, as well as gaps in the available literature (Booth, Papaioannou, & Sutton, 2012; Umscheid, 2013). Also essential in a thorough systematic literature review is the revelation of a new understanding or perspective (Booth, Papaioannou, & Sutton, 2012; Bruce, 2001; Grant & Booth, 2009; Umscheid, 2013).

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the components of effective preparation of culturally relevant and responsive teachers based on the most prevalent recommendations provided by experts who have studied this phenomenon. Although TEA's (2017e) requirements for EPPs allude to the obligation for PSTs to demonstrate proficiency in meeting the needs of CLD students, the administrative code is vague in describing exactly how this task should be accomplished or how to assess PSTs' ability to perform this duty. As Booth, Papaioannou, and Sutton (2012) described, the evidence gathered through a review of the literature may give readers more insight into the effective and ineffective practices, as well as help us identify gaps in the available research. The goal of this systematic literature review is to provide administrators of EPPs and other educational leaders a detailed description of the specific characteristics of culturally responsive teachers, as well as guidance in how to prepare most appropriately PSTs to maximize the success of their CLD students.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study: How has pre-service teacher preparation for culturally relevant and responsive classroom practice been described in the academic literature from 2007 to 2017? What strategies have been identified as effective in preparing pre-service teachers enrolled in traditional preparation programs?

Conceptual Framework

This study followed Grant and Booth's (2009) Search, Appraisal, Synthesis, and Analysis (SALSA) framework for a systematic search and review. This framework was

ideal for this study because it combines elements of both a systematic and a critical review and is aimed at finding answers to the broad question of effective practices for EPPs to generate culturally relevant and responsive teachers. Following Grant and Booth's (2009) guideline, I conducted an extensive search for all articles applicable to my research questions. Then, I assessed each article to ensure it was peer reviewed and published within a journal that is listed in Cabell's publication list. I also carefully reviewed each article to make sure it fit all of the inclusion criteria. Next, I extracted relevant program model components and study findings related to preparing teachers to be culturally competent, culturally relevant, or culturally responsive so they can support the academic and social success of diverse students. I noted these components and findings in a matrix to be able to identify relevant themes that emerge from collection of articles. Finally, based on the interpretation of these themes, I have provided recommendations for best practices in teacher preparation.

As is customary (Booth, Papaioannou, & Sutton, 2012), the systematic search process is explicitly described and consists of inclusion and exclusion criteria. Furthermore, all types of studies—quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method— were included, resulting in a wider range of articles for consideration. For the critical review procedure, data was appraised, synthesized, and analyzed using qualitative coding (Saldaña, 2016).

The articles' appraisal, synthesis, and analysis was compared to the framework of cultural responsiveness. Researchers, such as Gay (2002, 2010, & 2013) and Ladson-Billings (1995, 2006, 2011, & 2014) advocate that in order for teachers to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners, they must have a basic understanding of

general cultural and linguistic characteristics and celebrate the diversity the students in their classrooms. Furthermore, teachers must provide a safe environment for all students to learn from one another. Failure to provide a culturally responsive education can exacerbate the educational gaps and inequities in schools (Nieto, 2010).

Method

In this section, the process for searching for articles to be included in the data was discussed. Following the recommendations of Grant and Booth's (2009) framework, this systematic literature review included an exhaustive search for appropriate articles, each of which were either included or excluded in the overall review based on specific criteria discussed below. The planned method of organizing and documenting the data collection process was outlined. Finally, this section includes a discussion of how the data was analyzed to ascertain effective and ineffective practices, as well as under-researched strategies.

Inclusion Criteria

For this systematic review of the literature, only peer-reviewed journal articles written in English and published within the last 10 years were included. These conditions helped concentrate on up-to-date, quality, researched-based practices. Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods articles were considered. I searched predominately for studies that referred to the development of pre-service teachers who were obtaining their certification through a university-based EPP. This decision was made to help focus the study on the preparation of pre-service teachers, which is distinctive to growing in-service teachers. Finally, in conducting this systematic literature review, I concentrated only on articles describing studies conducted within the United States.

Exclusion Criteria

Any article published prior to 2007 was omitted to avoid outdated data. Similarly, any study based outside the United States was excluded because teachers in other countries may not encounter the same challenges that teachers in the United States face. Because university-based EPPs may be significantly different from online or alternative certification programs, all studies referring to a non-university-based EPP were also excluded. Although in-service teachers also might require additional training in cultural responsiveness, this study focused on the preparation of pre-service teachers. Consequently, any article that referred to a population of in-service teachers were omitted from this study. Finally, books, blogs, essays, opinion pieces, and any other non-peer-reviewed online publications were excluded. Articles written in a non-English language were excluded from this review, as accurate translations were difficult to acquire.

Data Collection and Organization

Data was collected via the online databases and Google Scholar through the Sam Houston State University library, as well as through recommendation of experts in the field. The online search consisted of a combination of terms to specify the desired context and content. For the context, I used similar search terms, including *teacher preparation*, *educator preparation*, *pre-service teachers*, *preservice teachers*, and *teacher candidates*. For the content component of the search, terms included *cultural and linguistic diversity*, *culturally relevant*, *culturally responsive*, *multicultural education*, *cultural proficiency*, *cultural inclusiveness*, and *cultural competence*. Because these searches yielded minimal results pertaining to middle school PSTs that fit the inclusion criteria, I also added a specific search for *middle school*.

These searches yielded 37,423 hits, but only 56 articles were selected for further review based on the inclusion criteria. Although I did not specifically track every article's exclusion, I did notice some commonalities between many of the texts that were excluded. For example, quite a few articles were excluded because they focused on teacher preparation in countries outside of the United States, particularly Australia. Another obvious criteria that excluded many of the articles was the focus on graduate level teacher education. Ultimately, I selected 25 articles to include in the final study. Articles were collected until data saturation was reached, which was an indication that no new or significant information would likely be found with additional searches (Glaser, 1965).

Study Coding

Articles collected were organized using an Excel spreadsheet to document databases, search terms, number of hits, and other notes. A second spreadsheet was used to track basic bibliographic information and key points about selected articles that were further reviewed. This Excel spreadsheet was created as the articles were reviewed with the following headers: (a) author, (b) year of publication, (c) journal, (d) primary data method, (e) primary grade band studied, (f) setting (i.e. coursework versus clinical), and (g) major themes. To minimize input errors, the spreadsheet initially was completed for each article, and then during each subsequent reading of each article, I confirmed the cells were accurately completed. Because I read the articles at least four times each, I reviewed the spreadsheet as many times throughout the process.

Data Analysis

The data collected through this study were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. To get an idea of the frequency of certain categories referenced in the literature, the Excel spreadsheet that contains the codes for the selected articles was analyzed using frequency counts. These analyses were conducted for each of the following components: (a) year, (b) journal, (c) primary data method, (d) primary grade band studied, and (e) setting (i.e. coursework versus clinical).

For the qualitative examination, the data was explored using classical content analysis. Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2008) described this type of analysis as a way to quantify how frequently particular codes are used throughout the data. Seeking to identify common practices of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy within the literature, the data was chunked into themes, coded, and examined for patterns (Creswell, 2013; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2008; Saldaña, 2016). First cycle coding was categorized into common types, including descriptive coding that summarized data, in vivo coding that used authors' own words, and process coding which indicated the methods used (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Once first cycle codes were organized into second cycle code bands, comparisons were made across these bands. Additionally, attention was paid to gaps in available literature, and recommendations for future research was made.

Results

In this section, I will describe both the quantitative and qualitative results from the data gathered in this systematic literature review. These data included frequency counts for (a) year, (b) journal, (c) primary data method, (d) primary grade band studied, and (e)

setting (i.e. coursework versus clinical). Data also included four main themes that emerged from the qualitative analysis of the articles.

Publication Year

This systematic literature review was limited to the last decade, so articles published prior to 2007 were excluded. Of the 25 articles selected, I selected between one and three articles for each year, with the exception of 2013. Five of the articles I selected were from 2013. This surge in research coincided with the approval of new accreditation standards for the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). These new standards included a number of specific references to meeting the needs of CLD students, as well as recruiting diverse candidates for enrollment in EPPs (CAEP Standards, 2013).

Journal

The 25 articles selected for inclusion in this systematic literature review were published in 22 different journals. Three of the articles were published in *Teacher Education Quarterly*, and two of the articles were published in *Multicultural Education*. Ten of the articles were published in journals dedicated to cultural and linguistic diversity or language development. In addition to *Multicultural Education*, these journals included *Journal of International Students*, *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *Journal of Negro Education*, *Linguistics and Education*, *The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, *The international Journal of Diversity in Education*, and the *Urban Review*.

Primary Data Method

Overwhelmingly, researchers utilized qualitative methods to study preservice teacher preparation for culturally responsive classroom practices. Almost 89% of the

articles (i.e., 23 studies) incorporated qualitative data, including nine mixed methods studies and 14 pure qualitative studies. Only two researchers conducted quantitative studies. Five of the nine mixed method researchers and both of the quantitative researchers gathered most of their quantitative data through participants' responses to questionnaires consisting predominately of Likert style responses.

Primary Grade Band Studied

Each article studied the preparation of preservice teachers within the range of early childhood (EC) through Grade 12, as represented in Table 2.1. Multiple grade bands were addressed in several articles. After initial searches, only two articles referenced middle school grades, and both of those articles included both elementary and middle school PSTs. Consequently, I added the term *middle school* to my search and selected seven more articles that included that grade band. Even with this specified search term, only three of the articles selected were solely middle school. Similarly, of the eight articles that included high school PSTs, three studies mentioned "secondary" PSTs and two studies did not specify a grade band but referenced content area focus.

Table 2.1

Grade Band Focus by Article

Grade Band	# of Articles	Article Citations
Early Childhood	5	Assaf, Garza, & Battle (2010); Gainer & Larrotta (2010); Gentry, Lamb, & Hall (2015); Keengwe (2010); Lim et al. (2017)
Elementary	10	Assaf, Garza, & Battle (2010); Brock, Case & Turner (2013); Doorm & Schumm (2013); Gainer & Larrotta (2010); Gentry, Lamb, & Hall (2015); Manburg et al. (2017); McCollough & Ramirez (2012); Ndemanu (2014); Rodriguez & Polat (2012); Wake (2009)
Middle School	10	Alexander, West, & Ebelhar (2007); Assaf, Garza, & Battle (2010); Brock, Case & Turner (2013); Howell & Arrington (2008); Manburg et al. (2017); McCollough & Ramirez (2012); Hill, Phelps, & Friedland (2007); Price-Dennis & Souto-Manning (2011); Rodriguez & Polat (2012); Wake (2009)
High School	9	Alexander, West, & Ebelhar (2007); Buehler et al. (2009); Hungerford-Kresser, Wiggins, & Amaro-Jimenez (2014); Kasmer & Billings (2017); Manburg et a. (2017); McKoy (2013); Rodriguez & Polat (2012); Sato, Fisette, & Walton (2013); Shedrow (2017)
Not Specified	3	Gunn, Peterson, & Welsh (2015); Kea & Trent (2013); Qi (2016)

Setting of Study

The final descriptive data pertained to the setting of the study (i.e., coursework or clinical experiences). Seven of the articles focused on coursework, whereas nine of the articles emphasized clinical experiences, including student teaching, classroom observations, school or community partnerships, and study abroad opportunities. In six

of the articles, researchers emphasized both settings. Two of the articles did not specifically address coursework nor experiences but instead analyzed PSTs' general competencies and perceptions.

Major Themes

Through further analysis of each article, I identified four main themes pertaining to preparing preservice teachers (PSTs) to work with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students: (a) importance of clinical/field experiences; (b) program curriculum knowledge and skills; (c) PSTs' reflections and discussions; and (d) perspectives of culturally and linguistically diverse PSTs. As modeled in Table 2.2, almost every manuscript was given multiple codes. In this section, I described each of these codes in more detail, and then I discussed components of teacher preparation that was represented minimally in the research.

Table 2.2

Coded Themes by Article

Article	<i>Experiences</i>	<i>Coursework</i>	<i>Reflections & Discussions</i>	<i>Minority Perspectives</i>
Alexander, West, & Ebelhar (2007)	X	X		
Assaf, Garza, & Battle (2010)	X	X	X	X
Brock, Case & Turner (2013)	X	X	X	
Buehler et al. (2009)	X		X	
Doorm & Schumm (2013)	X			X
Gainer & Larrotta (2010)	X		X	
Gentry, Lamb, & Hall (2015)		X	X	
Gunn, Peterson, & Welsh (2015)		X	X	
Hill, Phelps, & Friedland (2007)	X	X	X	
Howell & Arrington (2008)	X	X	X	
Hungerford-Kresser, Wiggins, & Amaro-Jimenez (2014)		X	X	
Kasmer & Billings (2017)	X	X	X	
Kea & Trent (2013)	X	X		
Keengwe (2010)	X	X	X	
Lim et al. (2009)	X	X		
Manburg et a. (2017)		X	X	
McCollough & Ramirez (2012)	X			X
McKoy (2013)	X			X
Ndemanu (2014)		X	X	X
Price-Dennis & Souto-Manning (2011)	X		X	
Qi (2016)	X	X		X
Rodriguez & Polat (2012)			X	X
Sato, Fisette, & Walton (2013)	X		X	X
Shedrow (2017)	X	X	X	
Wake (2009)	X			
Total	21	10	11	5

Importance of clinical/field experiences. Researchers referenced PSTs' clinical experiences as most essential to teacher preparation in working with CLD students. Clinical experiences were identified as most predominate in the results of the majority of the studies reviewed (i.e., 21 articles, 84%). Most of the researchers referenced typical clinical experiences in a classroom, like observation hours and student teaching. However, some researchers focused on more specialized experiences such as frequent interactions and building relationships with CLD peers (Keengwe, 2010), family engagement nights (McCollough & Ramirez, 2012), and study abroad opportunities (Kasmer & Billings, 2017; Shedrow, 2017).

Researchers agreed that exposure to CLD students is one of the best ways to prepare future teachers for the diversity in their classrooms, particularly because many preservice teachers (PSTs), especially those who were White and monolingual, tended to have limited interactions with people from backgrounds different from their own (Gainer & Larrotta, 2010; McKoy, 2013). In a study on PSTs' interactions with teacher peers from different cultural backgrounds and with limited English proficiency, Keengwe (2010) reported that PSTs' demonstrated an ability to overcome initial apprehensions and stereotypes and build a relationships with their assigned peer partners. These partnerships motivated PSTs to move beyond their comfort zones to engage one-on-one with someone from another culture without the parameters of a student-teacher relationship.

Other researchers (Kasmer & Billings, 2017; Shedrow, 2017) recommended pushing students out of their cultural comfort zones through study abroad experiences. Although this option may not be reasonable for every PST, the future teachers studied in

these two articles reported significant growth and empathy built from being cultural and linguist “outsiders” in study abroad settings (Shedrow, 2017, p.278). Whereas Kasmer and Billings (2017) emphasized the linguistic aspect of teaching in a country where English is not the dominant language, Shedrow (2017) accentuated the cultural components that challenged the status quo of American perceptions.

