

St. John's University

St. John's Scholar

Theses and Dissertations

2024

**CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS TRAINING IN TEACHER
PREPARATION PROGRAMS: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY**

Loraine Keriece Richardson McCray

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholar.stjohns.edu/theses_dissertations



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS TRAINING IN TEACHER PREPARATION
PROGRAMS: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

to the faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

of

THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

at

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

New York

by

Loraine Keriece Richardson McCray

Date Submitted: November 3, 2023

Date Approved: January 31, 2024

Loraine Keriece Richardson McCray

Ceceilia Parnter, Ph.D.

© Copyright by Loraine Keriece Richardson McCray 2024
All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS TRAINING IN TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY

Loraine Keriece Richardson McCray

The American education system has experienced a change in the racial and ethnic background of the student population nationally and in the Long Island, New York region. Yet, the teaching population remains mostly white and female. Teacher preparation programs train teachers in content, pedagogy, and adolescent development. During the training, teachers need to develop their ability to connect and understand their students' cultural and racial norms that may not exist in their program of study. This is no fault of the teacher or program but may be an inherent piece missing from the systems established to credential preservice educators. With the cultural landscape of America changing over the past 20-30 decades, i.e., "The Browning of America," the cultural norms of the students and their families may not reflect the same ideals of the institution. This qualitative case study aims to explore the teacher preparation program at a university in Long Island, New York. It examines the program requirements and how it develops teachers during their preservice studies and early years as educators serving students of color.

This study examines whether their experiences in the program impacted their ability to reach and teach students with different cultural backgrounds. Participants of this study consist of preservice teachers and teachers with less than five years of teaching

experience. Two research questions are framed as the focus of this case study: How do preservice and in-service teachers perceive culturally relevant pedagogy was addressed in the curriculum of university-based teacher preparation programs? How do preservice teacher preparation program students express their knowledge about culturally relevant pedagogy and bring it to their practice in the classroom?

DEDICATION

Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, “Do not imagine that you in the king’s palace can escape any more than all the Jews. 14 For if you remain silent at this time, liberation and rescue will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father’s house will perish [since you did not help when you had the chance]. And who knows whether you have attained royalty for such a time as this [and for this purpose]?” Esther 4: 13-14

I am Loraine Keriece Richardson McCray, the daughter of Delilah, the daughter of Josephine, the daughter of Cecile, the daughter of Felice. I dedicate this paper to the ancestors who lived, fought, and survived, making it possible for me to be who I am. This work is dedicated to the memory of #MyMommie Delilah Elizabeth Dupre and her sacrifices to raise her girls the best way she knew how #TheOneAndOnlyDiva – I truly love and miss you every day. I dedicate this work to my father, William Preston Richardson, Lloyd, who has always been proud of me and supports me in everything I do. I owe my existence and tenacity to be all I can be to you both.

To my children, my best friends from birth, #MySunAndMoon #MyMoo Lea Keriece McCray and #MyMook Leo Christopher McCray, I am inspired to be the best woman, mother, and educator because of you both. You made it possible for me to have the best and most important job in the world, to be a mother. That is the job I loved the most and the work I am most proud of.

To my entire family, aunts, uncles, and cousins in New York, NOLA, St. Maarten, and abroad, I dedicate this to you all. Your love and support have meant the world to me. My sisters, Nicole Deshone & Josmar Kysha, Brother in Love Joseph, Niece and my first Baby Shona Javon, Niece NiRey Kimani, Nephew Josmar Ovie, and the Greats – Calogero Eric, Josephina Laraine and the newest addition, Joji. This includes my sisters Danyette, Lloydia, and Evelyn (Lydia Li) and my brothers Brandon, Travis, and

D'Andre. We are FAMILY always. To my DrCousin Derek Hall – my day one – from kindergarten till now.

I want to thank my Village – My Sorors of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. In particular, for unwavering support, encouragement, and guidance, my Spec Jessica Raphael, La Shawn Jackson, Dr. Gretchen Rodney, Dr. Elizabeth Alexis, Andrea De Loney, Charlotte Taylor, Spec Aleyiah Skelton (and my GodSon Corey J.), and Dr. Carol Grant. Thank you to my longtime besties Charmaine Fraser, Marie 'Toufi' Augustin, Dr. Dahlia Thorpe, Pamela Walker Pinckney, and Shymeen Waite Lewis. My Bellport Middle School ENL Team, National Coalition of 100 Black Women Suffolk County Chapter, Black Girls Run! Long Island, GirlTrek Eastern Long Island Crew, my Auntie Muzette, and Auntie Michelle, thank you for your love and prayers.

To my students – past, present, and future – thank you for helping me become a great teacher. I learned from you far more than you learned from me. I am forever grateful for the twenty-six years I have been trusted to be your classroom leader and facilitator.

And to the God of many names, Yemaya, Spirit, Oshun, Jesus, Allah, Universe, Creator – this process has brought me to a closer realization of who you are to me – complex, ever-changing, ever faithful, and protecting me and mine always. I am grateful beyond what words could ever express. I am different, changed, and daily becoming the best version of myself.

To my mentor – the dedication you showed to me throughout this process, Dr. Ceceilia Parnter, you guided me gently and sternly through this process. I would not have finished this process without your encouragement and guidance. Thank you, Dr.

Parther, for your sacrifice to see me to the finish line. I could never, ever thank you and my committee members, Dr. Anthony Annunziato and Dr. Joan Birringer-Haig, enough. I am eternally grateful for your willingness to be my team and share with me constructive criticism and support and be available even on short notice. Thank You.

#Thankful #Grateful #Blessed #ShoutOuts #ThankGodForJesus

#MySonAndMoon #LeaAndLeo #TheMcCrayKids #MyBonusBaby #Jocelyn #MyNiece

#Jesire #MyDrCousinDerek #BigSisterDrGretchenCottonRodney

#FavoredAndBlessedToBeDelilahAndLloydDaughter #SistersKyshaNicole #Sorors

#Friends #Family #Students # Colleagues #DoctoralJourneyEnded

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| DEDICATION | ii |
| LIST OF TABLES | ix |
| LIST OF FIGURES | x |
| CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| Purpose of the Study | 2 |
| Theoretical Framework | 4 |
| Significance of the Study | 7 |
| Connection to Social Justice/Vincentian Mission | 13 |
| Research Questions | 14 |
| Definition of Terms | 14 |
| CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE | 17 |
| Theoretical Framework | 17 |
| Literature Review | 18 |
| Implementing and Embedding Culturally Responsive Pedagogy | 18 |
| Weinstein | 18 |
| Lenski | 19 |
| The Conditions of Education 2020 | 21 |
| Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in Research | 21 |
| Sleeter | 21 |
| Gay | 22 |
| Ladson-Billings | 23 |
| Perceptions of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy | 25 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Smolen..... | 25 |
| Fiarman..... | 26 |
| Gorski | 27 |
| Teacher Preparation Programs Governance | 29 |
| Sanders | 29 |
| Terrill..... | 30 |
| Sleeter | 31 |
| Conclusion..... | 31 |
| CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY | 33 |
| Research Design..... | 33 |
| Research Questions | 34 |
| Setting..... | 34 |
| Participants | 36 |
| Data Collection Procedures..... | 36 |
| Individual Interviews..... | 36 |
| Interview Questions..... | 37 |
| Content Analysis | 39 |
| Trustworthiness | 39 |
| Research Ethics | 40 |
| Data Analysis Approach..... | 41 |
| Researcher Role..... | 41 |
| Conclusion..... | 43 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| CHAPTER 4 RESULTS | 45 |
| Findings | 48 |
| Theme 1 Concern for Equity | 48 |
| Theme 2 Diversity in Curriculum..... | 51 |
| Theme 3 Building Relationships | 54 |
| Theme 4 Exposure to Other Cultures | 57 |
| Conclusion..... | 60 |
| CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION..... | 61 |
| Implications of Findings..... | 63 |
| Relationship to Prior Research | 64 |
| Limitations of the Study | 65 |
| Recommendations for Future Practice | 66 |
| Recommendations for Future Research | 67 |
| Conclusions | 68 |
| Appendix A Informed Consent..... | 70 |
| Appendix B Individual Interview Protocol..... | 72 |
| Appendix C Document Analysis Protocol..... | 74 |
| Appendix D Interview Questions..... | 75 |
| Appendix E Interviews | 76 |
| Appendix F Interview Protocol..... | 101 |
| Appendix G NYSED and Office of the Attorney General Memo in DEI in K-12 Education | 102 |