Whether PSTs’ experiences are abroad or local, researchers agree EPPs should intentionally place PSTs in diverse campus settings (i.e., Alexander, West, & Ebelhar, 2007; Howell & Arrington, 2008; McKoy, 2013). Although some teacher candidates might still be resistant to culturally responsive pedagogy (Howell & Arrington, 2008), intentionally structured field experiences can help PSTs feel more comfortable interacting with CLD students (Doorm & Schuum, 2013; Hill, Phelps, & Friedland, 2007; McCollough & Ramirez, 2012). These opportunities allow PSTs to transfer the theoretical learnings from their coursework to realistic application.

Program curriculum knowledge and skills. Several of the researchers noted that prior to these interactions with people from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds, PSTs need some initial training to: (a) gain insight into different cultures; (b) develop strategies to overcome language barriers; and (c) design lessons to meet the needs of CLD students (i.e., Howell & Arrington, 2008; Kasmer & Billings, 2017, Keengwe, 2010; Shedrow, 2017; Key & Trent, 2013). In this coursework, PSTs should be exposed to the history of oppressed groups and should challenge PSTs to consider different points of view (Hill, Phelps, & Friedland, 2007). By front-loading these experiences with coursework, PSTs will likely be more conscious of their personal biases

and will have some tools to use throughout their clinical experiences (Howell & Arrington, 2008; Kasmer & Billings, 2017).

Lim, Maxwell, Able-Boone, and Zimmer's (2009) revealed in their investigation that the Early Childhood teacher preparation programs they studied emphasized coursework focused on linguistic diversity much more than cultural diversity. Conversely, in their examination of EPPs for family and consumer sciences education, Alexander, West, and Ebelhar (2007) reported 91% of the programs studied required coursework to address meeting the needs of linguistically diverse students, only 58% of the programs addressed cultural diversity in any of their required courses. Researchers were more united in their belief that teacher educators throughout EPPs should collaborate to integrate curriculum throughout the program, as doing so would emphasize the importance of cultural competency to PSTs (Assaf, Garza, & Battle, 2010; Brock, Case, & Taylor, 2013; Gainer & Larrotta, 2010; Key & Trent, 2013).

PST reflection and discussion. A common code embedded into the experiences and coursework themes was the need for PSTs to reflect and discuss their thoughts, experiences, perceptions, and anxieties. Because cultural responsiveness is a complex and continuously progressing state of being without a definitive model of mastery, PSTs and teacher educators must engage in reflexive processes to evolve continuously (Buehler, Gere, Dallavis, & Haviland, 2009). Researchers suggested both independent reflections and peer-group discussions based on classwork or assigned readings can help PSTs have a better understanding of their own personal identity and biases, as well as a heightened awareness of other cultures (i.e., Gentry, Lamb, & Hall, 2015; Keengwe, 2010; Rodriguez & Polat, 2012; Sato, Fisette, & Walton, 2013). In two articles,

researchers (Gunn, Peterson, & Welsh, 2015; Manburg, Moore, Griffin, & Seperson, 2017) discovered the multiple benefits of PSTs reflecting on case-based simulations that provided real-world scenarios teachers may face. Hungerford-Kresser, Wiggins, and Amaro-Jimenez (2014) recommended teacher educators with large classes also allow PSTs to blog about their reactions and perceptions to class assignments to provide another outlet for those who may not get as many opportunities to speak out during a class discussion.

Additionally, researchers recommended PSTs reflect on and discuss their personal interactions with CLD students throughout their clinical experiences (Gentry, Lamb & Hall, 2015; Hill, Phelps, & Friedland, 2007; Howell & Arrington, 2008). PSTs should be given opportunity to debrief on their experiences with their peers and professors before, during, and after their field experiences (Brock, Case, & Taylor, 2013; Howell & Arrington, 2008; Shedrow, 2017). Researchers also recommended PSTs meet with their university supervisor and their cooperating teacher to discuss specific interactions with students to help bridge theory to action (Kasmer & Billings, 2017; Sato, Fisette, & Walton, 2013). These conversations may help PSTs recognize the impact of stereotypes and negative comments made by in-service teachers or other individuals (Howell & Arrington, 2008; Price-Dennis & Souto-Manning, 2011).

Assaf, Garza, & Battle (2010) acknowledged these conversations may often feel uncomfortable for PSTs and teacher educators alike, especially because nobody could possibly plan for the direct path the conversation will follow. However, these discussions are essential to helping each PST progress from their current stage of cultural competence. Teacher educators should be cognizant of the fact that this process is

difficult with ebbs and flows, so small steps of awareness should be acknowledged and appreciated (Buehler et al., 2009; Howell & Arrington, 2008).

Perspectives of culturally and linguistically diverse PSTs. In preparing future teachers, teacher educators should consider the varying perspectives, understandings of cultural and linguistic differences, and cross-cultural experiences of PSTs who are culturally and linguistically diverse themselves and represent traditionally marginalized and *minoritized* groups. Although non-White and non-native English speakers typically have a more complex understanding of cultural and linguistic diversity (Qi, 2016; Rodriguez & Plot, 2012), these PSTs may still be unfamiliar with culturally responsive teaching practices (McCollough & Ramirez, 2012; Ndemanu, 2014). As such, teacher educators should be intentional in determining PSTs' incoming levels of understanding and commit to moving all PSTs along a continuum toward greater cultural competency and responsiveness (Rodriguez & Polat 2012). Furthermore, because White females traditionally dominate EPPs, teacher educators should be sensitive to the perspectives of CLD teacher candidates, who might shy away from participating in class or small group discussions for fear of not being understood (Ndemanu, 2014). Ndemanu (2014) recommended teacher educators find a balance between “spotlighting racial minorities” and “revert[ing] to hyper-invisibility practice” (p. 76) and tokenship.

Discussion

For this study, I sought to identify how pre-service teacher preparation for culturally relevant and responsive classroom practice had been described in the academic literature and what strategies had been identified as effective in preparing pre-service teachers enrolled in traditional preparation programs. To this end, I conducted a

systematic literature review, in which I did an extensive search and review of available texts. Through this process, I noticed a heavy emphasis on qualitative studies or mixed-method investigations that incorporated Likert-style questionnaires for the quantitative data. Many of these articles were published in journals dedicated to the education of culturally and linguistically diverse students, particularly in 2013, which coincided with the adoption of new CAEP standards. The majority of studies were geared toward the preparation of early childhood and elementary PSTs.

Through a closer analysis of each article, I identified four main themes: (a) PSTs in the Trenches, (b) PSTs in a Desk, (c) In PSTs' Minds, and (d) From Minority PSTs' Perspective. Essentially, researchers recommend EPPs provide ample opportunities for PSTs to interact with CLD students, to learn about different cultures and strategies to support CLD students' learning, and to reflect and discuss on their personal identities, perspectives, and experiences. Furthermore, teacher educators should be mindful of the differing views of CLD teacher candidates and identify ways for each PST to progress on the continuum of cultural competence.

Future Research

I noticed some gaps in the available literature that are important to address in future research aimed at examining how to support educator preparation programs (EPPs) effective preparation of preservice teachers (PSTs) to work with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students. For example, although several articles utilized pre and post assessments to evaluate PSTs' progress during a specific course, minimal research addressed the evaluation of PSTs' growing awareness of cultural competence throughout the full EPP. Also, Assaf, Garza, and Battle (2010) was the only study I

located that investigated teacher educators' perceptions of their own ability to prepare culturally responsive teachers. With a call for EPPs to integrate components of cultural competency throughout the program (Assaf, Garza, & Battle, 2010; Brock, Case, & Taylor, 2013; Gainer & Larrota, 2010; Key & Trent, 2013), an increasing number of teacher educators will be responsible for the preparation of culturally responsive PSTs, instead of a few specific courses taught by experts in the field. As such, those teacher educators who are not experts in preparing PSTs to work with culturally and linguistically students probably will have valuable perspectives regarding the integration. Additionally, researchers may consider investigating the dynamics of EPPs because of the new CAEP requirement for EPPs to recruit more CLD teacher candidates. Shifting demographics and identities of those enrolled in EPPs could have an interesting impact on the nature of preparing PSTs to work with CLD students because teacher educators will need to consider the perspectives of the culturally and linguistically diverse PSTs and the dynamics of class discussions.

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CHAPTER III

MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER CANDIDATES' PERCEPTIONS OF PREPARATION EFFECTIVENESS TO WORK WITH CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS

This dissertation follows the style and format of *Research in the Schools (RITS)*.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER CANDIDATES' PERCEPTIONS OF
PREPARATION EFFECTIVENESS TO WORK WITH CULTURALLY AND
LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS**

Public school educators in Texas are constantly challenged with the task of teaching all of the required curriculum standards to an increasingly diverse student population, while also implementing technology, ensuring each student passes their standardized tests, and preparing the youth to be positive, productive citizens (Bryant, Moss, & Zijdemans Boudreau, 2015; Guyton & Wesche, 2005; Nadelson et al., 2012; Robinson & Clardy, 2011; Schellen & King, 2014). According to the Texas Education Agency (TEA), Black and Hispanic student populations in Texas have consistently increased while White populations have decreased over the last several years (2017a). Additionally, the population of English Language Learners (ELLs) across the country is growing at a faster rate than any other student population (Intercultural Development Research, 2015). Specifically, in Texas within the last 10 years, the number of students enrolled in bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs has increased by 47.3%, and the number of ELLs has increased by 37.8% (TEA, 2017a). Meanwhile, the teaching field continues to be dominated by White, middle class English speaking females (TEA, 2017b). These cultural and linguistic barriers add another layer of complexity to an already stressful profession, however, teachers who are able to appropriately address their students' unique backgrounds can enhance the learning environment for all students (Aronson & Laughter, 2015; Dover, 2009; Gay, 2010, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2006, Nieto, 2010).

Unfortunately, students who are identified as Black, Hispanic, or ELL consistently score lower on standardized tests than White, native English speaking students. These three student groups have historically underperformed on standardized tests, are deemed college ready at a much lower rate, and are underrepresented in and gifted and talented and advanced placement programs (Intercultural Development Research, 2015; TEA, 2017a). In 2017, TEA reported that a longitudinal analysis of dropout rates over the past nine years revealed that, compared to their White peers, ELL and Hispanic students dropped out at a rate twice as high, and the dropout rate of Black students was nearly three times as high (2017f). Furthermore, Black and Hispanic students are regularly disciplined at a much higher rate (Eckford & Slate, 2016; TEA, 2017b)

Researchers suggest the majority of teachers cannot empathize with their students' personal and academic challenges (Nadelson et al., 2012; Nieto, 2010; Robinson & Clardy, 2011; Schellen & King, 2014). As a result, these teachers tend to struggle with classroom management, misinterpret student behavior, fail to acknowledge different learning styles, and inadequately address learning difficulties (Guyton & Wesche, 2005; Nadelson, et al., 2012). For these reasons, among others, educator preparation programs (EPPs) are being challenged to address these complex realities.

Ladson-Billings (2011) argued that, similar to the demographics of the public school teaching field, EPPs are often dominated by older, White females who are “too far removed from PreK-12 teaching to be much help when it comes to preparing novice teachers for diverse classrooms” (p. 14). The author extended her concerns to acknowledge that the few culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) professors are often

solely responsible for teaching the few courses with the cultural and linguistic emphasis. Additional concerns include the minimal field-based experiences many EPPs require their pre-service teachers (PSTs) to complete, despite the numerous researchers (Flores, et al., 2014; Milner, 2011; Nadelson, et al., 2012; Robinson & Clardy, 2011; Ronfeldt, Schwartz, & Jacob, 2014; Schellen & King, 2014; Scott & Scott, 2015; Wood & Turner, 2015) who have investigated its effectiveness in the preparation of culturally responsive teachers. Online and alternative certification programs are particularly guilty of this omission, as they advertise an accelerated route to certification (Downing & Dymont, 2013; Ronfeldt et al., 2014). Unfortunately, PSTs who are not required to complete these hours of essential experience in working with real students in real classrooms may not be adequately prepared to meet the needs of their CLD students upon entering the workforce.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study was to describe current middle school PSTs' perceptions of the effectiveness of their teacher preparation program in helping them understand and implement cultural relevant and responsive classroom practice. Specifically, this study addressed middle school PSTs' perceptions of the influence of coursework and field experiences in preparing them to work with CLD students. I sought to identify other components that may have also contributed to their preparation to work with CLD students.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study: How do current middle school PSTs perceive the effectiveness of their teacher preparation program in

preparing them to work with CLD students? The following sub-questions were addressed in this study: (a) How do current middle school PSTs perceive the effectiveness of field experiences in preparing them to work with CLD students?; (b) How do current middle school PSTs perceive the effectiveness of their coursework in preparing them to work with CLD students?; and (c) What other components of their teacher preparation program have helped prepare PSTs to work with CLD students?

Significance of the Study

Much literature exists to support the need for multicultural education and the need to prepare teachers to work with a wide range of learners (e.g., Gay, 2010; Guyton & Wesche, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Milner, 2011; Nadelson et al., 2012; Nieto, 2010; Scott & Scott, 2015; Schellen & King, 2014). However, the literature is lacking in the analysis of the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs in adequately preparing PSTs to enter classrooms filled with students of varying skills, abilities, cultures, and languages. Findings from this study may have practical implications for this particular university in identifying opportunities to improve the teacher preparation program at either the elementary and/or secondary level. Additionally, because this undergraduate initial EPP has been accredited by the National Counsel for Accreditation of Teacher Education for more than 60 years (NCATE, 2010) the study, similar to the program itself, could serve as a model for other EPPs.

Middle school teacher preparation was the focus of this study because this level was often overlooked and under-researched. However, the middle school years are a crucial stage in a student's development, as they are filled with significant changes (Faulkner, Cook, Thompson, Howell, Rintamaa, & Miller, 2017; Schmidt et al., 2007).

Youth aged 10 to 15 years have distinctive emotional, physical, and psychological needs during this phase, and their teachers must be responsive to the unique characteristics of this age group. Despite the recommendations of researchers for EPPs to intentionally train middle school PSTs to address these needs, this specialized groundwork is often neglected (Faulkner et al., 2017; Schmidt et al., 2007). These PSTs often fulfill their certification requirements by taking a combination of elementary and high school preparation courses, which is typically a more efficient arrangement for the program.

Theoretical Framework

This study was conducted using the framework of cultural responsiveness, which aligns with the foundational principles of the public education system in America. Included in the United States Department of Education's mission statement is the "commitment to assuring equal educational opportunity for every individual" (2011). All students have the right to receive a quality education regardless of their cultural or linguistic backgrounds. Under the framework of cultural responsiveness, cultural and linguistic differences may influence students' success in schools. Consequently, to achieve the mission of providing all students with a quality education, researchers like Gay (2002, 2010, & 2013) and Ladson-Billings (1995, 2006, 2011, & 2014) contend that educators must understand basic components of various cultures and languages and address those characteristics within the schools.

Review of Related Literature

During the Industrial Revolution, the United States needed to train large quantities of factory workers and clerical assistants. Thus, public schools, as we know them, were established (Robinson, 2015). Because the job market of this era demanded

comparatively few professionals, education did not necessarily stimulate intellectual or original thinking but rather, Robinson (2015) argued, promoted robotic compliance to learn basic skills. The job market, however, has been changing as quickly and dramatically as the demographic make-up of the country. Unfortunately, despite the growing demand for innovative, scholarly, problem solvers, public educators have continued to follow that traditional school structure (Robinson, 2015). Similarly, even in the face of the increasingly culturally, linguistically, and academically diverse student populations and the plethora of researchers who have demonstrated numerous ways schools are failing these diverse populations, the majority of public schools continue to maintain the traditional school structure (Eckford & Slate, 2016; Intercultural Development Research, 2015; Nieto, 2010).

In response to the dire need for public school teachers to improve the education of CLD students, in particular, many researchers have turned to the preparation of preservice teachers (PSTs) to identify potential reasons for their shortcomings (e.g., Gay, 2010; Guyton & Wesche, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Milner, 2011; Nadelson et al., 2012; Nieto, 2010; Scott & Scott, 2015; Schellen & King, 2014). Many of these researchers attest that CLD students are not failing school, but rather, the schools are failing CLD students (Milner, 2011; Scott & Scott, 2015). This review of the literature seeks to describe culturally responsive teaching, the characteristics of culturally responsive teachers, and some of the components of EPPs that researchers have suggested may enhance future teachers' preparedness to work with CLD students.

Culturally Relevant Education

Gay (2010) has been a long-time supporter of explicitly teaching accurate, contemporary information about various cultural and ethnic groups to help teachers gain a better understanding about their students' experiences and the influences of their cultures, which are often disparaged in traditional schools. This support has since evolved to include helping teachers understand how to make content relevant to culturally diverse students by providing opportunities for students to relate their personal experiences and knowledge to new information to make it more accessible (Gay, 2013). The focus of this framework is on teachers' instructional practices, with specific content curriculum a secondary consideration (Gay, 2013).

Ladson-Billings (1995, 2006) is another researcher who has written extensively on this topic, although she refers to the concept of *culturally relevant pedagogy* and later *culturally sustaining pedagogy* (Paris, 2014). Much like Gay (2010), Ladson-Billings highlighted the importance of learning through an understanding of and appreciation for students' cultures and creating a mutually beneficial classroom environment, in which teachers and students all benefit from one another. The main difference between these two researchers' emphasis is that Gay's *culturally responsive teaching* accentuated the art of teaching, whereas Ladson-Billings focused on the culturally relevant pedagogy (Aronson & Laughter, 2015). The later stressed the importance of cultural awareness both in and out of the classroom, where educators recognize and genuinely appreciate the influence and strengths of a variety of cultures and highlight these strengths in their students (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2006, 2014).

In 2015, Aronson and Laughter combined the major characteristics of culturally relevant teaching and culturally responsive pedagogy to describe the framework of *culturally relevant education*. This framework emphasized the components of the others that focused on social justice and using the classroom as a stage to promote social change (Aronson & Laughter, 2015). Similarly, Dover (2009) included some of the critical contributions of multiple frameworks that influenced the development of *teaching for social justice*. In addition to culturally responsive education, teaching for social justice incorporated pieces of multicultural education, critical pedagogy, social justice education, and democratic education.

Characteristics of Culturally Relevant Educators

In her quest to identify characteristics of culturally relevant teachers, Ladson-Billings (1995) realized that teachers who were identified as successful with Black students did not necessarily share a set of similar strategies or classroom structures. Instead, they had a common, passionate perception of their role as a teacher, sought to build solid relationships with their students based on mutual respect, and established a safe classroom environment that emphasized collaborative practices in which students and teachers challenged one another to learn. She described “the secret behind culturally relevant pedagogy [as] the ability to link principles of learning with deep understanding of (and appreciation for) culture” (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 77) which extends beyond the classroom and into educators’ everyday lives. These types of educators are cognizant of the impact their own culture in their life and are consciously aware of the interactions of cultural influences (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2006, 2014).

Gay (2010) described four essential characteristics of culturally responsive teachers, including culturally responsive caring, encouraging culture and communication in the classroom, emphasizing ethnic and cultural diversity in curriculum content, and cultural congruity in teaching and learning. The author further explained that culturally responsive caring exceeds simply wanting the best for students and requires teachers to pursue actively a positive influence on students' lives (Gay, 2010). Gay also encouraged teachers to emphasize culture and communication in the classroom by being mindful of different communication styles and focusing on the discourse itself rather than the manner in which the dialogue is conveyed. Additionally, culturally responsive teachers should be mindful of how cultural diversity is represented in the curriculum and intentionally pursue opportunities to include accurate portrayals of ethnically diverse groups from a variety of resources throughout the curriculum. As for the fourth tenant of culturally responsive teaching, Gay (2010) recommended teachers get to know how their students learn and implement instructional practices to address students' needs and lived experiences.

Robinson and Clardy (2011) agreed with Gay (2010), and Ladson-Billings (1995, 2014) that culturally responsive teachers are cognizant of the impact of their own culture as well as their students' cultures on their personal lives and the lives of others. These researchers also emphasized the importance of creating a community with mutual respect between teachers and all students, where both students and teachers can learn from one another. An integral part of creating this safe environment includes effective communication between all members of the classroom community.

In her 2013 study, Dover investigated secondary English Language Arts teachers' understanding and application the principles of teaching for social justice in their classes, while also addressing the content curriculum standards. In their descriptions of teaching for social justice, the participants highlighted the importance of ensuring the curriculum specifically incorporates students' cultures and integrates content standards and social justice. Furthermore, like Robinson and Clardy (2011) and Gay (2010), these teachers explained how essential a safe classroom environment that welcomes a variety of viewpoints is in teaching for social justice. The last theme Dover identified in her analysis emphasized the need for teachers to view themselves as social activists and to encourage their students to speak out against injustice.

Coursework versus Field Experiences

Initiated by the comments of Ladson-Billings (2006), researchers have acknowledged that cultural responsiveness is not something teachers do, but rather this mindset is a characteristic of who they are (Milner, 2011; Scott & Scott, 2015). If this mentality is to become a part teachers' everyday professional and personal lives, teachers must have experiences in working with CLD students (Noddings, 2012). The proceeding articles describe the influences of coursework and field experiences in growing culturally responsive teachers.

Schellen and King (2014) compared the effectiveness of both classwork and clinical experiences for middle school PSTs' work with CLD students. These PSTs had previously finished their required courses and, at the time of this study, were in the process of completing their student teaching in one of two districts. One of the districts served a majority White student population, whereas the other district was inner city with

a predominately Hispanic student population. The authors analyzed the data collected through the PSTs' portfolios, which included lesson examples, reflections of their experiences, writing samples to assess the essential learnings from their coursework, and other artifacts (Schellen & King, 2014). Through these portfolios, PSTs who served in the inner city district demonstrated a more consistent application and understanding of the English Language Learner strategies they had learned than their counterparts in the predominately White district. Both groups of student teachers acknowledged the importance in recognizing individual student differences, but the PSTs who worked closely with more Hispanic students were more inclined to appreciate these differences. Based on these results, Schellen and King (2014) concluded PSTs should have a number of varied courses and field experiences to learn about and work with CLD students.

Alternatively certified teachers often do not have these opportunities to interact with diverse students during their training. Ronfeldt, Schwartz, and Jacob (2014) discovered that although the number of methods courses is comparable, PSTs enrolled in a traditional certification program have drastically more clinical hours than their alternatively certified peers. In fact, almost half of the teachers who received their certification through an alternative program are hired as classroom teachers with zero hours of practice teaching. Ronfeldt et al. (2014) also reported that PSTs who had more clinical experiences felt more prepared to teach and typically stayed in the education field longer. These experiences were more highly correlated with PSTs' readiness than methods courses, even though PSTs testified to the effectiveness of the coursework in preparing them.

Wood and Turner (2015) also contributed to the research of the effectiveness of clinical experiences in their investigation into the relationship between cooperating teachers, university supervisors, and PSTs. In this study, PSTs and cooperating teachers together interviewed elementary-aged students to discuss their mathematical problem solving process. After working with the student, the PST and cooperating teacher reflected on their observations while the university supervisor facilitated the conversation. Through this process, the PST was able to glean insight into the reflective processes of an expert teacher, as well as make connections to the methods coursework materials through the university professor. Furthermore, the cooperating teacher and university supervisor also benefitted from these conversations and modeled continuous professional learning for the PST. Wood and Turner concluded that these collaborative conversations enhanced the learning experience for all members of the triad, and made a greater impact on the PST than the independent interactions.

Self-Efficacy and Self-Reflection

In her study of White PSTs' involvement with the predominately Black and Hispanic elementary students at a community center, Bennett (2012) sought to identify the components of these experiences that enhanced PSTs' cultural responsiveness. During their time as tutors at the community center, these PSTs also were enrolled in a writing course and were required to submit their reflections of their experiences, as well as field notes and other artifacts. Through the data analysis, Bennett recognized the benefit of the one-to-one interactions between the students and the PSTs, as well as the opportunities the PSTs had to discuss their experiences with one another. The researcher also noted the PSTs who failed to connect personally with their tutee did not increase

their aptitude for cultural responsiveness as a result of their time at the community center. Another aspect of this experience that also fell short was the professor's subtle incorporation of culturally responsive components throughout the writing course, as only a few of the participants even acknowledged the indirect instruction.

In an attempt to identify a potential strategy to prepare PSTs to work with minority and students who were economically disadvantaged, Bryant et al. (2015) investigated open dialogue with a group of 30 PSTs. Similar to the demographics of the teaching field, the vast majority of these PSTs were White. Utilizing Critical Race Theory, the researchers arranged multiple opportunities for PSTs to view and discuss films about race with current educators from various backgrounds. Through these crucial conversations, many of the PSTs identified revelations they experienced throughout this process and recognized the impact this newfound awareness could have on their future students. Specifically, several of the participants acknowledged the privilege they unintentionally lived with as the result of their upbringing. This experience also challenged the PSTs to identify how their interpretations of poverty related to perceptions of race and other such factors. Participants recognized that having a clearer understanding of their own ideas of different cultures could help minimize their biases with the various types of students they would have in their classrooms.

Guyton and Wesche (2005) sought to create a scale to measure PST's self-efficacy in working with diverse groups of students. Although other scales were available to investigate some of the important factors regarding multicultural education, the Multicultural Efficacy Scale was unique for a number of reasons. In addition to questioning participants about their knowledge of various cultures, this scale was also

geared toward understanding the interactions of among cultures in society, attitude toward recognizing personal prejudices, and skill in creating and implementing effective teaching practices to work with diverse students. After receiving feedback from teacher educators on their prototype, Guyton and Wesche revised the scale to 160 questions, which they piloted with 665 undergraduate and graduate education students from across the United States. The demographics of this sample resembled the nation's teacher workforce of predominantly White, lower-middle class to upper-middle class, heterosexual, Christian females. The researchers analyzed the data in two stages to establish the 35 most reliable and essential questions. Although Guyton and Wesche acknowledged that further research should be conducted to increase the reliability of the scale, they concluded that the Multicultural Efficacy Scale could be an effective method to measure PST's changing perceptions throughout their teacher preparation program.

In another study designed to investigate PST's perceived preparation for working with diverse students, Nadelson et al. (2012) utilized the Multicultural Efficacy Scale. This survey of 35 questions was designed to collect data on teachers' experiences with and attitudes toward working with students from various backgrounds, as well as their personal opinions on their ability to teach all students effectively. Of the 88 teachers surveyed, the large majority of them were lower to middle class White teachers, and approximately a quarter of the PSTs who participated spoke a second language in addition to English. Nadelson et al. (2012) concluded that being taught about multicultural education was not as highly regarded by PSTs as their interactions with different types of students. Experiences with other races, cultures, religions, and

languages had a much stronger influence on the PSTs' reported confidence in working in diverse classrooms.

According to Robinson and Clardy (2011), PSTs are not the only stakeholders who should reflect on their experiences with and understanding of people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Because the majority of PSTs are middle class white females, these authors questioned teacher educators' emphasis of CLD pedagogy in teacher preparation courses. In their autoethnographic study, Robinson and Clardy reflected on their first-hand knowledge of teacher educators, as well as their personal interactions with PSTs enrolled in their courses. They summarized the three dominant approaches to addressing diversity within a teacher preparation program. These approaches include "segregated diversity course approach," in which CLD is the emphasis in specific courses, and "programmatic diversity integration approach," in which all courses address CLD to some extent (Robinson & Clardy, 2011, p. 103). They suggested the most effective method, however, included a combination of these two approaches. Ultimately, Robinson and Clardy concluded that just like the PSTs they teach, teacher educators should incorporate many of the same strategies that K-12 teachers use to address the needs of CLD students. To do so may require specific training for teacher educators as well as a focused consideration by the program to integrate coursework specifically designed to address diversity, as well as maximizing field experiences in which PSTs can interact with CLD students.

Evaluation of PSTs

Chung and Kim (2010) investigated the PST's understanding and application of the education standards at Riverdale University. Through group interviews with six PSTs

in their fourth semester of the program, Chung and Kim questioned the PSTs' interpretation and use of the standards throughout their courses. The PSTs described the standards as a checklist that they marked off as they accomplished each one, instead of a set of principles to develop over time. Similarly, the PSTs created their portfolios in an attempt to demonstrate their mastery of each standard, as opposed to showing their development of the set of standards throughout the course of their program. Chung and Kim recommended PSTs' professors provide frequent feedback on the development of these portfolios to emphasize the developmental process over the final product. The authors also suggested that the teacher educators who use teacher standards should help PSTs interpret them as evolutionary practices to support the importance of reflection throughout their careers.

Feuer, Floden, Chudowsky, and Ahn. (2013) agreed that portfolios may provide an important opportunity for teacher candidates and their university supervisors to identify and reflect on PSTs' growth throughout the program. These researchers also suggested that additional performance assessments, including observations of PSTs during a lesson, may provide some helpful evaluative measures but also have many drawbacks. Specifically referencing the observations, Feuer et al. argued that university supervisors' impressions of student teachers' ability to teach may be inflated due to the rehearsed nature of a specific day's observation. The authors also suggested that although surveying recent graduates and their employers may provide some interesting information, the subjective and personal nature of surveys may not offer the most accurate evaluation of a novice teacher or preparation program. However, upon further evaluation of other potential PST evaluation methods, including hiring and retention rates

and statistical analysis of student scores before and after student teaching stint, the researchers concluded that each method has its drawbacks. Consequently, Feuer et al. encouraged educator preparation programs to use a variety of measures to evaluate PST and program effectiveness.

Prior to evaluation, however, Feuer et al. (2013) suggested teacher preparation programs must first identify the goals of their program. Building off this idea and the suggestion to use multiple measures to evaluate PSTs, Heafner, McIntyre, and Spooner (2014) examined two of the Council of Accreditation for Educator Preparation standards, including the Clinical Partnerships and Practice standard and the Program Impact standard by conducting a program evaluation of a secondary level social studies tutoring program. This program was a required component of the secondary education program and was part of a “co-constructed, co-designed university-school partnership” that was taught by PSTs, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors (Heafner et al., 2014, p. 521). According to Heafner et al., this program was beneficial to all stakeholders, from the high school students enrolled in the program to the district and university, as well as the PST. They acknowledged, however, that documenting the growth was essential in identifying the progress made by all involved.

Although some research has been conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher preparation, minimal literature is available that evaluates the effectiveness of EPPs in preparing PSTs to work with CLD students, in particular. This void may be the result of unclear EPP evaluation tools and the subjective nature of the education field. In Texas, much of the accountability system data is limited to survey responses. The Texas Administrative Code specifies required survey questions pertaining to new teachers’

reflections on their preparation to work with ELL students, but there is no mention of culturally diverse students (TEA, 2016).