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Appendix H Resources..... | 127 |
| REFERENCES | 128 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|--|----|
| Table 1 Coding Themes and Subthemes..... | 47 |
|--|----|

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|---|---|
| Figure 1 Cultural Representation of Teachers and Students in Long Island Schools..... | 8 |
| Figure 2 Students Per Teacher of the same Race in Long Island Schools, 2017..... | 9 |

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, Long Island, New York, has experienced a surge in racial and ethnic diversity, a national trend that seems to be rapidly accelerating. “Throughout the United States, the student body is becoming increasingly diverse. Nationally, 2014 was the first year that students in K-12 education are “majority-minority,” meaning that children of color are now more than 50% of the student population” (Hofstra, 2019). The demographic change has left school systems, once homogenous populations, to experience a substantial shift in the students and communities they serve. To foster academic success, schools have historically focused on equitable systems; these center on the middle class. Historically, teaching has long been dominated by White women. Their roles as teachers were historically a pathway to social mobility in an environment not dominated by patriarchal demand. While this represented a level of liberation for this population, this history has resulted in centering the White student and teacher experience as the norm, modeling assessments, curricular decisions, linguistic traditions, discipline, and other concerns.

Now that diverse populations represent a critical mass of students in K-12 education, there is a growing understanding of the need to fully support students from all backgrounds. Training in culturally relevant pedagogy is a highly referenced framework for supporting preservice and new teachers as they develop as educators. While much has been made of the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom, research indicates that teachers with exposure, cultural reflection, and a desire for advocacy and transformation can positively impact diverse classrooms. These teachers are also more likely to be retained in a study presented by Sleeter (2001) preservice teachers with cross-

cultural training projects that made “a positive impact on their attitudes, knowledge, and employability in Native as well as non-Native schools. Despite understanding this, federal, state, and accrediting bodies offer little directives that measure the introduction, understanding, or use of culturally relevant pedagogies in teaching training programs. This presents a risk for students, especially those not exposed to the highly diverse settings they will likely find themselves working in. There is a need to understand how teacher education implements elements of culturally relevant pedagogy, how preservice teachers understand the information in class and the field, and how faculty and recent alumni recall and use culturally relevant pedagogy in their practice.

Students enrolled in a teacher preparation program not connected to a School of education have different expectations regarding learning content and obtaining the requirements for licensure and certification. These programs are understandably not as robust in their offerings of classes to students because of how the program impacts their course of study and their time spent at the university. The embedded opportunities offered to students enrolled in a School of Education differ from those of a university that does not have one.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the impact of culturally responsive training for the preservice and the new in-field teacher. The current research compared the existing teacher training programs at the postsecondary level and their effectiveness. This study focused on the current context of a teacher preparation program that is not connected to a School of Education and the cultural responsiveness training in culturally responsive pedagogy that is provided to the participants and how that affects their perception and

ability to foster a culturally sensitive pedagogy with students of varied cultural backgrounds. Four universities on Long Island have a School of Education, and the other institutions do not. Many offer a teacher preparation program towards the end of the students' Bachelor courses that allows students to finish their studies and then complete the requirements for New York State teaching certification. The information gathered in this study will foster the conversation and awareness of what being a culturally responsive teacher looks like and highlight the current teacher preparation program not connected to a School of Education curriculum model's impact on developing preservice teachers' cultural sensitivity and educational pedagogy.

Cultural Competence for Educators can increase the sensitivity needed to deal with the changing landscape of needs expressed and addressed in the expanding modern culture of the United States, specifically Long Island, New York. All students deserve to have the same rigor as students, irrespective of race, ethnicity, or nationality. All children do not enjoy these benefits; "classroom studies document the fact that underserved English learners, poor students, and students of color routinely receive less instruction in higher order skills development than other students (Darling-Hammond, 2001)." "Have high expectations and deliver rigorous instruction for all students regardless of identity markers, including race, gender, sexual orientation, language, ability, and economic background" (NYSED CRT, 2018).

The shifting demographic and cultural background of the Long Island population causes a challenge to the current teaching staff, which is largely white and female. At the same time, the demographics of Long Island have shifted dramatically. The teacher preparation program, which is the focus of this case study, includes integrating diversity

into the mission of their professional education program and teacher education and educational leadership programs. This training is to be infused into the academic and clinical experience of the preservice teacher or educator. The program further promises to prepare teacher candidates with an understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments. The study will determine how this is achieved and the effect on the preservice teacher.

Theoretical Framework

The study is grounded in culturally relevant pedagogy, which is the framework guiding this study. Culturally relevant pedagogy operationalizes critical race theory (Ladson-Billings, 1995) in the classroom. Culturally relevant pedagogy has long been studied since the post-school integration in the mid-1970s, considered a mediating factor positively impacting the success of diverse student populations. Despite this awareness, racial and ethnic disparity has been allowed to permeate the fabric of education. Culturally relevant pedagogy is based on three criteria: “(a) Students must experience academic success; (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order” (Ladson-Billings, 1995). When integration took place, many schools became integrated into the student population, whether by force or choice; students left the schools and neighborhoods they lived in and were bused to predominately white neighborhoods. This led to school closings and layoffs for the faculty at institutions in the Black community. The student population changed, but the staffing did not. The laws were changed, and the policies were changed, but the attitudes

were not changed. Many in the Black community felt that the separation in education was unequal but that integration was not the only feasible solution to this issue.

Culturally relevant pedagogy emerged in 1990 as a new and somewhat unique position in how teachers could deliver content to students in a way that informed them and was sensitive to their diverse cultural communities (Ladson-Billing, 1995). When cultural norms from different communities co-exist in one space, the question is whose cultural background will dominate and set the tone of that space. In schools, the overwhelming majority of white male and female culture dominates as they are in the seat as the majority rule makers, curriculum writers, administrators, lawmakers, and teachers. The original idea of public education was not designed for diverse populations. We know from historical records that public education that would support the general welfare was designed for white, male landowners, not for women, white or otherwise, and certainly not for anyone else. The limited scope of public education only changed through protest and legislation. We now stand at the precipice of a new revolution – a cultural revolution affecting the entire country of the United States, the ‘Browning of the World’ as described in Biology 101 classes many years ago. Still, this research will focus on ‘The Browning of Long Island’ and how it has affected, or in some cases may not, the teaching teachers of Long Island, New York.

The theory of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) is teaching that inspires students in multiple ways. Those ways can be through their intellect, social and emotional self, and political/social understanding by having sensitivity to the students’ cultural norms with respectful and genuine insight into the cultural context of the students (Ladson-Billings, 2009). “Culturally responsive teaching (CRT)... is a systematic

approach...an educator's ability to recognize students' cultural displays of learning and meaning making and respond positively and constructively with teaching moves that use cultural knowledge as a scaffold to connect what the student knows to new concepts and content to promote effective information processing.' (Hammond 2015). When one has no knowledge or understanding of another race's cultural norms and traditions, there can be a belief that those differences could be viewed as deficiencies. Understanding the cultural differences and learning how to use those major or minor differences to help inform how the curriculum is shared with the students can greatly impact how the student views themselves in the educational community and how that student receives the instruction.

Culturally responsive pedagogy emerged in the early 1970s because of concerns stemming from the racial and ethnic inequities in education and was apparent in learning outcomes for students of color. Suppose racially marginalized students are to be taught effectively. In that case, teachers "must learn wherein their cultural difference lies and...capitalize upon them as a resource, rather than ...disregarding the differences... thereby denigrating...the students" (Gay, 2018). In this process, educators, both preservice and currently teaching, "need to analyze their cultural attitudes, assumptions, mechanisms, rules and regulations that have made it difficult for them to teach these students successfully." (Gay, 2018) The current change in population, as seen in the following chart, outlines the dramatic changes in the population on Long Island that create a need for teacher preparation programs to train and equip teachers to be more effective educators for students of color. Figure 1 shows the cultural breakdown by percentage of teachers and students in the represented ethnic and racial groups in Long

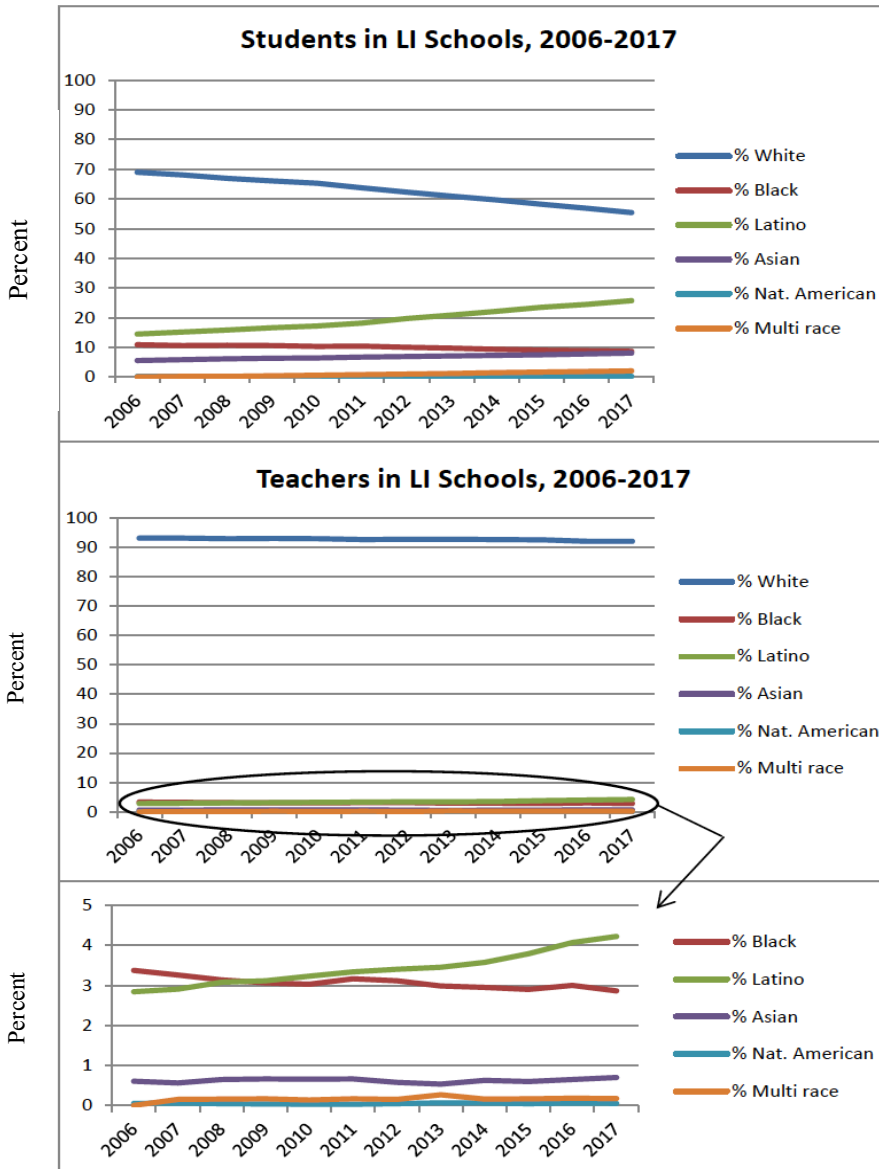
Island. “On average, LI’s 642 schools have 678 students, who are 55% White, 9% Black, 26% Latinx, 8% Asian, 0.2% Native American, and 2% Multiracial. At these 642 schools, there is an average of 55 teachers per school, of which 92% are White, 3% are Black, 4% are Latinx, 1% are Asian, 0.05% are Native American, and 0.2% identify as Multiracial” (Hofstra, 2019).

Significance of the Study

Culturally relevant pedagogy is a necessity in and is needed at varying levels in different communities, and training may not even exist in certain teacher preparation programs. The nation has struggled to meet the needs of diverse children and families for decades. The system of biases and inequity is embedded in the history, culture, government policies, and various institutions. The New York State Education Department (NYSED) understands this system of inequity that sometimes gives an advantage to certain student groups based on gender, skin color, language background, and other characteristics. They acknowledged that changes to the current situation cannot be accomplished without incorporating equity and inclusion into the curriculum. “In January 2018, the New York State Board of Regents directed the Office of P-12 Education and Higher Education to convene a panel of experts, engage with stakeholders, and develop from the ground up a framework for culturally responsive-sustaining education.”

Figure 1

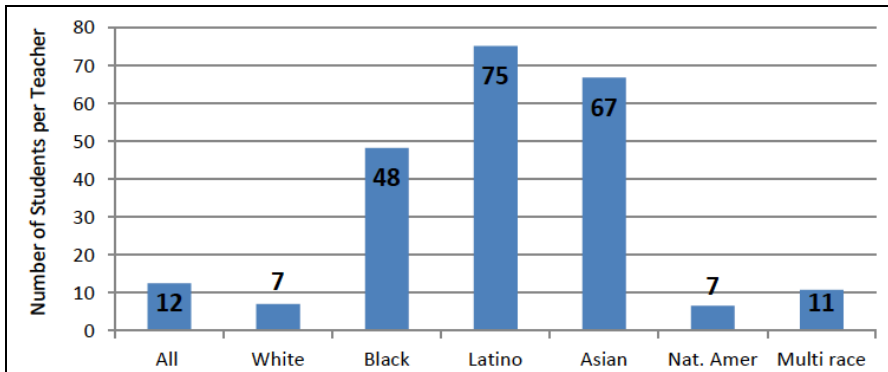
Cultural Representation of Teachers and Students in Long Island Schools



Source. Hoftra, 2019

Figure 2

Students Per Teacher of the Same Race in Long Island Schools, 2017



Source. Hoftra, 2019

White teachers comprised 92% of the Long Island teaching force in 2017, which remained constant since 2006. Because of this, the student-teacher ratio is favorable towards White students. They are overrepresented in the teaching faculty, and therefore, the overwhelming culture in Long Island schools is white-dominated. Figure 2 shows the student-teacher ratio of students per teacher of the same race in Long Island schools in 2017. In 2017, every seven white students had a white teacher.

Conversely, every 48 Black students had one Black teacher, and every 75 Latino students had one Latino teacher. Generally, it is better to have fewer students per teacher. A diverse teaching force brings representation to the demographics of each district and can benefit all students when teachers of the same race teach them. This would also allow white students to benefit from having more interaction with teachers and authority figures of different racial backgrounds. This exposure would allow all races to engage and interact and could catalyze more culturally sensitive, empathetic students and teachers.