Method

Research Design

The research design for this study was a single case study focused on a select teacher preparation program examined from multiple perspectives. Yin (1994) described one purpose for a case study as an opportunity to investigate a situation thoroughly in an attempt to describe its various components. A case study is the best fit for this study because the researcher will be conducting a first-hand investigation of the program and will be gathering data from PSTs in their final semester in the teacher preparation program.

Context

The College of Education at Piney Woods State University (PWSU), a moderately sized university in Texas, offers undergraduate, masters and doctoral programs. This case study focused on the undergraduate initial teacher preparation program, which has been accredited by the National Counsel for Accreditation of Teacher Education for more than 60 years (NCATE, 2010). According to the Cognos General Student Report (2018), PWSU served 2,177 students in its initial teacher preparation program, at the time of this study with approximately 200 students scheduled to complete their teaching certification and preparation at the end of the Spring 2018 semester. Supporting the national demographics, the majority of the students enrolled in this teacher preparation program are white females (Cognos, 2018).

Aligning to Texas certification requirements, the middle grade certifications at PWSU include certifications for Early Childhood through sixth grade, content specific certifications for Grade 4 through Grade 8 (Grades 4-8), as well as content specific certifications for Grade 7 through Grade 12 (TEA, 2016b). The teacher candidates pursuing the composite English Language Arts and Reading and Social Studies certification were required to take six courses pertaining to language development, literacy, and ELLs (Keen & Bustamante, 2017). This number is twice the amount of courses the composite Mathematics and Science PSTs took. For all Grade 4 through Grade 8 PSTs, the number of required courses emphasizing linguistic diversity is significantly greater than the number of required courses focused on cultural diversity (Keen & Bustamante, 2017). However, these PSTs are also required to participate in field experiences in 63% of their coursework (Keen & Bustamante, 2017).

Participant Selection

Participants were selected using criterion sampling to focus specifically on the perspectives of the students currently pursuing their Grade 4 through Grade 8 certification in this particular initial teacher preparation program (Miles & Huberman, 1994). All current PST participants were enrolled in their final semester of the teacher preparation program at PWSU, completing their student teaching at a middle school campus, and were on schedule to graduate at the end of the Spring 2018 term. Participants were also all planning to teach full time at a public school in the fall of the following year. All PSTs who fit these criteria were invited to participate in the focus group, in order to use maximum variation (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Fifteen females and one male PST participated in the focus group, 75% of whom ranged between

21 to 24 years old. Two of the participants were between 25 to 29 years old; one participant was 35 to 39 years old, and one was over 40 years old. Unlike the demographics of Texas teacher educators, less than 44% of these participants identified themselves as White/Caucasian, whereas approximately 38% of participants identified themselves as Hispanic. The participant pool also included one Asian participant, one Indian participant, and one participant who identified as both White and Hispanic. One-fourth of the participants spoke a language other than English, including Spanish, Malayalam, and American Sign Language. Eight of the participants were obtaining their certification in mathematics, four in mathematics/science, and four in English Language Arts and Reading/Social Studies.

Role of the Researcher

In this study, I was an outside observer. Although I did not attend PWSU, I did receive my teaching certification through a different university-based program in Texas and have several co-workers who attended this specific program. For this reason, I may have had some biases regarding the quality of the university in general, including the emphasis on cultural responsiveness. Furthermore, as a graduate from, what I consider, a very effective teacher preparation program for middle school certification, I may have had some preconceived notions of effective ways to prepare PSTs to work with linguistically and culturally diverse learners. As Moustakas (1994) suggested, being conscious about these potential prejudices and intentionally focusing purely on the data helped me bracket my biases as much as possible.

Instrumentation

For this case study, I was the main instrument, as I was the one collecting and analyzing the data. The dominant source of data was gathered through focus groups. The interview questions were developed following Spradley's (1979) ethnographic interview model (i.e., grand tour, mini tour) to get participants' overall descriptions of the program, specific examples and experiences, as well as additional details.

Data Collection

A questionnaire, as seen in Appendix A, was sent to the PSTs who met the participant criteria, were in their final semester of the program, and were completing their student teaching. The purpose of this initial questionnaire was to get an overall impression for the students' perceptions of the program's effectiveness in preparing them to work with students from various backgrounds. The questionnaire also addressed basic demographic information.

Teacher candidates were then invited to participate in a focus group with their peers. A focus group allowed participants to speak comfortably about the program by providing the opportunity for PSTs to expand upon or contradict a peer's opinion, providing richer data than an interview may provide (Kruger & Casey, 2000). Because of the large number of PSTs who agreed to participate, two focus groups were conducted simultaneously with the aid of an additional moderator and two assistants, according to Morgan's recommendations (1997). Participants self-selected which focus group to participate in. The questions that were used in this focus group can be located in Appendix C. Additional follow-up emails were utilized to allow PSTs the opportunity to provide further data and to help clarify statements made during the focus group conversations.

Data was collected through the analysis of the questionnaires, focus groups, and emails until saturation was achieved. Glaser (1965) contended that data saturation is reached when further data collection will probably not provide any additional insight or value to the study. Immediately following the focus group conversations, the researchers and co-facilitators debriefed on the observations to establish trustworthiness (Shelton, 2004)

Data Analysis

The focus group data was analyzed using first and second cycle coding, using descriptive and in vivo coding to develop themes that occur throughout the data (Saldaña, 1994). The focus group discussions were transcribed and analyzed using several rounds of descriptive coding to identify significant statements that participants made (Creswell, 2013). I used constant comparison analysis to continuously make connections between all forms of data analysis to further support emerging themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Results

From my analysis of the transcripts from both focus groups, I identified five main themes: (a) Experiences – Early and Often; (b) Getting Around Language Barriers; (c) Creating a Culturally Responsive Classroom Environment; (d) Same Preparation – Different Perceptions; and (e) Middle School Woes. Each theme was supported by in vivo and descriptive codes. The participants' exact words were quoted throughout this section to most accurately depict their genuine responses (Saldaña, 2016).

Experiences – Early and Often

One of the PSTs explained that she felt her preparation to work with CLD students “began right away. I wasn’t something that was added on to [her] education; it was built in from the beginning.” The PSTs’ described some experiences early in the

program during which they interacted with people from a variety of backgrounds. Specifically, both focus groups discussed the benefit of having professors of various races/ethnicities and who spoke languages other than English. These teacher educators were able to share their personal experiences growing up in the school system as a cultural minority and an English Language Learner. Additionally, these professors served as a representative for CLD teacher candidates. Mira, an Indian PST, reflected about the predominately-white teachers she had in school. She concluded, “while they were great, it would have been nice to see someone that looked like me.”

The PSTs also mentioned multiple opportunities to converse, both in person and via video chat, with college students from other countries, including China, Turkey, and Armenia. In their interactions with the Armenian students, both the PST and their foreign counterpart were assigned with teaching one another a component of their language. One PST described this experience as a beneficial alternative to reading about working with CLD because of the real-time challenge and personal connections.

Closer to home, the PSTs in this small college town also described their learning that took place while tutoring students in an after-school program, which served students “who were primarily people of color” and with low socio-economic status. One of the PSTs said she learned “patience” through this experience, and appreciated the opportunity to build relationships and to provide a safe “place for them to stay out of trouble.” Another PST wished she had been required to tutor more than once a week to build a stronger bond and to “challenge [themselves] to get out of [their] comfort zone” more frequently. Several students also claimed the block of courses in which they served

in this tutoring program was “the best semester that helped [them learn how to] teach diverse students” because of these experiences.

Although the PSTs generally regarded the aforementioned interactions as positive experiences, many of their other clinical experiences received mixed reviews. Several of the PSTs described their time student teaching as very enlightening, where they were able to apply their coursework learnings and to experience the daily challenges of being a classroom teacher. In particular, these students explained their exchanges with CLD students and the trials of overcoming language barriers. One PST said she was thankful she had learned about the different stages of language development because it gave her a better understanding of her students’ second language acquisition as well. Although challenging, these PSTs were thankful for the opportunities to converse with their cooperating teacher and recognized this time as essential learning experiences.

Other PSTs, however, were not as impressed with their classroom involvement. Julia expressed her frustration with the observation hours:

I was placed in a bilingual classroom, but I didn’t really feel like it helped me that much because instead of helping them learn English... half the day was taught in English, and half the day was taught in Spanish...so like half the day, I would literally just sit there because I had no idea what anyone was saying – neither the teacher nor the students. So it wasn’t like integrating both, it’s like they were accommodating.... So I guess that helps them, but we weren’t really trying to integrate them to full English.

Julia’s description indicates a lack of understanding the most foundational components of cultural responsiveness that is to appreciate students’ culture and language.

One of the other PSTs was disappointed that her cooperating teacher would “always talk to [ELL students] in Spanish.” Because she did not speak Spanish herself, this PST expressed her need to observe other strategies to work with ELL students. Another participant was highly discouraged by her cooperating teacher’s “belittling” interactions with the ELL students. This PST observed her mentor “talk down” to these students and, consequently, witnessed the students “shut down when [the teacher] comes around.” Although the cooperating teacher had been teaching for four years, this PST felt responsible for undoing the damage done to these students’ confidence by her mentor.

Other PSTs were also disheartened by the classroom teachers they worked with at the after school tutoring program because they discouraged the PSTs from applying in their school district, claiming that “the kids are bad.” In the focus group, the PSTs defended the students and described that placement as good “practical experience working with students...who were struggling.” However, the PSTs admitted their uncertainties in how to respond to the teachers in this “uncomfortable situation.”

Getting around Language Barriers

Several of the PSTs mentioned that during their coursework, they were required to review, critique, and modify lesson plans and assignments to meet the needs of various student populations, including Special Education and ELL students. All of the PSTs who brought up these differentiation assignments felt they were beneficial to their preparation. One PST also described the value in her observations of her cooperating teacher working in small groups with ELL students. She said that in watching these interactions, she knew better how to “speak to students and really see the accommodations that we are

allowed to have” and gave her a better vision of what differentiation might look like in practice.

When asked about strategies the PSTs knew to help ensure the success of CLD students, the PSTs provided a few recommendations they had learned in their coursework and clinical experiences. In addition to the use of culturally diverse texts, the most common response the participants discussed to assist with linguistically diverse students were grouping strategies that can be used to give students “more time to focus on the academic language.” One PST described how her cooperating teacher also utilizes technology to help provide additional visual and audio supports to specific groups of students, based on their needs.

Although the PSTs were able to modify lesson plans and assignments and provide a few specific strategies to help meet the needs of linguistically diverse students, several of them also expressed their anxieties in actually working with students when a language barrier exists. In particular, these PSTs voiced a concern with ELLs’ likelihood to ask for questions because, in their opinion, these students do not request help when they need it. A number of the participants said they can recognize when an ELL is struggling with the content but that they are unsure how to intervene.

Adding to these conversations, several of the PSTs also discussed their suggestions for helping to assuage their fears. Julia described her concerns, “what most worries me... is I have zero background in Spanish..., so I would have no way to even kinda like try and understand what they are saying or work with them.” Another PST recommended a mandatory second language proficiency, in order to break through

language barriers to allow teachers to be better able to speak to non-English speaking students and parents.

Another topic of discussion in both focus groups was ESL certification, which is a supplementary certification designed to demonstrate teachers' aptitude in working with ELL students (TEA, 2001). Many of the PSTs were planning to take the certification test and wished some of their coursework were more designed toward preparing them for the test. On the other hand, another participant was adamantly opposed to obtaining an ESL certification because "if [she] get[s] that certification... [and] get[s] hired to teach a class of 20 students who are learning English... [she is] not going to be able to communicate with them nor help them."

Creating a Culturally Responsive Classroom Environment

With regard to cultural diversity, several PSTs passionately described the importance of building one-on-one relationships with students. One PST explained "once you get a better feel for [students'] lives, it's easier to click with them." Several others described a mutually beneficial relationship, in which both teacher and pupil can learn from one another's cultural background. Collectively, the participants explained this rapport with students is one of the most important ways to meet the needs of culturally diverse students.

Another essential component many of the PSTs also emphasized was the need to create a "safe environment" for students to be themselves and openly share about their culture, experiences, and points of view. One of the PSTs stressed the importance of not "creating... little soldiers [because] it takes away from freedom and creativity and expression" and that, instead, she wants to "broaden their horizons" and "build that

freedom of expression into [her] lessons.” Throughout the focus groups, PSTs highlighted their desire to establish an inviting classroom community of diverse learners more consistently than any other response. One of the participants explained ‘one of [her] goals as a teacher is to foster an environment where diversity is accepted, not necessarily ignored, but acknowledged and appreciated.’ They were particularly excited about “experience[ing] different parts of the world in [their] own classroom” and “building a smaller family,” and establishing their own classroom culture that embraces the lived experiences of both students and teacher.

A few PSTs expounded on the desire for students to share respectfully their opinions and the need for their peers to be open to different points of view. One of the White participants provided the example that “understanding the Texas Revolution for [her] is completely different than the Texas Revolution for Mexican students,” and so it is very important to acknowledge these different perspectives and to allow students to discuss them freely. Another PST added that by having this awareness and allowing these conversations to take place, she will “grow [her]self more so that [she] can be a person to be more open and more willing to see things from different points of view and not be stuck in one.”

Although this sentiment was the most coded response, a large part of the conversation in one of the focus groups pertained to the PSTs’ uncertainties in how to establish this sort of environment in their classrooms without jeopardizing their jobs because of the taboo nature of race and culture. Early in the focus group dialogue, this group of PSTs expressed their appreciation for one of their professors who had, in their coursework, “modeled and demonstrated for [them] how to go about constructing [a safe

environment] like that and getting everyone to share and integrate their culture and helping students appreciate it.” However, as the conversation progressed, the participants voiced their concerns for being able to establish their own welcoming classroom community, commenting that they feel “in our society, we’re really not supposed to talk about being ethnically diverse. You’re really not supposed to point those things out.” The group questioned “if [they are] not supposed to talk about it, how [are they] supposed to model for [students] how we’re supposed to embrace our differences and appreciate everyone’s diversity?” Several PSTs expressed that “in this current political climate... [they] worry a little about how far [they] can go... and if it will be ‘appropriate’ in the school,” especially “when [students] are not having it modeled at home.” One participant wondered,

What’s my place? How can I say ‘not in here?’ when [some students] are having something modeled at home that’s different... How do I enforce [acceptance and tolerance] while still being respectful to their parents because they have different views too.

Another participant remarked that although she believes teachers should be “politically correct... the students are already talking about [race and culture and] are already very aware of the ethnic diversity, but they’re not always treating it... with respect.” She added that handling disrespectful comments is “one of [her] biggest concerns because we were not really taught exactly what to say.” None of these fears expressed by the PSTs seemed to pertain to students’ responses to conversations about culture and different points of view, but rather, they all centered on the reactions of adults, including administrators and parents.

Same Preparation – Different Perceptions

Another important observation in this study was the different dynamics between the two focus groups. Because the participants were allowed to choose which focus group they wanted to join, the groups ended up culturally divided. One of the groups was predominately White, whereas the other group was predominately Hispanic. Although this separation could be coincidental, I question why this division occurred, especially considering that, according to the PSTs, the EPP had only one section of middle school candidates, so these participants had been classmates throughout their preparation.

Interestingly, in the predominately-White focus group, the minority participants spoke up minimally. Conversely, in the other focus group, one White PST dominated the conversation. Mira, the Indian PST, was in the predominately-White group, and she only responded to one question to explain what she was most excited about working with CLD students. She explained that for her, “as an ethnic minority, [she] wants students to see that anyone can be a teacher.” She concluded this short statement with “no offense,” as though to apologize. I emailed her the next day to ask if she wanted to add any other reflections that she did not have a chance to say or did not feel comfortable saying in the group. She responded with a lengthy email full of her thoughts and perceptions, stating that she “express[es her]self better in writing.”

Furthermore, the PSTs in each focus group emphasized different aspects of their preparation. For example, the predominately Hispanic group, as well as Mira in her email, referred several times to the beneficial practice from tutoring in the after school program. This experience was not mentioned at all in the predominately-White focus group. Similarly, the predominately-White focus group was the one that expressed their

great concerns with the taboo nature of discussing race/ethnicity and culture with their students. The other focus group did not articulate this fear. These differences in perception support the literature's discussion of the disparities between White and non-White PSTs' response to multicultural education (Dedeoglu & Lamme, 2001; McKoy, 2013; Ndemanu, 2014).

Middle School Woes

Another important component that arose from the data is the feeling that, as middle school PSTs, they “got stuck under the radar.” Several of the participants expressed their frustration with classes that claim to be specific for middle school aged students but actually focus more on Grade 4 and Grade 5, instead of the older grade levels in their certification. Although several of the PSTs named the Grade 4 through Grade 8 (Grades 4-8) literacy block as the course that best prepared them to work with CLD students, one participant, who incidentally took both the Early Childhood through Grade 6 (EC-6) and the Grades 4-8 literacy blocks, claimed that she “got more out of the EC-6 lit block than [the] 4-8.” She justified this claim by explaining in the EC-6 classes were held at a school, so they “would meet and then [they] would go out into the classrooms for a certain amount of time, and then [they] would come back and ... reflect as a class.” During her EC-6 literacy block, she was also charged with the memorable experience of being tutored by a third grade student how to read a picture book in Spanish, and then she had to go read the book to a Kindergarten class.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, EPP administrators may consider reflecting on their requirements. This particular EPP integrated field experiences into 63% of their

coursework (Keen & Bustamante, 2017), and, as other researchers have also concluded (i.e., Alexander, West, & Ebelhar, 2007; Howell & Arrington, 2008; McKoy, 2013), PSTs praised these experiences as the most influential in preparing them to work with CLD students. Some participants made negative comments regarding their cooperating and mentor teachers during these experiences. For this reason, the EPP may consider additional screening or training for their cooperating teachers. Additionally, university supervisors should regularly meet with both the cooperating teacher and the PST to discuss specific situations that arise in class. These collaborative sessions can benefit both the PST and the cooperating teacher (Kasmer & Billings, 2017; Sato, Fisette, & Walton, 2013).

However, even with screening and training, PSTs will likely overhear negative comments about students either by their cooperating teacher or by another teacher in the hallways or lunchroom. For this reason, professors should provide ample opportunities for the students to reflect and discuss uncomfortable scenarios throughout their coursework with the embedded field experiences (i.e., Gentry, Lamb, & Hall, 2015; Keengwe, 2010; Rodriguez & Polat, 2012; Sato, Fisette, & Walton, 2013). These discussions and reflections should include both interactions with other teachers, as well as interactions with students, in which the PST either did not know how to respond to an inappropriate comment or did not know how to intervene to support an ELL student's learning. These types of situations were mentioned several times throughout the focus group discussions, but the PSTs did not always feel that they were given the time and freedom to reflect as a group. They said that they often "reflected in writing on their own." Mira also admitted that, although she preferred to express herself in writing, she

wished the courses pertaining to CLD students would be offered face-to-face, as opposed to online in order to allow for more conversations with her peers. These conversations may also help PSTs connect their coursework material to its application in classrooms.

If PSTs do not have a specific scenario to discuss, professors may consider providing a realistic situation and allow the PSTs an opportunity to discuss how they might respond. The PSTs may even need to roll-play different situations. Through these reflections and discussions, professors should pay close attention to students, like Julia, who have intense concerns about working with ELL students and provide additional support to mitigate those fears. Furthermore, the faculty in EPPs should also be cognizant of the different perceptions of their minority students (Ndemanu, 2014; McKoy, 2013).

Finally, policy makers may reconsider the certification requirements for middle school teacher candidates. Although these Grades 4-8 teacher candidates had intensive clinical experiences and took many courses focused on pedagogy, many of the participants expressed uncertainties in meeting the needs of their linguistically diverse students, in particular. The PSTs obtaining their secondary certification in Grade 7 through Grade 12 will have drastically fewer experiences and courses pertaining to meeting the needs of CLD students (Keen & Bustamante, 2017). As such, policy makers can infer that middle school teachers who receive a secondary certification would feel even less prepared to work with CLD students.

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CHAPTER IV

NOVICE MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PREPARATION EFFECTIVENESS TO WORK WITH CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS

This dissertation follows the style and format of *Research in the Schools (RITS)*.

NOVICE MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PREPARATION EFFECTIVENESS TO WORK WITH CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS

Texas public school educators are faced with progressively complex factors, including rigorous curriculum standards, standardized testing, technological requirements, societal expectations, and an increasingly more diverse student population (Bryant, Moss, & Zijdemans Boudreau, 2015; Guyton & Wesche, 2005; Nadelson et al., 2012; Robinson & Clardy, 2011; Schellen & King, 2014). The Texas Education Agency (TEA) reported a shift in demographics with consistently growing Black and Hispanic student populations and a dwindling White population enrolled in state public schools (2017a). Meanwhile, the number of English Language Learners (ELLs) is the fastest growing population in the United States (Intercultural Development Research, 2015). The number of students enrolled in bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs has nearly doubled in the last decade, and the ELL population has grown by almost 40% in the state of Texas (TEA, 2017a).

At the same time, researchers have repeatedly demonstrated that students who are Black, Hispanic, or ELL are consistently out-performed by their White counterparts on standardized tests (Intercultural Development Research, 2015; TEA, 2017b). Additionally, these three student populations are regularly over-represented in disciplinary setting but are significantly less likely to be labeled college-ready or gifted and talented and are under-represented in advanced placement programs (Eckford & Slate, 2016; Intercultural Development Research, 2015; TEA, 2017b). Black students

drop out at a rate almost three times higher than White students, whereas Hispanic and ELLs drop out at a rate almost twice the rate of White students (TEA, 2017f).

Some researchers suggest that many teachers lack empathy for the personal and academic struggles of culturally and linguistically diverse students because the majority of the U.S. teaching force consists of White, middle class, women who have drastically different life experiences and were likely successful in their own schooling (Nadelson et al., 2012; Robinson & Clardy, 2011; Schellen & King, 2014). Consequently, these teachers may fail to effectively manage their classroom, or they may unnecessarily administer disciplinary consequences to students who struggle with the traditional school model (Guyton & Wesche, 2005; Nadelson, et al., 2012). These teachers may also unintentionally neglect to address the variously learning styles or learning difficulties of their students (Guyton & Wesche, 2005; Nadelson, et al., 2012). These complexities extend out of the public school sector into higher education, as teacher preparation programs are challenged to prepare PSTs to respond to these vast concerns.

Ladson-Billings (2011) expressed concern that teacher preparation programs may not be effectively addressing these issues because the majority of the university faculty are older, White females who have not been a classroom teacher recently enough to describe their first-hand experiences with the nuances of today's educational system. Furthermore, Ladson-Billings described programs in which the few minority faculty members who teach in a university preparation program are *pigeonholed* into teaching the few courses that focus on diversity or working with CLD learners. Other researchers (e.g., Flores, Santos, Fernandes, & Pereira, 2014; Nadelson, et al., 2012; Ronfeldt, Schwartz, & Jacob, 2014; Robinson & Clardy, 2011; Schellen & King, 2014; Wood &

Turner, 2015) extended these concerns to acknowledge the lack of extensive interactions PSTs have with students in diverse classroom settings, despite the evidence that supports the need for such experiences. In particular, online and alternative certification programs that emphasize an expedited route to teacher certification often remove the field-based experiences all together to ensure a quicker completion (Downing & Dymont, 2013; Ronfeldt et al., 2014). This omission of field experiences, however, may result in new teachers who are unprepared to meet adequately the needs of the CLD students they undoubtedly will face in their classrooms.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study was to describe recent graduates' perceptions of the effectiveness of their teacher preparation program in preparing them to work with CLD students once the novice teachers are working full-time in middle school classrooms. Specifically, this study addressed recent graduates' perceptions of the effectiveness of their coursework and field experiences in preparing them to work with CLD students. Additionally, I attempted to identify other preparation program components that also may have contributed to their preparation to be culturally responsive teachers.

Research Questions

The following research question were addressed in this study: How do recent teacher graduates perceive the effectiveness of their teacher preparation program in preparing them to work with CLD students? The following sub-questions were addressed in this study: (a) How do recent graduates perceive the effectiveness of field experiences in preparing them to work with CLD students?; (b) How do recent graduates perceive the effectiveness of their coursework in preparing them to work with CLD students?; and (c)

What other components of their teacher preparation program helped prepare recent graduates to work with CLD students?

Significance of the Study

Although a number of researchers (e.g., Gay, 2010; Guyton & Wesche, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Nadelson et al., 2012; Nieto, 2010; Schellen & King, 2014) have recommended educators be explicitly trained to work with CLD students, little research has been conducted to analyze the effectiveness of this training by EPPs. Follow up research on recent former teacher candidates in their first year of teaching is particularly limited (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2009). University leaders of the select College of Education preparation program explored in this study ideally will be able to use the findings from this research to identify which aspects of the teacher preparation program are most effective and be able to make improvements, as necessary. Furthermore, other educator preparation programs may benefit from the results of this study, as they will highlight specific program components that potentially affect novice teachers' ability to work with students from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The program selected for this study has served as a model for others since the 1950s, when it was first accredited by the National Counsel for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2010).

Further significance of the study is found in its focus on middle school teacher preparation. During their adolescent years, students have unique needs, as this phase of their life includes a multitude of changes. In addition to students' individual cultural and linguistic characteristics, 10 to 15 year olds also have age-specific emotional, physical, and psychological needs. Consequently, middle school teachers must be responsive to all

of these complexities and their overlap, and should be trained specifically to work with this age group (Faulkner, Cook, Thompson, Howell, Rintamaa, & Miller, 2017).

Researchers have discovered, however, that middle level teacher preparation programs often lack this specialization (Faulkner et al., 2017; Schmidt et al., 2007). For efficiency's sake, the requirements for middle school certification are often a blended collection of elementary and high school courses.

Theoretical Framework

This study was framed using the notion of cultural responsiveness. Within the United States Department of Education's mission statement, the committee described their "commitment to assuring equal educational opportunity for every individual" (2011), indicating that educators must provide a quality education to every student, regardless of their cultural or linguistic background. Based on a framework of cultural responsiveness, students' success in school may be affected by their cultural and linguistic differences. Researchers (Gay, 2002, 2010, & 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2006, 2011, & 2014) argue that in order to adhere to the Department of Education's mission statement, educators must be adequately trained to understand cultural influences and linguistic patterns and be consciously addressing their impact on students.

Review of Related Literature

American schools were established during the industrial revolution predominantly as a means to train large numbers of factory workers or clerical assistants. The market demanded few professionals, and the majority of the work available required little intellectual effort or original thought (Robinson, 2015). Just as the demographics of the United States has changed dramatically since the 18th century, the requirements of the

workforce is also continuously evolving. Robinson (2015) argued that American schools, at large, have not progressed sufficiently to develop creative, innovative, technologically inclined problem solvers to meet the essentials of the current job market. Similarly, the traditional school structure has repeatedly failed to adapt their structure to address the needs of CLD students (Robinson, 2015).

Acknowledging the numerous ways traditional schools are failing CLD students, researchers have challenged teacher preparation programs to provide essential training to establish a foundation of culturally relevant and responsive teachers to meet the needs of the increasing populations of CLD students in the United States (Nieto, 2010; Scott & Scott, 2015). Through this literature review, I will describe culturally responsive teaching and the characteristics of teachers who embrace this type of teaching. I will then summarize several components of teacher certification programs that researchers have identified as effective in the preparation of PSTs in working with CLD students in their classrooms.

Culturally Relevant Education

Gay and Ladson-Billings have been two major researchers who encouraged this focus of teachers incorporating social justice in their classrooms. Although both researchers have supported this movement, their emphasis has varied slightly. Aronson and Laughter (2015) described the difference is that where Ladson-Billings' research focused on having culturally relevant pedagogy, Gay emphasized the art of teaching.

In an effort to facilitate teachers' understanding of the influence culture has on their students, Gay (2013) endorsed explicit instruction on racial/ethnic groups and their traditions and general beliefs. The author expanded on this recommendation to include

training on how to adjust instruction to make new information more accessible to students from various backgrounds (Gay, 2013). Gay (2010) described teachers' instructional practices as her primary emphasis, with their content knowledge as a secondary concern.

Whereas Gay (2010, 2013) focused on the instructional practices of teachers, Ladson-Billings (2006) highlighted a more holistic approach, which she referred to as *culturally relevant pedagogy* and then *culturally sustaining pedagogy* (Paris, 2014). The author points out that although teacher preparation consistently neglects to address the “anthropology of education” (Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 104), educators and policymakers are quick to use race/ethnicity as a way to explain away schools' failures. For example, if a campus has low passing rates on standardized tests or high disciplinary actions, the first explanation is the demographics of the campus. Ladson-Billings (2006) argued the primary explanation for campus failures should not be the same concept that is glossed over in training. She stated that educators in general view students as solely responsible for their success in school and fail to acknowledge how “individual, family, community, school, and societal factors interact to create school failure for some students” (Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 106).

In another study, the authors described *culturally relevant education* as a combination of the major characteristics of culturally relevant teaching and culturally responsive pedagogy (Aronson & Laughter, 2015). Aronson and Laughter (2015) focused especially on the idea of social justice and the encouragement of teachers to use their platform in the classroom to promote social change. Dover (2009) also combined several similar philosophies, including culturally relevant education, multicultural

education, critical pedagogy, social justice education, and democratic education, to establish the idea of *teaching for social justice*.

Characteristics of Culturally Relevant Educators

Beyond defining culturally relevant education, researchers have also investigated the characteristics of teachers who effectively promote social justice in their classrooms. In 1995, Ladson-Billings studied a group of teachers who parents and administrators had identified as effective with Black students. Ladson-Billings described her frustration in analyzing the qualitative data she had gathered because she was unable to pinpoint specific strategies or classroom structures these teachers had in common. The researcher eventually realized that these teachers shared a much deeper philosophical approach to their classroom, in which they sought to establish genuine relationships with their students and community, built on students' individual strengths, and used the classroom as an opportunity to learn about one another through the use of collaborative groups. Ladson-Billings (1995, 2006, 2014) explained that for culturally relevant teachers, the appreciation for other cultures, and the awareness of social injustices is not limited to the school setting.