At a white Long Island Catholic school, a headmaster used what he described as an “African Way” to have a student say sorry and apologize to a teacher. The Daily News

reported that the student's English teacher confronted the student about working on the wrong assignment, ripped the assignment up, and walked the child to the headmaster's office, where the headmaster told the boy to get on his knees and say sorry. In a phone call with the mother, the headmaster revealed that he had learned this approach from a Nigerian father who said it was an "African Way" of apologizing. The student and his family are Haitian-American. When the mother asked how the two incidents were relatable, the headmaster could not explain. The headmaster made many cultural assumptions, and this incident has changed "the normally outgoing middle-schooler" into a "really reserved...humiliated, hurt, embarrassed, sad, and confused" 11-year-old based on his mother's description. The phone call left her with the impression that the headmaster thought the punishment was appropriate for her child because he's Black (Elsen-Rooney, Daily News). This is Long Island, not Africa, and more importantly, this family is not of an African or Nigerian cultural background, so the assumption that all Black people are a monolith and share one experience shows the reality that cultural responsiveness training and sensitivity is needed in Long Island schools as well in teacher training.

This single descriptive case study explored teacher candidates and preservice teachers' perceptions of using culturally responsive training practices in a teacher preparation program at a mid-size, regional comprehensive, public university in the Northeast United States.

Teachers trained in culturally responsive pedagogy help students learn more, grow socially and academically, be more confident and self-assured, and be more willing to participate in academic and extra-curricular activities (Gay, 2002). The current

requirement for certification in New York State lists seven items to be addressed but does not include any criteria for cultural competency training. In the absence of including cultural competency in teacher preparation programs, the New York State Education Department has instead created a culturally sustaining education framework that states, “The culturally responsive-sustaining (CR-S) framework is intended to help education stakeholders create student-centered learning environments that affirm cultural identities; foster positive academic outcomes; develop students’ abilities to connect across lines of difference; elevate historically marginalized voices; empower students as agents of social change; and contribute to individual student engagement, learning, growth, and achievement through the cultivation of critical thinking” (NYSED CRT, 6, 2018).

When culturally responsive pedagogy is present, students feel validated and heard, and their needs are being met on a much higher level. This document has been created for all stakeholders, including students, teachers, school leaders, district leaders, families and community members, higher education faculty and administrators, and education department policymakers. Still, there is no change to the state licensure process. The Teacher Preparation Programs, therefore, do not have the mandate to fulfill cultural competency training for preservice teachers. With no licensure requirements, once the student has completed the major coursework of their degree, observation hours, and student teaching, the students are ready to submit their application and proceed to take the required state tests to gain certification. The researcher understands that adding culturally relevant pedagogy training can impact students’ progress with an extra course of study time and possibly extra money to be spent on prolonged, unmandated

coursework. This would be a major factor in developing and including this training in the current teacher preparation programs statewide coursework.

In Ladson-Billings (1995), research was discussed concerning the implications of the lack of a diverse teaching staff and the impact on student academic success. Research has focused on culturally responsive teaching, teacher preparation programs, and professional development. Limited research has focused on evaluating and implementing teacher preparation programs and their effectiveness. Teacher preparation programs focusing on methodology produce teachers with a clear understanding of their content and emphasis on how to turn the information within their classroom (Guyton Wesche, 2005).

The implications of a homogenous teaching population impact future teachers and students. Teacher preparation programs are not attracting diverse teachers or preparing the next generation for this challenge. “Ninety-two percent of Long Island public-school teachers are white. In nearly two-thirds of Long Island schools, there are no Black teachers. In more than two-fifths of them, there are no Latino teachers. And most children grow up in segregated communities that divide along school district lines” (LI Herald, 2019). In May 2021, the New York State Education Department adopted a diversity, equity, and inclusion policy. This policy strongly expressed its expectation “that all school districts and institutions of higher education [would] develop and implement policies and practices that advance diversity, equity, and inclusion [‘DEI’] – and that they will implement such policies and practices with fidelity and urgency” (NYSED 2023). To meet the new DEI policies, school districts need to hire educators with training in culturally responsive teaching. Teacher preparation programs are responsible for

preparing preservice teachers to “create opportunities for all students to learn from multiple perspectives...and reflect the diverse groups that have contributed to the intellectual discourse...diverse perspectives build a safe and nurturing school community and improve academic achievement for all students” (NYSED 2023).

Preservice teachers can be inexperienced and come to the profession with stereotypical views (Sleeter, 2001). This is true of any person entering any profession. Teachers gaining experience can be caught off guard when facing diverse populations when they haven’t had any training or instruction in interacting with and understanding those diverse backgrounds. White preservice teachers can expect to have students from diverse cultures in their classrooms, but they may have little knowledge, understanding, or sensitivity to those cultures. Those stereotypical beliefs can contribute to the difference in versus deficiency attitude that can interfere with the students’ educational success in their classes.

Connection to Social Justice/Vincentian Mission

This future research will continue the work of St. John’s mission to bring equity and inclusion to education. Social justice tells us that we need to provide opportunities to provide a path to success for all students, no matter their socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, or nationality. By researching and understanding where teachers are learning how to engage and provide content in culturally sensitive ways, we can support or better prepare how the preservice teachers are taught these practices because we recognize from the present research that this practice is important for students. There is limited focus in the teacher preparation program on how to successfully reach, teach, and share content effectively with students from varying socio-economic, ethnic, and intellectual

landscapes or those with varying parental points of view. The New York State Education Department certification office has not included the necessity of culturally responsive pedagogy to be included in the criteria for accreditation. Yet, it has created a document outlining to all stakeholders the need for this kind of cultural competency for administrators, teachers, higher education personnel, parents, and students. The primary job of the educational system is to provide a fair and equitable educational environment where all students have the potential to succeed in life. Cultural relevant pedagogy is one way to ensure that equity is provided to all students. If teachers are not provided with explicit training in their teacher preparation program, we need to determine where they are learning it, where it is coming from, and if they use it in their classrooms.

Research Questions

The following research questions drive the study's purpose:

1. How do preservice and in-service teachers perceive culturally relevant pedagogy was addressed in the curriculum of university-based teacher preparation programs?
2. How do preservice teacher preparation program students express their knowledge about culturally relevant pedagogy and bring it to their practice in the classroom?

Definition of Terms

Several terms are important to this study. As such, for this study, the following terms are defined below based on the literature used for research.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. Culturally relevant pedagogy maintains that cultural practices, or traditions, within communities of color, can inspire teaching and learning to be made more relevant and connected to the community being served by adding the

students' cultural practices, linguistic diversity, and social-emotional and cognitive aspects. Communities of color have different cultural norms, language, and even body language that govern interactions. Understanding and knowing this information can help educators formulate lessons and affect how the content is delivered to the students. Genuine understanding, not through the eyes of stereotypical biases, can hinder the process of teaching and learning in the classroom (Paris, 2012).

Culturally Responsive Teaching. Culturally responsive teaching is an educator's capacity to recognize a student's culture and use that knowledge to connect with the students. It uses this information in creating lessons and scaffolding curriculum to make it sensitive to how students learn and process new concepts and content. The achievement gap is sometimes attributed to "a culture of poverty" or the belief that, in some communities, education is not important. The reality is that understanding the norms and issues faced within the community and how that affects the role of education. Once those issues are understood, the educator can craft their content and differentiate how the curriculum is presented to influence student success better (Hammond, 2014).

Implicit Bias. Implicit Bias is also described as unconscious bias where people of all backgrounds, races, and creeds show unconscious bias, or preference, to one another based on gender, sexual orientation, race, nationality, or any of the other aspects of identity. Most are known to favor their group or the group they identify with, while others claim they "don't see color" or have any biases against anyone. In some instances, some who are in the marginalized group may favor the perceived more culturally valued group. Unconscious bias is just that – unconscious – most aren't aware of their own biases. Without self-reflection and introspection, many will not realize how

these deep-seated beliefs influence their behavior or interactions with others. For educators, these unconscious biases can hinder providing true equity in their classrooms (Fiarman, 2016).

Preservice Teachers. A preservice teacher can be either an undergraduate or a graduate student pursuing their teaching certification licensure through their state's certification requirements being met through an approved preparation program at a university. These teachers must complete coursework in their major and then complete an array of criteria, including educational courses in methodology, clinical observations and student teaching a year of language, complete standardized tests, and a series of certificates in DASA – Dignity for All Students, Mandatory Reporting for Child Abuse and Neglect, Substance Abuse, Harassment, Bullying Prevention, etc., and fingerprinting. Certification requirements can be found on each state's education department website; for New York, it is the New York State Education Department.

Teacher Preparation Program. The Department of Education (ED) defines a teacher preparation program as a state-approved course of study, the completion of which signifies that an enrollee has met all the state's educational or training requirements for an initial credential to teach in a K-12 school.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This literature study lays the foundation of this case study. Culturally relevant pedagogy training in teacher preparation programs is needed for preservice teachers facing the changing demographics across the country and on Long Island. Culturally relevant pedagogy is included in teacher preparation programs at varying levels across the country, New York State, and here in Long Island and may not even exist in certain programs. We need to understand how, if at all, culturally relevant pedagogy is applied and the perceptions of that application for new and emerging teachers. This was done by conducting a case study focused on one teacher preparation program, using a questionnaire for demographic purposes to identify participants, an informed consent meeting, and a full interview session.

Theoretical Framework

The case study foundation is in culturally relevant pedagogy, the framework guiding this research. Culturally relevant pedagogy is an educational theory that expresses that there is a need for a focus in teacher preparation on preparing preservice teachers to educate students that represent various cultural backgrounds by “re-educating typical teacher candidates for the variety of student populations in U.S. public schools” (Ladson-Billings, 1995) in the classroom. Culturally relevant pedagogy has long been studied since the post-school integration in the mid-1970s, considered a mediating factor positively impacting the success of diverse student populations. Despite this awareness, the racial and ethnic disparity has been allowed to permeate the fabric of education. Culturally relevant pedagogy is based on three criteria: “(a) Students must experience academic success; (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and

(c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order” (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Literature Review

Guided by culturally relevant pedagogy, this literature review provides a comprehensive review of the landscape of culturally relevant pedagogy in research and practice. To organize the literature, an understanding of the impact of racism and discrimination in education is presented. The resulting structure presents research on culturally relevant pedagogy as a mitigating factor to the effects of race-based marginalization and an anti-racist, liberatory, transformative practice. As the research mentioned above is largely theoretical, the realities of implementing culturally relevant pedagogy programs are introduced, highlighting research on current examples of classroom and integrative field practices best practices for embedding culturally relevant pedagogy in curriculum, assessment, reflection, and artifact. The realities and challenges are examined, including financial, political, and curricular concerns. The literature review continues with a research-based understanding of the perceptions and state experience of culturally relevant pedagogy for students (in the classroom and field placements), faculty, and alums who are new teachers will also be reviewed.

Implementing and Embedding Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Weinstein

The increasing diversity of American classrooms juxtaposed with the lack of diversity of the teacher population can introduce issues and a clash of cultural backgrounds, leading to a possible lack of academic achievement and classroom and behavioral issues with misunderstood behaviors. A lack of competence in the cultural

background of the student population can provide obstacles to preservice and experienced teachers. Novice teachers often lack the experience necessary to maintain classroom management. A lack of understanding of cultural differences can lead to disruptions in the classroom, and academic progress can suffer. Definitions of behavior, values, and expectations of what is considered good behavior are all culturally influenced, and differences in that understanding can lead to conflicts between the student and teacher. Most teachers are of European descent and are generally used to passive and quiet class settings. In contrast, African American students are more accustomed to a more participatory class setting where they may speak out without permission, and the difference continues for Asian, Latino, Haitian, and Pacific Islander students.

As professors at Rutgers University, Weinstein et al. used their students' experiences as preservice and novice teachers to aid their research and stimulate discussion around the culturally responsive classroom management (CRCM) they developed. This management system has five components that are described as recognition of one's ethnocentrism through self-reflection, knowledge, and understanding of student cultural backgrounds, a broader understanding of the political, economic, and social context, the willingness of the teacher to use this information to inform their classroom management style and interactions with students and to have a personal commitment to building a culturally responsive classroom.

Lenski

Lenski et al. studied effective ways to address culture and cultural differences in the preparation of preservice teachers. The group included 28 preservice teachers, 26 females and two males. Before and during the ethnography, the preservice teachers were

given the steps in the ethnographic process, including learning about ethnography, conducting participation observation, making descriptive observations, analyzing the data, and writing the report. The data indicated that using ethnography as an observational tool helps preservice teachers become more aware of cultural differences. The data indicated that using ethnography as an observational tool helps preservice teachers become more aware of cultural differences.

The New York State Education Department produced a culturally responsive, sustaining education framework to aid all stakeholders in education in creating an environment that will encourage a student-centered approach to provide racial, linguistic, and culturally sensitive schools and classrooms. The New York State Education Department Culturally Responsive Sustaining Framework outlines that students will engage with a rigorous curriculum, including independent learning, which will develop all children's ability to relate to each other regardless of race, religion, and ethnicity. The main goal is to uplift the voice of the marginalized and encourage all stakeholders to be representatives of social change.

The document outlines culturally responsive sustaining guidelines for students, teachers, school leaders, district leaders, families, community members, higher education faculty, administrators, and education department policymakers. The guidelines were borne out of the documented struggle in the United States education system to provide an equitable educational experience for students of marginalized communities. The framework sets forth four principles that describe the features and elements of a quality education. Those four principles are a welcoming and affirming environment, high

expectations and rigorous instruction, inclusion curriculum and assessments, and ongoing professional learning.

The Conditions of Education 2020

The data in *The Conditions of Education* outlines the percentage of public elementary and secondary school teachers based on race/ethnicity, comparing 1999-2002 with 2017-2018. About 79 percent of teachers were white, only nine percent were Hispanic, and seven percent were African American. In the fall of 2017, there were 50.7 million students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools in the United States. Of that number, 24.1 million were White, 7.7 million were Black, 13.6 million were Hispanic, and 2 million were identified as bi-racial or multi-racial. Between the fall of 2000 and the fall of 2017, the percentage of White students decreased from 61 to 48 percent, and the number of White students decreased from 28.9 million to 24.1 million. Similarly, the percentage of Black students decreased from 17 to 15 percent, and the number of Black students decreased from 8.1 million to 7.7 million. In contrast, the percentage of Hispanic students increased from 16 to 27 percent during the same period while the teaching population stayed majority White, not reflecting the population changes across the country and in the Northeastern region and Long Island.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in Research

Sleeter

At the time of this research, Sleeter explained that over the 20 years prior, the attention brought to culturally relevant pedagogy was supplanted by the driving force of standardized testing, somewhat fueled by federal education policies like *Race for the Top* and *No Child Left Behind* and free market trade, business privatization and the focus on

individualism. Schools were in the same situation as a failing business – producing positive outcomes or facing closure. The emergence of charter schools is prevalent during this time in educational history.