Similarly, Gay (2010) described one tenant of culturally responsive teachers as those who desire to be a positive influence in the lives of their students, which she termed culturally responsive caring. Additionally, culturally responsive teachers encourage culture and communication in the classroom by focusing on the topics of conversations in the classroom significantly more than the manner in which the topics are articulated. Gay (2010) also recommended teachers be mindful of the way various cultures are portrayed in the curriculum and intentionally include a variety of accurate representations of diverse

cultures throughout the course. The final characteristic Gay (2010) used to identify culturally responsive teachers was their ability to recognize how their students learn and to address students' experiences and needs by incorporating specific instructional practices.

Several researchers also have characterized culturally responsive educators as those who continuously reflect on ways that their personal culture impacts their own lives and the lives of their students (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014; Robinson & Clardy, 2011). Acknowledging this influence aids in establishing a "safe haven" (Robinson & Clardy, 2011, p. 105) in which all students feel empowered and comfortable to express themselves freely. Culturally responsive teachers seek to learn from their students and provide opportunities for students to learn from one another (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014; Robinson & Clardy, 2011).

Dover's (2013) study explored the ability of secondary English language arts teachers to incorporate components of social justice in their lessons, while also addressing the content standards. The participants emphasized the use of resources that reflect a variety of cultures represented in the classroom and present multiple perspectives. The purpose of including these types of resources is to allow students to reflect on social and cultural inequities, converse within the classroom about these injustices, and then continue addressing these issues outside of the classroom. Similar to other researchers, Dover also emphasized the essential component of a safe classroom environment, where students are comfortable to express their opinions and experiences.

Coursework versus Field Experiences

An underlying understanding of cultural responsiveness is that teachers cannot simply follow a set of strategies. Culturally responsive teachers exhibit this characteristic throughout their personal and professional lives (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Milner, 2011; Scott & Scott, 2015). With these characteristics in mind, educator preparation programs are challenged to develop teacher candidates to exhibit these traits through either coursework, field experiences, or a combination of these two components. In addition to the recommendations of Gay and Ladson-Billings to provide explicit instruction on culture and anthropology, a number of other researchers have studied the effectiveness of coursework and clinical experiences. Noddings (2012) clarified these experiences must include a variety of interactions with CLD students. Some of these researchers have also recommended specific criteria for each of these components that may further enhance the development of culturally responsive educators.

Schellen and King (2014) investigated the influence of coursework and field experiences, paying special attention to compare the specific placement campuses of intermediate level preservice teachers for their student teaching. The researchers analyzed the syllabi and required texts for each for the courses that all of the 53 PSTs had taken. Additionally, Schellen and King gathered data from the portfolios each participant submitted at the end of the semester of student teaching, which was intended to demonstrate their proficiency in working with CLD students. These portfolios included written descriptions of their learnings from previous courses, reflections from their interactions with students, and other teaching artifacts, such as sample lessons, that focused specifically on their understanding of and ability to teach CLD students. The

researchers noticed a drastic difference between the PSTs whose student teaching took place in a district with a high Hispanic population and those who were assigned to a mostly White district. Although every PST articulated the importance of recognizing individual student differences, the PSTs in the predominately-White classrooms did not apply their learnings as routinely as those in the predominately-Hispanic classrooms. Schellen and King recognized the benefit of the coursework in the initial introduction of cultural knowledge and strategies but emphasized that in order for students to apply these learnings, they must have the opportunity to interact with CLD students.

Ronfeldt, Schwartz, and Jacob (2014) also acknowledged the value of PSTs participating in coursework but highlighted the essentialness of field experiences. During their investigation, the researchers revealed that alternatively certified teachers spend significantly less time in classrooms with students than traditionally trained teachers. Although both types of programs required methods courses, almost half of the teachers who received their certification through alternative routes had zero opportunities to interact with students in actual classroom settings during their training (Ronfeldt et al., 2014). The participants who completed their certification program through a college or university setting consistently reported feeling more prepared than their alternatively certified peers and remained in the education field longer. The authors concluded that the methods courses required by both routes of preparation programs did have a positive influence of PSTs' readiness, but classroom experience was even more highly correlated with their preparedness.

Expanding on the support for field experiences, Wood and Turner (2015) provided insight into the relationship between PSTs, their university supervisors, and

their cooperating teachers. The PST participants in this study were enrolled in a methods course and were required to spend a day and a half each week in a classroom with a cooperating teacher. As one assignment, PSTs and their mentors were instructed to interview individual elementary-aged students as they explained their understanding of a math problem and how to solve it. After these interviews, a university supervisor facilitated debriefing sessions in which the PST and cooperating teachers discussed their observations. Wood and Turner (2015) documented several benefits to this structure. For one, because the cooperating teachers knew the students more intimately, they were often able to clarify PSTs' observations and questions that were specific to the student. In these reflective conversations, the cooperating teachers also modeled continued professional learning. The university supervisor, meanwhile, was able to point out connections between the PSTs' and cooperating teachers' observations and the content from the methods courses. In these ways, the cooperating teachers and university supervisors provided unique contributions to the PSTs' development, and the combined conversations with all three individuals further enhanced their training.

Self-Efficacy and Self-Reflection

In an effort to investigate components of teacher preparation programs that are intended specifically to prepare PSTs to work with diverse populations, Bennett (2012) conducted a qualitative study to investigate the effective and ineffective requirements. The eight White elementary PSTs who participated in this study tutored predominately Black or Hispanic students at a local community center that served students who were economically disadvantaged as part of their student teaching. At the same time, these participants were also taking a writing course in which the PSTs were assigned writing

assignments to provide field notes and to reflect on their experiences through journaling. Bennett gathered data through these artifacts and interviews and determined several characteristics that made the tutoring experience particularly effective. The researcher noticed the PSTs who made genuine connections in their one-on-one interactions with students grew in their understanding of culturally responsiveness. Meanwhile, the PSTs whose descriptions of culturally responsive teaching did not change much from the beginning of the semester to the end of the semester, acknowledged the importance of knowing each student but did not extend the effort to establish these relationships (Bennett, 2012). Another effective component in increasing PSTs' culturally responsiveness Bennett identified were the opportunities for them to discuss their experiences and reflections with one another. However, the PSTs' reflections did not identify the writing instructor's subtle references to cultural responsive teaching, so this indirectness was deemed ineffective instruction.

Pursuing a possible strategy to prepare PSTs to work with minority students and students who were economically disadvantaged, Bryant et al. (2015) analyzed data gathered from an open dialogue with 30 PSTs. The participants in this study reflected the general teaching field and were predominately White females. Based on the Critical Race Theory, the PSTs viewed films about race and then discussed their observations and emotional reactions to the film with one another. Select educators from a variety of backgrounds helped facilitate these crucial conversations, during which several of the PSTs described personal revelations, most significantly recognizing their own privilege. Many of the participants also acknowledged the impact this experience would have on their future students, as it brought awareness to the differences in opportunities afforded

to students of color or lower socioeconomic status. The PSTs were also challenged to reflect on their own perceptions of poverty, as it relates to race. Bryant et al. (2015) suggested these types of open dialogues were a quality method for teacher preparation programs to incorporate to enhance PSTs' reflections of cultures and to help reduce biases.

In their 2005 study, Guyton and Wesche created and tested a scale to measure the self-efficacy of PSTs in working with culturally and linguistically diverse students. The Multicultural Efficacy Scale was different from other scales related to multicultural education because it questioned participants' knowledge of different cultures, how cultures interact with one another in society, as well as PSTs' perceptions of their personal biases. This scale also required PSTs to evaluate their ability to develop and implement culturally responsive lessons. To design the initial scale, Guyton and Wesche (2005) gathered input from teacher educators and revised a scale to 160 questions, which they piloted to almost 700 undergraduate and graduate-level education students across the United States. Intended to resemble the demographics of the teacher workforce, these participants were predominately White, middle class, heterosexual, Christian females. After two stages of data analysis, Guyton and Wesche (2005) narrowed the Multicultural Efficacy Scale down to the 35 questions that provided the most crucial and reliable results and suggested this scale may be a helpful way for teacher preparation programs to measure PSTs' changing beliefs throughout their training.

Nadelson et al. (2012) employed the Multicultural Efficacy Scale to assess 88 PSTs' personal experiences and attitudes towards working with CLD students, as well their perceptions in their ability to design and implement culturally responsive lessons.

The majority of these participants were lower to middle class White females, but almost a quarter of them spoke English and another language. Based on the data gathered from this scale, Nadelson et al. (2012) noted that PSTs regarded genuine interactions with CLD students as more influential in their multicultural efficacy than the coursework dedicated to teaching PSTs about cultural responsiveness.

Expanding on the recommendations of researchers (Bennett, 2012; Bryant et al., 2015; Guyton & Wesche, 2005) for PSTs to reflect on their experiences and beliefs, Robinson and Clardy (2011) suggested teacher educators should also be reflective of their practices. These researchers pointed out that because most PSTs are White, middle class females, teacher educators may not regularly engage with CLD students and therefore may not model cultural responsive pedagogy in their own teaching practices. The authors described the three main pathways for teacher preparation programs to address diversity training. One option was to have specific courses that focus solely on CLD students, whereas another route was to integrate cultural responsiveness throughout every course. Robinson and Clardy (2011) preferred the third approach, which was a combination of the first two, in part, because it emphasized specific characteristics of culturally responsive pedagogy in some courses and modeled it in others. To implement this approach effectively, however, teacher educators would need to reflect on their current practices and may need training on how to incorporate the strategies K-12 teachers use when working with CLD students. Additionally, the teacher educators within specific programs would need to collaborate with one another to address the varied components of multicultural education, including an abundance of field experiences in which PSTs can apply their learnings with CLD students.

Evaluation of EPPs

In an attempt to assess PSTs' preparedness to enter the workforce, Chung and Kim (2010) researched their understanding and application of the education standards. The participants revealed through their interviews that they perceived the education standards as a checklist to be marked off throughout their coursework, as opposed to a continuum to be constantly improving upon. Additionally, the PSTs viewed their portfolio submissions as demonstrations of their mastery of each standard instead of a description of their continuously evolving understanding and application of each standard. Chung and Kim suggested teacher educators provide a more detailed explanation of the standards in reference to their developmental nature, which will continue to evolve upon completion of the EPP. Then, teacher educators should emphasize the purpose of the portfolios as a demonstration of their growth throughout the program.

Another proponent of portfolios, Feuer, Floden, Chudowsky, and Ahn (2013) also underscored the importance of PSTs using these artifacts to model their continuous improvement throughout the program and beyond. These authors also recommended teacher educators use observations of PSTs as an additional evaluative tool but warned university supervisors against using these often highly-rehearsed lessons as their sole assessment of PSTs' preparedness. EPPs may also choose to survey recent graduates and their employers to gain insight into the effectiveness of their program, but this route has a number of drawbacks too, as surveys are terribly subjective and personal. Ultimately, Feuer et al. (2013) suggested EPPs use a variety of instruments to evaluate their program because each of them independently, has a number of drawbacks.

Feuer et al. (2013) also recommended EPPs identify the goals of the program prior to identifying evaluation methods so that the program can use the tools to measure their effectiveness in reaching these goals. Heafner, McIntyre, and Spooner (2014) supported the idea of establishing clear goals and using multiple instruments to evaluate the program in their program evaluation of a secondary level social studies tutoring program that was developed and implemented collaboratively between a university and a public school. This tutoring program was taught by PSTs, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors and was deemed beneficial to all stakeholders, including the high school tutees. Heafner et al. (2014) emphasized, however, that the coalition had to document their progress throughout their time together in order to accurately assess its effectiveness.

As demonstrated through the literature, EPPs often struggle to accurately assess PSTs' preparedness and, consequently, the effectiveness of their program (Chung & Kim, 2010; Feuer et al., 2013; Heafner et al., 2014). The literature is lacking in the evaluation of EPPs to prepare teachers to work with CLD students. Along these same lines, the accountability for EPPs' appraisals is unclear, and often limited to survey responses. In Texas, EPPs are required to obtain survey data from new teachers that specifically references their preparedness to work with ELLs. The Texas Administrative Code does not require any data regarding teachers' preparedness to work with culturally diverse students (TEA, 2016).

Method

Research Design

Creswell (2013) described case studies as a comprehensive investigation of a specific issue or phenomenon. Following Stake's (2010) descriptions, I was the primary investigator collecting the data from the novice teachers to identify the effective and non-effective practices of their teacher certification program in preparing them to work with CLD students. Because this study was an in depth investigation of a selective university-based teacher preparation program from a variety of perspectives, a collective case study was deemed the most appropriate approach (Yin, 1994).

Context

The context of this study was based at a moderately sized Texas university, Piney Woods State University (PWSU). Although the College of Education offers undergraduate, masters, and doctoral programs, this study will focus on its undergraduate initial teacher certification program, which has been accredited by the National Counsel for Accreditation of Teacher Education since 1954 (NCATE, 2010). At the time of this study, 2,177 students were enrolled in the initial teacher preparation program, and approximately 200 students completed the program in Spring 2018 with their teacher's certification (Cognos, 2018). The demographics of the PSTs enrolled in PWSU were similar to the national data of teachers, in that the vast majority are white females (Cognos, 2018).

Participant Selection

The participants in this study were selected using criterion sampling to focus specifically on novice middle school teachers who graduated PWSU immediately before

beginning their career in education (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The participants were full-time public middle school teachers with less than three years' experience at the time of this study. Three of the participants were in their second semester of teaching, one participant was in her first semester teaching, and one was in her third year. Although my initial pool of participants was limited to first year teachers, because I had much difficulty finding participants to complete the questionnaire and agree to meet with me, I widened the pool to include first through third year teachers. Participants taught a variety of middle school classes, including math, science, social studies, and an elective technology class. Using maximum variation, I interviewed three White female novice teachers, one Black female, and one White male. All participants spoke only English, and two of the participants, the male and Black novice teachers, were also enrolled in a Master's degree program at the time of this study. These sampling procedures were used so that the conclusions drawn from this study may also apply to additional cohorts of teacher preparation programs (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

Role of the Researcher

Although I did not attend the select university from which my study participants graduated, I did obtain my middle school teaching certification through another traditional program within a different Texas university. I also have several co-workers who attended this university. For these reasons, my perception of this university and its emphasis on cultural responsiveness may have been slightly biased. I believe I was effectively prepared through the initial teacher preparation program that I graduated from, so I may have unconsciously related back to my own experiences there, particularly in regards to meeting the needs of CLD students. To maintain the most objective study

possible, I maintained awareness of these potential biases and bracketed them by concentrating vigilantly on the data (Moustakas, 1994).

Instrumentation

Because I was gathering and analyzing qualitative data throughout this case study, I was the main instrument. Participants' responses to interview questions served as the primary data for this study. Spradley's (1979) model for ethnographic interviewing was used to develop the interview questions, which were geared toward understanding participants' general thoughts of the program as a whole, as well as more detailed anecdotal descriptions and other relevant specifics regarding how effectively their preparation has upheld in their new career.

Data Collection

First year middle school teachers who graduated from the specific teacher preparation program and meet the participant criteria were asked to complete a questionnaire, as presented in Appendix B. In addition to gathering initial professional and demographic information, participants began to reflect on the effectiveness of their preparation in terms of cultural responsiveness. During subsequent interviews, I used the questionnaire data to delve further into participants' experiences, beliefs, and self-efficacy. Readers are directed to Appendix D for a list of these interview questions. One-on-one interviews with each participant were the main source of data collection, and I collected data until saturation was reached. According to Glasser (1965), saturation is achieved when no further insight would be gathered from additional data collection.