The research provided focused on the reforms that were taking place and how these reforms were negatively impacting teachers' professional development and learning, as well as negating the possible and proven empowering of marginalized students and supporting equity in education for all students. Education reform has been largely color-blind in that the same curriculum is expected to be offered in the same way to all students, devoid of the cultural lens of the student's background. Small gains in the data for younger students do not translate to the upper grades; the gap between the races increases steadily over time.

Culturally responsive pedagogy is often limited to simple holidays, celebrations, language, and food displays. This simplistic view separates culture from academics and makes them seemingly disconnected. This phenomenon can be connected to the inequalities built into the system that perpetuates low performance and lack of resources at largely minority schools and success and more resources provided to students who attend predominately White schools.

Gay

Improving the success of ethnically diverse students by preparing preservice teachers in their teacher preparation programs equips them with the knowledge and skills necessary for the challenges of providing an equitable educational atmosphere for marginalized students who are underrepresented in the teaching staff and overwhelmingly attend underperforming schools where their academic achievement is not ideal. Based on

this teaching approach, the pieces provided are based on theory, practical experience, research, and personal stories of educators who collaborated with underperforming Black, Asian, Native American, and Latino students.

The disproportionate lack of success seen in marginalized communities and students of color must be approached from a different pathway. Traditional offerings of content and curriculum do not always translate to their academic success. Educators need to learn how to use and capitalize on the knowledge of the cultural background of the students and include it in their curriculum plans and instructional approaches. Culturally responsive educators will learn and understand how to use the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum that they must present to their students to help plan and design lessons that complement the students' cultural norms and contextualize social issues within the content. The communication styles present in the student's culture can influence and help the teacher plan lessons that focus on the student's strengths instead of what the student is deficient in.

Ladson-Billings

The preservice teacher of this century is facing a rapidly changing student population. The demographics of the United States have changed from predominately White to predominately non-White, while the teachers' demographic has remained predominantly White. The necessity to 're-educate' the preservice teacher candidate to be prepared for various student backgrounds is more of a priority now than ever. The purpose of this article was to outline the pedagogical practices of eight educators of African American students and discuss their practice of using culturally relevant pedagogy in their classroom instruction. The investigator, working alone, picked the eight

educators based on community nomination and a list of excellent teachers submitted by the school's principal. The teachers who appeared on both lists were asked to participate. There were nine, all female, three White, and five African American. One teacher declined to participate, and the study began with the eight others who agreed.

Four phases of ethnographic interviews were created for this study. The first was to gather background information and discuss each participant's philosophy of education, classroom management, and parent and community involvement. In the second phase, the participants observed the researcher as she visited, unannounced, their classrooms for two years, three times a week. The third phase was included in the second in that audio and visual taping of the participants was conducted. In the fourth phase, the participants worked together as a collective in a series of ten two-to-three-hour meetings, viewed each other's videos, gave feedback and interpretation of what they saw, and discussed their teaching. From this phase, the theory of culturally relevant pedagogy was formulated as revealed in the initial phase and confirmed through the rest of the phases. One of the issues discussed is the disturbing term 'acting White,' which means that in many instances, African American students who achieve academic success do so at the expense of their cultural identity, which is shed to obtain this accomplishment. This social isolation came as a belief that African American students must distance themselves from their African-Americanness and the negative stereotypes associated with it to be seen as academic. The concept that one must shed one's cultural identity and move from one community as the only option to achieve academic success is one of the underlying issues that helped create the theory of culturally relevant pedagogy.

Perceptions of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Smolen

This study aims to provide an on-going research agenda focusing on the College of Education faculty's role in preparing preservice teachers to teach diverse student populations. The participants selected in the study were full-time College of Education faculty from four urban institutions in the Midwest that housed teacher education programs. The university enrollment at each site was: Site A-21,852, Site B-17,000, Site C-33,747, and Site D-12,500. The percentage of minority students at these institutions ranged from 10% to 25%.

The study investigated the knowledge, perceptions, and attitudes of College of Education faculty in four urban state institutions regarding the preparations of preservice teachers to work with students from diverse backgrounds. The question that guided the research was: What are the diverse characteristics, perceptions, beliefs, and commitment to diversity of College of Education faculty in teacher education programs in four urban institutions with stated multicultural agendas? A 44-item survey of Likert scale-type questions about characteristics, experiences, perspectives, and personal commitments to addressing diversity issues, together with demographic questions, was administered to 116 COE faculty from four urban universities. A MANOVA where the independent variables were the demographic data and the dependent variables were five subscales (importance of diversity, training for preservice teachers, college support, teaching diversity in courses, and issues of racial sensitivity) identified four statistically significant factors in faculty's beliefs regarding the importance of diversity.

This study used empirical data to investigate the College of Education faculty's perceptions, beliefs, and commitment to diversity. The study found no support for a relationship between the faculty's beliefs about the importance of teaching diversity and their teaching practices. This research will give information from the perspective of the faculty members of a higher education department and their perceptions, personal beliefs, and educational opinions concerning how and why preservice teachers should and should not be trained to be culturally responsive. This information is helpful to this study because the professors' attitude is important in designing a program of study for preservice teachers. Cultural responsiveness must be relevant and significant to be included as a more integral part of the preservice teacher preparation program.

Fiarman

There are biases deep within the character of all human beings that hinder our ability to accept each other without reservation. This is what is revealed to be described as Implicit Bias. The author had an experience that brought about a time of thought and self-reflection. In this experience, she revealed that certain students disrupted class with private conversations. In listening to my complaint, a Black colleague asked if only the group of Black students was engaging in disruptive conversations or if all the students were having this issue. After observing more carefully, the author realized that many different students were displaying some minor disruptive behavior. Still, only one subgroup had been identified, revealing a selective predisposition to focus on one group over another.

This was of great surprise and concern to the author as she believed she cared deeply about equity, was the leader of an anti-racism faculty club and taught against

racism within their content area. The question – how could someone who seemingly cares so deeply about racism show such a bias? Tests of implicit bias, also known as unconscious bias, show that all people, regardless of their own espoused beliefs, show an unconscious preference for a certain gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, or even sexual orientation. While most people favor their group, many prioritize the most socially acceptable group over their own. These unconscious or implicit biases influence our daily interactions and decision-making. Research reveals that teachers give harsher penalties for the same or similar misbehavior to Black students in comparison to their White classmates. Teachers are responsible for many things linked to student success, including behavior, grades, assistance, and redirection, and who gets ignored and receives less feedback. The first step in the elimination of illicit bias is the awareness that it exists, and the idea that we do not see color or in some way can become blind to it is just not possible. Recognition of its negative effect can go a long way in addressing it in self-reflective practice. In this way, teachers can find techniques to identify implicit bias and create ways to deal with it in their classrooms, build empathy, and hold themselves accountable to the students and their academic and personal success.

Gorski

The purpose of this article is to make the pervasive myth that those who live in lower socioeconomic conditions have a lack of desire and motivation for education, that because of poverty, they don't have supportive parents, have a lack of desire to excel, and generally don't care about education. These myths about lower-income students harm them by causing educators to have lower expectations for these students and coddling them instead of holding them to the same rigor as students who have higher

socioeconomic status. Most educators are determined to provide their students with an equitable education. These illicit biases reveal themselves in varied ways. “Chief among these is the "culture of poverty" myth—the idea that poor people share more or less monolithic and predictable beliefs, values, and behaviors. ... to be the best teachers for all students, educators need to challenge this myth and reach a deeper understanding of class and poverty.” To correct these widely held beliefs, educators must be aware of the illicit bias these ideas can cause and the damage that can be done to students’ academic achievements and future educational careers.

Oscar Lewis coined the term culture of poverty in his book “The Children of Sanchez.” In the book, his research findings uncovered 50 different characteristics attributed to those living in communities lacking resources and economically disadvantaged. This research created discourse and debate, and a flood of research entered G. Ladson-Billings, G. Gay, N. Carmon, and others. These researchers all came to the same conclusion, “There is no such thing as a culture of poverty. Differences in values and behaviors among poor people are just as great as between poor and wealthy people.” The culture of poverty theory opposes the real culture of classism. One tool in the culture of classism is the deficit theory – that those who live in poverty have chosen to do so and isn’t created by educational inequalities, inequitable access to resources, and systemic support of a cycle of poverty. Educators usually have great intentions, and without acknowledgment of the culture of classism, it is easy for educators to fall into the deficit mindset and the belief that students in poverty will achieve less.

Teacher Preparation Programs Governance

Sanders

This article aims to promote a discussion of how teacher education programs can better prepare teacher candidates to teach social justice in ethnically diverse schools. The author suggests that teacher education programs must develop teacher candidates' capacity to teach for social justice through preparation programs that encourage critical reflection and awareness of one's beliefs, perceptions, and professional practice. Five amalgamated case studies were shared, given the supposition that teachers' perceptions and beliefs influence their actions in the classroom. The case cases were composite characters representing the authors' experiences in higher education. Each case represented a preservice teacher's response to diversity issues in an education course. These scenarios represent students enrolled in teacher education courses in which the instructor attempted to expose them to different perspectives of race, gender, sexuality, religion, social inequalities, and culture. Teacher education programs must strive to teach and understand how to convey the definition and reality of diversity to our preservice educators. This effort begins with teacher candidates being self-aware, reflective, and understanding the future populations of children they will be held accountable for soon. My research aims to provide Teacher Preparation Programs and School Districts with research that supports the need to prepare educators to teach content and be equipped as advocates for all their students, especially minority students, by understanding diversity and what genuine inclusion is instead of using insincere clichés.

Terrill

Current and future teachers in the United States are and will be majority White, monolingual, and female. The demographic profile of students indicates that they will increasingly be children of color and second-language learners. This cultural and linguistic mismatch between teachers and students is critical for teacher educators.

The sample included 97 undergraduates accepted into the teacher education program. Sixty-five percent of the respondents were female; 89% were European Americans. There were no African American participants. Fifty-one percent of the participants were from suburban communities, and 38% were from rural communities. The students' demographic profile matches teachers' current and future demographics nationally.

A 37-item questionnaire for distribution to students enrolled in three sections of a required Foundation of Education course during the summer of 1998. Staff and faculty who were not the professors of record distributed the questionnaire. When asked what their interests were in theory, the respondents chose the more socially acceptable response. Still, when asked what their interests were in theory, they chose the White, suburban schools when they had to indicate a preference that would affect them in practice.

This research explores the effects of culturally responsive training on the overall achievement of students from diverse backgrounds and how the lack of this training affects both the preservice and experienced educator. It will also be used to compare the efficacy of the existing teacher training programs in creating culturally responsive teachers and how professional development assists, supports, and guides current

postsecondary-level educators and their effectiveness in being culturally responsive to their students of minority and diverse backgrounds.

Sleeter

Sleeter reviewed research-based data studies on preservice teacher preparation for multicultural schools, particularly underserved communities. The author surveyed 80 studies regarding the effects of various preservice teacher education strategies, including recruiting and selecting students, cross-cultural immersion experiences, multicultural education coursework, and program restructuring.

The researcher suggested that community-based cross-cultural immersion experiences are more powerful than stand-alone multicultural education courses. The implications of this research will help identify and address how teacher perception, bias, or lack of exposure affects the current educational landscape using the participants' voices and recollections of and observation of behaviors considered not sensitive to cultural diversity and how to address them.

Conclusion

The literature review explored some factors that have influenced culturally responsive pedagogy and the lived experiences of educators in the classroom about race, culture, bias, and training preservice teachers may be offered. The literature in this chapter discusses the history before the advent of cultural-responsive pedagogy and some early research and discoveries in the field. The following chapter explains how this researcher has explored current preservice and in-service educators and their relationship and understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy, how it affects their classroom,

curriculum, and ability to connect with their students, and how they create a classroom with cultural sensitivity.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

This study examined the impact of culturally responsive training on the preservice and the field teacher. The current research compares the existing teacher training programs at the postsecondary level and their effectiveness. This study focused on the current context of a teacher preparation program not connected to a School of Education, the cultural responsiveness training provided to the participants, and how that affects their perception and ability to foster a culturally sensitive pedagogy with students of varied cultural backgrounds. The information gathered in this study fostered the conversation and awareness of what being a culturally responsive teacher looks like and highlighted the current Teacher Preparation curriculum model's impact on developing the cultural sensitivity and educational professional development of preservice teachers.

Research Design

A single descriptive case study methodology was used for this study. This design is appropriate as it provides an in-depth, bounded description within a real-life, contemporary context (Creswell & Poth, 2018); in the proposed study, the demonstrated use, perceptions, and perceived value of culturally relevant pedagogy in a teacher education program preparing teachers for field work and employment in nearby communities that are rapidly diversifying by race and ethnicity in Long Island, New York. As the state and nearby school districts consider the ways that cultural relevance, care, and academic success for *all* students are measured, an in-depth description of the experiences and perceptions of students who have participated in the teacher education program will provide a rich, reflective element that will add to the body of research in understanding how culturally relevant pedagogy is used, retained, and understood.

Case study research is a qualitative approach that allows the researcher to explore bounded systems (cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information. Yin (2016) contends that in a single case study design, an embedded model allows the researcher to consider a case with multiple units of analysis. Here, the researcher will compare the data gathered from current students to determine the ability of the teacher preparation program to achieve the goal outlined in the mission statement to integrate diversity into the academic and clinical experiences of the preservice teacher and to prepare the individual to understand diverse cultures and communities and ensure an inclusive learning environment that enables each learner they teach to meet high standards.

Research Questions

The following research questions drive the study's purpose:

1. How do preservice and in-service teachers perceive culturally relevant pedagogy was addressed in the curriculum of university-based teacher preparation programs?
2. How do preservice teacher preparation program students express their knowledge about culturally relevant Pedagogy and bring it to their practice in the classroom?

Setting

The university that is the focus of the case study is set in the suburban region of New York State on Long Island, New York. Long Island is divided into Nassau and Suffolk County. The university is a public education facility and does not have a School of Education. Traditionally, students seeking teacher certification would enroll in their university's School of Education. Still, New York State allows alternate pathways to

teacher certification without a School of Education. The university that is the focus of this study is prestigious and has undergraduate and graduate programs in hundreds of areas. This Teacher Preparation Program model combines education in the liberal arts and sciences with knowledge and skills to provide a high-quality education to K-12 students in Long Island and throughout New York. The program houses six undergraduate teacher education programs and a graduate Educational Leadership program that trains future school administrators for School Building, School Business, and District Leadership certifications.

The teacher preparation program consists of English, Foreign Languages (French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Chinese, and Spanish), Mathematics, Science (Biology, Chemistry, Earth Sciences and Physics), Social Studies, and TESOL. All programs are secondary licensure certifications (7-12) except for TESOL, which is certification in both elementary and secondary (PreK-12). The program offers combined bachelor's/master's degree programs by allowing some graduate credits to be taken along with undergraduate credits to accelerate the completion of both degrees. Clinical placements for micro-teaching, observations, student teaching, and internships are assigned across Long Island. In the Foreign Language program, there are opportunities to study abroad.

The education program leaders agreed to allow their students to fill out a questionnaire and to be interviewed with the understanding that present COVID regulations must be adhered to, so email and WebEx were used to conduct interviews safely. Each participant will sign a waiver as prescribed by the IRB process, and no harm was done to participants.