Data Analysis

I analyzed the interview data using first and second cycle coding (Saldaña, 2016), identified important information, and interpreted common themes (Moustakas, 1994). After transcribing the interviews, I located significant statements using multiple rounds of descriptive and In Vivo coding (Saldaña, 2016). In an effort to support emerging themes further, I continuously related each form of data analysis using constant comparison analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Results

From my analysis of the transcripts of all five interviews, I identified five main themes: (a) Understanding of Culture; (b) Teacher Culture; (c) Preparation Reflections; (d) Lessons from Experience; and (e) Perceived Program Deficits. Each of these themes are described in detail in the following sections. Participants' exact wording was used throughout these descriptions to provide a clear depiction of the novice teachers' reflections.

Understanding of Culture

In an attempt to get an overall feel for the participants' understanding of culture, I asked them two generic questions: (a) How would you define the term *culture*? and (b) How would you describe your own culture? By far, the participants struggled to answer these two questions significantly more than any of the other questions. Most of the participants were able to stumble through a reasonable explanation of *culture*, all of which essentially described "a group of people who have shared norms... and... shared experiences." One of the participants eloquently added that "from a community standpoint, you have different cultures that intermingle into this beautiful concoction

of... different traditions [and] unique outlets... [where] you can work together and learn from each other that makes [the community] a stronger unit.”

In general, the novice teachers had much more difficulty in describing their own culture. Most of their responses began with a long, uncertain pause, and one participant asked to skip the question all together. Whereas one White novice teacher described her culture as “pretty American,” another explained, “when you’re white, and you’re southern, you try not to say ‘I’m a southern white person’ because then that sounds like your culture is different than what it is.” Notably, the only Black participant, Ashlyn, seemed the least phased by the question, stating:

That’s a really good question. Are you referring to my culture as far as within the teacher culture? Because I feel like teachers have their own little culture. And then me being African American, I have a culture within that. And then even with me being a Texan, that’s a different type of culture... So it’s many different ones; I guess I’m part of it all.

Ashlyn’s clear understanding of the intersectionality of factors that influence her culture supports Dedeoglu and Lamme’s (2011) conclusions that non-White PSTs tend to have a more advanced perspective of their identity than White PSTs. Conversely, the White participants’ hesitancy to describe their culture is significant because researchers (Dover, 2013; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Robinson & Clardy, 2011) specify culturally responsive teachers should be mindful of their own culture so they can reflect on the impact their culture has had on their life and the lives of others.

Some level of understanding of culture also was evident in the novice teachers’ responses to the question asking about what biases they have and how they control them.

Three of the participants acknowledged everybody has biases and that they attempt to keep them “in check.” Ashlyn seemed less convicted of her biases, saying that hers was a tendency to call on people she knew would have the correct answer. Although I do not question this response as being a genuine predisposition, I was intrigued that this bias was the first and only one she described. Another participant claimed not to have any biases because she “really doesn’t think about [cultural differences].”

Although most of the participants admitted to having biases, they may not have been fully aware of their own misconceptions of CLD students. One of the novice teachers believed having “a whole class [in their EPP] that focused on teaching kids with ethnic backgrounds [would not be] beneficial to someone who leaves to go teach in a place that doesn’t have [CLD students].” Another participant, Alex, referred to CLD students as being “definitely not from around here” at least eight times during the interview. This novice teacher also referenced CLD students’ “original country” and explained

culturally diverse students... are scared [because] they are brought into the situation... that they may speak your language, but culturally when it comes to the food, the atmosphere, how the school is run, and especially how discipline may be conducted, it may be a huge culture shock.

In talking about the various levels of English proficiency of linguistically diverse students, Alex compared students “who knows most of the English language, almost like Spaniglish... all the way down to they just stare at you,” which “knock on wood, luckily [Alex had] not experienced.” Adding to this deficit perception, this novice teacher also

explained the importance of building strong relationships with CLD students because teachers are the “gateway to success for them.”

Despite these questionable references, both of these novice teachers were also the most forthcoming with their need to disconnect from frustrating situations and consider students’ background before reacting. Both of these participants acknowledged that teachers cannot respond in the same manner with every student. One of them said her “job...is to encourage [students] to move in a direction that would be better for them” without trying “to change who they are.”

This participant went on to explain that one way she tries to reach this goal is by “exposing them to a person who looks the way they do who has [the] professional field they want to be in.” Several other participants echoed a similar sentiment. Ashlyn explained that teachers need to expose students to people of their culture, ethnicity, race “within successful parts of their lives” to model for students the struggles these professionals went through and “what they have overcome.”

All of the novice teachers expressed the joy they feel from allowing students to share their unique perspectives. Each of the participants described ways in which they learned from their students and their students learned from one another based on their different background and familial experiences. Despite this openness to different points of view, one of the novice teachers also expressed her desire to keep “differences in opinion... out of the classroom because [class] is not the time nor place.”

Teacher Culture

Beyond discussing their interactions with CLD students, the novice teachers also reflected on their interactions with their own peers. Four-fifths of the participants

addressed the culture of educators, explaining they are “all just teachers doing what we gotta do!” On a personal level, only two of the novice teachers, Ashlyn and the third year teacher, seemed comfortable with describing the cultural differences amongst their team of teachers. Conversely, the male participant explained he and his coworkers “purposely don’t ask... about [each other’s] backgrounds.”

On a professional level, however, all five of the participants expressed how beneficial they found the interactions with their CLD peers. Several of them explained they appreciate having other people to ask questions of to get different perspectives to see a given situation from a different point of view. Three novice teachers gave specific examples of coworkers they regularly pursue for advice on their interactions with students because of their peers’ different outlooks. They discussed the importance of “building a community that can assist the kid” and utilizing one another’s strengths to assist all students.

Interestingly, two of these novice teachers also did not seem to take full ownership in the language development of their ELLs. They explained their ELL students go to other classrooms or work with other teachers to receive the linguistic supports they need. One of the participants said when she identifies a student is struggling with reading, she “send[s] them to the diagnostician,” adding she is “not the person” to provide clarity for the students’ troubles. This mathematics teacher later expressed her frustration with providing writing samples for the ELL language assessment, TEPAS, stating her apathy is because she is “not in charge of TELPAS.”

Preparation Reflections

Beyond their subtle references to their understanding of cultural and linguistic diversity, the novice teachers also provided insight into their pre-service teacher preparation to work with CLD students. When asked about their preparedness to work with ELLs, each participant discussed the multiple English as a Second Language (ESL) courses they were required to take in their EPP. All five participants also provided specific examples of strategies they learned in these courses to help meet the needs of their linguistically diverse students. Some of the strategies discussed included the use of visual supports, allowing ELLs to use their native language to support their content learning, and providing a variety of opportunities for students to engage in the language during classes. Two of the participants specified these classes helped them learn how to build a lesson to accommodate the needs of ELLs.

However, the novice teachers were not as clear on their preparation to work with culturally diverse students. One of the participants stated she did not remember any component of their coursework that was designated specifically to working with CLD students, although she vaguely remembered having to build culturally responsive components into their lessons. Earlier in the interview, this same participant also suggested she was doubtful PSTs could discuss lesson adaptations based on students' cultural backgrounds "without being racially profiling." Another novice teacher hesitated before responding to the question regarding strategies learned during their EPP to work with culturally diverse students, stating:

I don't know. Did we do...? I'm sure we did, but I cannot think of anything we learned. I mean, I know that we did the cultural diversity stuff, but have I used any of those things with my kids? I'm not sure.

These novice teachers' responses support the findings of Keen and Bustamante (2017), which suggested this EPP required drastically fewer courses emphasizing cultural diversity than linguistic diversity.

Another commonality between the participants' comments about their coursework is four of them felt as though the courses merely "textbook prepared" them and gave "theoretical" lessons more than applications of their learning. One lone participant provided the opposite feedback. As she now teaches math to "newcomers," ELL students who have been in the United States for less than three years, she expressed her gratitude for having so many ESL classes, even though, at the time of her enrollment in the courses, she did "not realize how much they were going to help [her] in the real world." This participant also noted her appreciation for the teaching mathematics courses, which "helped [her] think outside of the way [she] learned" math. Although she did not specify CLD students in these comments, she clarified these courses helped her recognize students learn differently and that she would need to have alternative ways to explain concepts to students who think differently.

Lessons from Experience

Each of the participants also remarked their field experiences "prepared [them] more than the classwork did" because they were able to be "hands-on" with the students. All five participants acknowledged that their EPP exposed them to a number of different types of school environments and "wet [their] feet in different areas" to avoid a "huge

culture shock [at] whatever campus” they choose to work. The participants described their time at a number of schools that served a variety of student populations, including campuses with large numbers of students labeled low income, campuses with high populations of ELLs, and campuses in “very high class areas.” One of the participants described one of her placement campuses as serving a student population “more like how [she] grew up, so [that experience] wasn’t really as enlightening.” In general, the novice teachers explained these opportunities were good experiences because they had to “learn how to explain things a different way” and to “think on [their] toes.”

Most of the novice teachers expressed their appreciation for being “exposed to various strategies” and the opportunities to observe other teachers “to see what worked and what didn’t work,” which added “different strategies [to their] toolboxes.” One participant also described a disappointing, yet “eye opening,” experience in one of her placements, where the school “would not let the kids speak Spanish.” She said she felt as though the teachers and administrators were “trying to stamp all the culture out of them.” Ultimately, she said, when she was applying for full-time teaching positions, she opted not to apply in this particular district because she did “not want to work at a place where they don’t let kids speak Spanish.”

Most of the participants also explained that throughout their clinical experiences, they had many opportunities to reflect and discuss their interactions with students and mentor teachers through conversations with their peers and professors. One participant described this collaboration as “priceless” because they had a “community of people that [were] experiencing the same thing,” which created a safe environment to share openly their thoughts, feelings, and struggles. Two of the novice teacher were also thankful for

their EPP professors' encouragement and feedback, particularly in their interactions with CLD students. One professor reportedly pointed out specific interactions with particular students following observations of the participant during student teaching, which forced the now-novice teacher to pause and reflect. Another professor gave one of the participants explicit instructions to "talk slower," especially when working with ELL students. Both of these participants vividly remember this feedback and continue to apply these suggestions in their classrooms.

Perceived Program Deficits

Despite the general consensus of being well prepared by incredible professors, each participant also expressed some frustrations with specific components of their preparation. The male participant felt his professors were too far removed from classroom experiences to provide adequate support for working in today's modern schools. He felt unprepared for the students' use of technology and social media, as well as "current disciplines in how to manage today's students" with the wide range of cultures, background experiences, and familial supports. Several of the other novice teachers also explained their biggest struggle in working with CLD students is with "behavioral interventions." Three of the participants recommended the EPP provide "more classes that focus on... behavioral challenges [teachers face] because of these cultural differences."

Ironically, another participant expressed her frustration with the professor of her ESL classes having "a very thick accent." She explained,

...being in her class, a lot of us struggled with understanding what she was saying
I think that was an issue for us. In a way, it was good because you think this is

what my students would feel like in my class if it was a person who didn't speak English, but at other times, it was bad because I was like 'I don't really know what you are trying to teach me.

Although she recognized the empathy potentially built through this experience, her overall feeling was the course “lacked some of the benefit” for her because “when there is the language barrier from the person that you are learning from... it is a hard environment to learn from.” She seemed to comprehend the irony in her statements, as she jokingly requested an “English interpreter” or an “ESL class to go to during [her] ESL class,” but ultimately she perceived this experience as a negative component of her training.

Although most of the participants appreciated the field experiences and coursework lessons of their literacy block, one of the math teachers said she “hated every minute of it” and that it was a “wasted semester.” Earlier in the interview, she described this placement as one in which she interacted with many ELLs but expressed her discontent with the course in general because “it was all about reading and writing, and as a math teacher, [she] doesn't do that.” She did not see the connection between her teaching mathematics and students' language development.

Recommendations

Based on these novice teachers' reflections, this section provides several recommendations for this EPP and its professors, as well as other programs and teacher educators to consider in preparing future teachers to work with CLD students. First of all, EPPs may consider integrating as many field experiences as possible throughout their coursework, especially in different campuses with a variety of student demographics.

These experiences seemed to have the most lasting impression, as every participant consistently referenced these opportunities as the most beneficial in their preparation to work with CLD students. However, supporting Howell and Arrington's (2008) conclusions, PSTs cannot simply go into the field without later discussing their observations and interactions, lest they fail to make connections between their coursework learnings and its applications. University supervisors may also need to schedule conversations with individual PSTs and their cooperating teachers to allow for additional opportunities for the PST to reflect on specific instances encountered in the classroom (Kasmer & Billings, 2017; Sato, Fisette, & Walton, 2013). Because cooperating teachers were rarely mentioned in any of the interviews, these discussions may also help ensure the cooperating teacher is supporting the coursework emphases by opening the dialogue between all three contributing members of the PSTs' preparation.

Additionally, based on the novice teachers' perceptions of their professors, instructors may need to make slight adjustments. For example, for professors who have been out of a public school classroom for many years, they may need to pursue actively opportunities to be in classes and working with middle school students and teachers in public school settings. Furthermore, these professors may seek out classroom teachers to lead class discussions with PSTs, particularly, in dealing with students' behavior and classroom management.

As Ladson-Billings (2011) reported, oftentimes, professors from traditionally marginalized groups tend to teach the courses focused on multicultural and linguistic competencies. The ESL teachers with "strong accents" have a perfect opportunity to build empathy in their PSTs, but the professors may need to provide time for the PSTs to

discuss their perceptions explicitly throughout the course. Subtle references may be lost in the white privilege. Furthermore, these professors can use this opportunity to use their own lessons to model the strategies teachers should use with middle school students. Again, the strategies used may need to be explicitly pointed out to the PSTs.

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CHAPTER V

The purpose of this journal ready dissertation was to identify effective strategies that educator preparation programs (EPPs) can use to prepare pre-service teachers (PSTs) to work with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students. In the first investigation, I conducted a systematic literature review to determine the most effective components experts are recommending EPPs include in their program to establish a foundation of cultural responsiveness in their PSTs. The purpose of the second study was to explore the perceptions of current middle school PSTs concerning their preparation to work with CLD students. For the third study, I researched novice middle school teachers' perceptions of their preparation to meet the needs of CLD students, as they reflected back after having gained some experience as a full-time classroom teacher. In this chapter, the results off each study are summarized and discussed. Additionally, this final chapter includes implications for policy and practice, as well as recommendations for future research.

Summary of Study 1 Findings

In Study 1, I conducted a systematic literature review and analyzed the data using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Based on the frequency counts of different aspects of each of the 25 articles chosen for inclusion, I noticed a heavy emphasis on qualitative methods, and that the mixed methods studies predominately utilized Likert-scale style questions for the quantitative data. I also identified a slight increase in literature relating to the preparation of culturally responsive preservice teachers in 2013, which is when the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) changed their standards to an increased emphasis on diversity. Notably, although 22

different journals published these 25 articles, ten of the journals were dedicated to cultural and linguistic diversity or language development.

Four main themes emerged from the analysis of the first and second cycle coding of each article. Three of the themes pertained to essential components of PSTs' preparation to work with CLD students, including experiences engaging with CLD students, coursework emphasizing culture and strategies to work with CLD students, and opportunities to reflect and discuss cultural competence. These three aspects should be incorporated throughout the EPP, and teacher educators should explicitly help PSTs make connections between the theoretical components of cultural competence and its application. Although less prevalent in the literature, I also identified an important fourth theme, which acknowledged the different perspectives of White, monolingual PSTs and their peers with other cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Because each teacher candidate enters the program with varying levels of cultural competence and understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy, teacher educators are challenged with meeting each PST at their current level of understanding and moving them toward deeper comprehension.

Summary of Study 2 Findings

In the second study, I identified five main themes from the PSTs' reflections: (a) Experiences – Early and Often; (b) Getting Around Language Barriers; (c) Creating a Culturally Responsive Classroom Environment; (d) Same Preparation – Different Perceptions; and (e) Middle School Woes. The PSTs described the numerous opportunities they had to interact with students and peers from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds throughout their EPP. In general, they attributed much of their

feelings of preparedness to these interfaces, as they were able to apply what they learned in their coursework to realistic situations they will encounter as a classroom teacher. Although the positive remarks about these experiences outweighed the negative ones, some of the PSTs also described uncomfortable and discouraging instances, most of which stemmed from demeaning actions of their cooperating teachers toward CLD students. Additionally, a few of the participants noted they did not feel their cooperating teacher modeled applicable strategies for working with ELLs because the teacher was able to speak the students' language but these PSTs were not.

Although some of the conversation centered on the participants' lack of second language acquisition, the PSTs mostly focused their discussion by describing several specific strategies they learned to help overcome language barriers either from their coursework or field experiences. Most of the future teachers expressed some hesitancy in their ability to meet the needs of linguistically diverse students but seemed up to the challenge. One PST, however, described her extreme reluctance to teach ELLs because she believed she would not be able to help them without speaking their language.

Regarding the creation of a culturally responsive classroom, several of the PSTs were particularly excited about the opportunity to work with and learn from CLD students. They described their visions of a respectful community of learners openly discussing their culture and freely sharing their points of view. The PSTs admitted they were uncertain about how to go about creating such an environment and how to balance their desired classroom community without overstepping their boundaries as a teacher.

In another theme that arose, I noted important differences between the two focus groups, one of which was predominately White, and one of which was predominately

Hispanic. Notably, in the predominately-White group, the Non-White participants were extremely quiet and rarely commented, yet one of the Indian PSTs shared extensive insight via email after the focus group. Conversely, in the predominately-Hispanic group, a White PST dominated the conversation. The two distinct groups also emphasized different components of working with CLD students. The predominately-Hispanic group, as well as the Indian student in her email, emphasized the extreme benefit of a particular field experience, in which the PSTs tutored in an after school program that served mostly Black and Hispanic students who were poor. This particular experience was not mentioned in the predominately-White group. In the same regard, the predominately-White group discussed at length their uncertainties at addressing the taboo nature of culture and race in their classroom without offending parents or administration. These types of comments were not mentioned at all in the focus group with mostly Hispanic participants.

In the final theme, participants from both groups revealed their frustration with some of the aspects of their preparation to work specifically with middle school students. They perceived their Grade 4 through Grade 8 (Grades 4-8) courses as focusing more on the elementary side of the grade band than on the middle school grades. They also felt the PSTs who participated in elementary courses had even more profound opportunities to interact with students and were allowed more opportunities to reflect on their experiences and perceptions with one another.

Summary of Study 3 Findings

In Study 3, I categorized the novice teachers' interview responses into five main themes: (a) Understanding of Culture; (b) Teacher Culture; (c) Preparation Reflections;

(d) Lessons from Experience; and (e) Perceived Program Deficits. In the first theme, I noticed that although most of the participants were able to define culture, they had much more difficulty describing their own culture. The exception to this generalization was the sole Black participant, who was able to articulate clearly numerous factors that make up her culture. Concerning their interactions with their CLD students, one of the novice teachers claimed not to have any biases, whereas the others were able to identify one or more of their specific predispositions, as well as how they try to control them. However, some of the participants may not have been fully aware of their deficit view of their CLD students. One novice teacher, in particular, consistently referred to ELLs and students with a variety of backgrounds as being “not from around here.” Aside from these negative references, several of the novice teachers recognized the importance of allowing students to maintain their self-identity while still helping prepare them for life.

The second main theme that emerged from the novice teachers’ responses pertained to a culture of educators. Although one participant said he and his coworkers intentionally do not ask one another about their backgrounds, the others said they enjoyed learning about their peers’ culture and life. All five participants described specific instances in which they were able to obtain a different perspective on working with a CLD student by conversing with a coworker with different experiences. Unfortunately, two of the novice teachers seemed to push responsibility of language development on to other teachers who specialize in ELL support.

Concerning their preparation, several participants were able to provide examples of strategies they learned in their EPP to help their linguistically diverse students be successful that they now use regularly with their ELLs. However, the novice teachers

were less clear on what they learned to support their culturally diverse students, and some participants were not certain they learned anything in particular. Many of the participants described a “textbook” education from their coursework, which they were not always able to apply to actual situations in the classroom.

Every participant claimed the most effective component of their preparation to work with CLD students was the numerous opportunities they had to engage with students in actual classrooms. They described a variety of campuses with a wide range of demographics, which prepared them for any school they might work for in the future. One of the novice teachers noted an “eye opening” experience at one of the campuses that would not allow their students to speak Spanish. The participants appreciated the collaborative conversations they had with their peers throughout these experiences to discuss their interactions, both positive and negative.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Based on the results of this study, educator preparation programs (EPPs) and teacher educators might consider reevaluating their program requirements and practices. EPPs must incorporate multiple opportunities for preservice teachers (PSTs) to interact with CLD students in a variety of educational settings. Teacher educators might also pursue chances for PSTs to engage in conversations with peers who are from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds from their own. In doing so, PSTs are able to build relationships and overcome stereotypes in a more relaxed setting than in their clinical experiences.

All of these experiences should be prefaced and followed up with discussions or written reflections to allow PSTs to process through their experiences and to consider

their own feelings and biases (Howell & Arrington, 2008). Additionally, teacher educators should provide significant opportunities for students to engage in conversations throughout their coursework. PSTs need to have a clear understanding of their own culture and the influence it has on their daily life. Furthermore, all PSTs should be challenged to consider points of view that may conflict with their personal views by engaging in group discussions and reflections.

EPPs and teacher educators must also remain cognizant of all PSTs, including PSTs from traditionally marginalized groups. Although these PSTs may have higher cultural competence than their White, monolingual peers, teacher educators cannot assume they are familiar with culturally responsive practices. Teacher educators should be mindful of all PSTs' engagements in class discussions, so that everyone's voice is heard and valued.

Recommendations for Future Research

With the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation's (CAEP) push for EPPs to recruit more culturally and linguistically diverse PSTs, more research will be needed to evaluate the effect of a diverse pool of teacher candidates on programs' effectiveness of preparing culturally responsive educators. Additionally, because many researchers (i.e., Assaf, Garza, & Battle, 2010; Brock, Case, & Taylor, 2013; Gainer & Larrotta, 2010; Key & Trent, 2013) have recommended components of cultural competence be incorporated throughout EPPs, researchers might also study this transition. Through this integration, more teacher educators will be responsible for preparing culturally responsive teachers, even though they may not all be comfortable or familiar with these practices themselves.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire for Preservice Teacher Participants

The purpose of this questionnaire is for you to provide background information about yourself and some initial thoughts about your educator preparation program. Culturally diverse students have been defined as students of various races and ethnicities who have specific “values, traditions, social and political relationships, and worldview” (Nieto, 1992, p. 129). Please complete this questionnaire.

1. Gender: ____Female ____Male ____Prefer not to answer
2. Age: ____Under 21 ____21-24 ____25-29 ____30-34 ____35-39
____Over 40
3. What teaching certification are you pursuing? (grade band/content)
4. How do you describe your race?
5. How do you describe your ethnicity?
6. Do you speak any languages other than English? ____Yes ____No
If Yes, what language(s) other than English?
7. On a scale of 1-4, outside of teaching, how regularly do you interact with people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds from your own? (1 = minimal; 4 = I go out of my way to interact with people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds)
8. On a scale of 1-4, how comfortable did you feel with the idea of teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students prior to enrolling in this educator preparation program? (1 = Not comfortable at all; 4 = completely comfortable)
9. On a scale of 1-4, how linguistically diverse are the students you work with in your student teaching placement? (1 = I currently work with no English Language Learners; 4 = All of my current students are English Language Learners)

10. On a scale of 1-4, how culturally diverse are the students you work with in your student teaching placement? (1 = All of the students in my class are the same race/ethnicity; 4 = I have a wide variety of races/ethnicities represented in my class)
11. On a scale of 1-4, how well do you feel your educator preparation program has prepared you to work with English Language Learners students? (1 = My educator preparation program as not prepared me at all to work with English Language Learners students; 4 = My educator preparation program has prepared me completely)
12. On a scale of 1-4, how effective do you feel your educator preparation program has prepared you to work with culturally diverse students? (1 = My educator preparation program as not prepared me at all to work with culturally diverse students; 4 = My educator preparation program has prepared me completely)

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire for Novice Teacher Participants

The purpose of this questionnaire is for you to provide background information about yourself and some initial thoughts about your educator preparation program. Culturally diverse students have been defined as students of various races and ethnicities who have specific “values, traditions, social and political relationships, and worldview” (Nieto, 1992, p. 129). Please complete this questionnaire.

1. Gender: ____Female ____Male ____Prefer not to answer
2. Age: ____Under 21 ____21-24 ____25-29 ____30-34 ____35-39
____Over 40
3. What teaching certification do you have? (grade band/content)
4. How do you describe your race?
5. How do you describe your ethnicity?
6. Do you speak any languages other than English? ____Yes ____No
If Yes, what language(s) other than English?
7. On a scale of 1-4, outside of teaching, how regularly do you interact with people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds from your own? (1 = minimal; 4 = I go out of my way to interact with people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds)
8. On a scale of 1-4, how comfortable did you feel with the idea of teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students prior to enrolling in this educator preparation program? (1 = Not comfortable at all; 4 = completely comfortable)
9. On a scale of 1-4, how linguistically diverse are the students you work with in your student teaching placement? (1 = I currently work with no English Language Learners; 4 = All of my current students are English Language Learners)

10. On a scale of 1-4, how culturally diverse are the students you work with in your student teaching placement? (1 = All of the students in my class are the same race/ethnicity; 4 = I have a wide variety of races/ethnicities represented in my class)
11. On a scale of 1-4, how well do you feel your educator preparation program has prepared you to work with English Language Learners students? (1 = My educator preparation program as not prepared me at all to work with English Language Learners students; 4 = My educator preparation program has prepared me completely)
12. On a scale of 1-4, how effective do you feel your educator preparation program has prepared you to work with culturally diverse students? (1 = My educator preparation program as not prepared me at all to work with culturally diverse students; 4 = My educator preparation program has prepared me completely)

APPENDIX C

Focus Group Questions

1. How would you define culture?
2. How would you describe your own culture?
3. Personally and professionally speaking, describe your interactions with people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds from your own.
 - a. How have these interactions shaped your perspective of culturally and linguistically diverse students?
4. How has your educator preparation program prepared you to work with culturally and linguistically diverse students?
 - a. How has your coursework prepared you?
 - b. How have your clinical experiences prepared you?
 - c. What component(s) has been most beneficial in your preparation?
5. What strategies have you learned to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of your linguistically diverse students?
 - a. What strategies have you learned to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of your culturally diverse students?
6. What about working with culturally and linguistically diverse students most excites you?
 - a. What most worries you?
7. What, if anything, do you feel has been missing in regards to your preparation in working with culturally and linguistically diverse students?

APPENDIX D

Interview Questions

1. How would you define culture?
2. How would you describe your own culture?
3. Personally and professionally speaking, describe your interactions with people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds from your own.
 - a. How have these interactions shaped your perspective of culturally and linguistically diverse students?
4. How did your educator preparation program prepared you to work with culturally and linguistically diverse students?
 - a. How did your coursework prepare you?
 - b. How did your clinical experiences prepare you?
 - c. What component(s) of your preparation were most beneficial?
5. What strategies did you learn in your preparation program to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of your linguistically diverse students?
 - a. What strategies did you learn to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of your culturally diverse students?
6. What about working with culturally and linguistically diverse students do you enjoy the most?
 - a. What about working with CLD students do you struggle with the most?
7. What, if anything, do you feel was missing in regards to your preparation in working with culturally and linguistically diverse students?

APPENDIX E



Institutional Review Board
 Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
 1831 University Ave, Suite 303, Huntsville, TX 77341-2448
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DATE: January 28, 2018

TO: Jessica Keen [Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Rebecca Bustamante]

FROM: Sam Houston State University (SHSU) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: *Teacher Preparation for Cultural and Linguistic Diversity: Perceptions of a University-Based Educator Preparation Program [T/D]*

PROTOCOL #: 2018-01-37671

SUBMISSION TYPE: INITIAL REVIEW

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS

DECISION DATE: January 28, 2018

EXEMPT REVIEW CATEGORY 2—research involving the use of survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Thank you for your submission of Initial Review materials for this project. The Sam Houston State University (SHSU) IRB has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records.

*** What should investigators do when considering changes to an exempt study that could make it nonexempt?**

It is the PI's responsibility to consult with the IRB whenever questions arise about whether planned changes to an exempt study might make that study nonexempt human subjects research. In this case, please make available sufficient information to the IRB so it can make a correct determination.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB Office at 936-294-4875 or irb@shsu.edu. Please include your project title and protocol number in all correspondence with this committee.

Sincerely,
 Donna Desforges
 IRB Chair, PHSC

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Sam Houston State University IRB's records

VITA

Jessica J. Keen

Educational history

Doctorate of Education – Educational Leadership, August 2018

Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX

Dissertation: Teacher preparation for Cultural and linguistic diversity: Perceptions of a university-based educator preparation program

Master of Art in Teaching, December 2009

University of Houston-Downtown, Houston, TX

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Southwestern University, Georgetown, TX

Professional Licensure and Certifications

Classroom Teacher, Mathematics/Science, Grades 4-8

Classroom Teacher, Mathematics, Grades 8-12

English as a Second Language Supplemental, Grades 4-12

Publication

Keen, J. J., & Bustamante, R. M. (2017). Preparing for diversity: Program Evaluation of an Accredited Teacher Certification Program in Texas. *The Texas Forum of Teacher Education*, 7, 12-20.

Presentations

Keen, J. J. (2016, September). Differences in Commitment to Adapting Instruction for Diverse Students by School Level. Paper presented at the graduate research exchange of the Texas Council of Professors of Educational Administration (TCPEA), Houston, TX.

Keen, J. J., & Rankin, L. L. (2016, June). Let's be smart about this. Invited presentation for the annual conference for the Advancement of Mathematics Teaching, San Antonio, TX.

Honors and Awards

Dr. Jimmy N. Merchant Scholarship Recipient, Sam Houston State University, 2017

Graduate Studies Scholarship Recipient, Sam Houston State University, 2017

Dean's List, Southwestern University, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005

Brown Scholar, Southwestern University, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005