Participants

The main participants are the preservice educators in the teacher preparation program. They will receive an emailed questionnaire requesting preliminary demographic information, inviting them to participate in an informed consent session before being asked about their willingness to share their experience in the teacher preparation program about culturally responsive pedagogy training and be involved in a more in-depth analysis of their experiences. Seven participants and one decided not to participate in the study.

Data Collection Procedures

This case study primarily uses a demographic questionnaire to identify participants, a preliminary interview to gain informed consent, and a more in-depth interview. This multiple data collection process will allow the researcher to understand the preservice educator's knowledge and perception of culturally relevant pedagogy. The data will mainly be collected from the in-depth video interview, allowing the participant to feel connected to the researcher. The open-ended questions will allow the participant to fully express their narrative and perspective and not guide them to a particular response. This will allow participants to elaborate on their experiences with instructors, their courses, what they were exposed to, and their desires to learn specific things. Allowance will also be made for the researcher to use self-reflection concerning my biases and values to ensure those views are not expressed and participants are allowed to express themselves fully.

Individual Interviews

The Siedman model was used for the interview process. Each interview is anticipated to be 30-45 minutes long and conducted via Zoom to allow the researcher to

build a rapport with the participants. The interview being conducted via Zoom will allow the meeting times to be flexible for the participants and provide health protection as they can participate from the comfort of their environment. The questions will allow the participants to discuss their views and beliefs concerning culturally relevant pedagogy, how it is addressed, and their experience with it in their teacher education program. They will also be allowed to define culturally relevant pedagogy in their own words.

Interview Questions

Introduction Question

Tell me about your background. Where were you raised and educated, and why did you become an educator?

Disproportionate Experiences in American Education

1. Are you aware of the current cultural and linguistically diverse populations represented in Long Island?
2. What are your opinions on effectively providing students with an equitable education?

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

3. What is your understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy? What does culturally responsive pedagogy look like to you? Could you provide an example of what it would look like in your classroom?
4. How does it inform your understanding of creating and scaffolding curriculum or developing lessons?

Implicit Bias

5. Can you think of any characteristics students of color, as a group, bring to the classroom?
6. How much do you know about facilitating academic success for African American students? Would this process look different from how you would facilitate a class lesson?

Teacher Preparation Program

7. How much of what you know about teaching a student of color is because of your training in the teacher preparation program?
8. How would you do it if you could change or influence the teacher preparation program to include or improve culturally responsive pedagogy?
9. What would be important for a preservice teacher to experience to make you more prepared to work with diverse populations?

Creating Culturally Responsive Educators

10. What is your perception of the classroom environment when culturally responsive strategies are used?
11. How do you describe your teaching philosophy, and does that differ from teaching students of color?

The overarching question to be addressed is how preservice and newly in-service teachers perceive culturally relevant pedagogy addressed in the curriculum of university-based teacher preparation programs and how it can influence creating meaningful relationships between the educator and the students. Through a case study using interviews with current students in the university's teacher preparation program, they can

share their experiences concerning culture and the exposure to new cultures they were unprepared for. Cultural sensitivity has shaped their teaching philosophy, may impact future and current strategies and classroom practices, and has influenced their focus and expectations for their diverse students.

Content Analysis

The researcher collected the answers from the interviews of the participants and gathered their comments to inform higher education leaders so that they are equipped with the information they need to consider when considering what needs their future students will have in becoming future educators. The researcher included visuals and artifacts from the participants' classrooms and lessons that represented their inclusion of culturally relevant pedagogy in their practice and document analysis. This information may further influence the certification policies of the New York State Education Department. Recent changes in education law have encouraged all school districts to employ a Diversity and Inclusion officer and create Equity and Inclusion committees to address inequity in the racial diversity of the teaching staff and student populations they serve. The collected information was coded using the methods detailed in 'The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers' by Johnny Saldaña.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness means the interviewer must establish a foundation of credibility, reliability, confirmability, and dependability, and with an interviewee, an atmosphere of comfort with one another and the topic. Establishing credibility is the researcher's job to accurately reflect each participant's views and responses. To ensure that each participant's reality is accurately reflected in the transcribing and coding of the interview question responses. To ensure the interviews were accurately recorded, the researcher

gained participant permission and used the Zoom recording feature and a voice recorder to have a backup system operating simultaneously. The researcher had a preliminary warm-up question to let participants get comfortable before the interview questions began.

Research Ethics

The researcher's primary responsibility is to protect the participants' confidentiality. Researchers are expected to maintain the highest interview ethics, receive informed consent before any questionnaires or interviews, and continue member checking to ensure that all participants feel valued and respected for their contribution. More importantly, finding differing opinions, values, and experiences to share those positions to improve the canon of academic research.

All participants received a consent form before any data collection began. The consent form contained all pertinent information and details relating to the purpose of the study, any possible risk associated with data collection, the benefits of participating in this research, strict confidentiality of their identifying information, their right to refuse to answer any questions that feel are uncomfortable and their right to pose questions of the researcher and engage in discussion if requested. Participants were given pseudonyms, and any identifying information for the university or their course of study was removed or changed to create an alternate persona. All IRB protocols were followed, explained to each participant in detail, and conducted so that they were afforded ethical treatment and minimized possible harm. All participants were informed of the video and audio recording for transcription and data coding. The data were stored securely in password-protected files, and no one else could access the files.

Data Analysis Approach

The coding of the data is the critical analysis of the data collected from the research collected through questionnaires and interviews. The data collected from other research related to this research, as well as information collected about the university's Teacher Preparation Program course requirements and description of the courses, was used to create a tiered level approach in phases to demonstrate the need to include the research, highlighting keywords and phrases and re-reading some things two or three times to determine its relatability to the subject. The development of themes and subthemes was determined, and using those themes to describe the case was done once the data was separated by topic. The case topics and themes were used to answer the research questions proposed.

The following was a plan for analysis, including putting the data through multiple rounds of descriptive coding.

1. Develop codes.
 - a. Noting patterns/themes
 - b. Refine and recode.
 - c. Making contrasts/comparisons
 - d. Counting* (for content analysis)
 - e. Clustering/pattern making

Researcher Role

As a fellow educator with twenty-five years of classroom experience and a woman of color, the researcher has a personal connection to the purpose of this study. The researcher had the benefit of having strong role models of my racial background for

most of my life. Still, there are so many children of color who only have athletes or entertainers to look up to, never having had a teacher who reflected their race, background, or cultural norms. This researcher believed that no true learning could happen without respect for other races and understanding their complexities and norms. Educators must master self-reflection because, as educators, we are responsible for influencing young people, and our judgments can shape their lives for many years and even influence decisions they may make and opinions they hold. The researcher must prioritize awareness of her own personal values, experiences, biases, philosophy, and teaching practices and not sit in any judgment of the participants and their individual views, beliefs, values, feedback, and responses.

As a sorority member, prospective members' interviews are conducted before entry into the organization. During one of the interviews, the prospective member revealed that as a New York City police officer, during training, they are told that when they arrive on the scene, they must take control and are the authority figure in the situation automatically. At that moment, I realized that teachers are taught the same thing. We place ourselves in authority with no regard for the culture, experiences, or values of our students and their families and lack respect or sensitivity regarding how the rules, school atmosphere, or school norms affect those. How overlooked and disrespected our students and their families must feel when their cultural norms and accepted cultural practices and, essentially, their way of life are ignored and not regarded with any respect.

Students deserve to be represented in their educational journey. When their behavior, actions, or reactions are misunderstood, when educators hold implicit biases against them and lower their expectations for their students because of those biases and

then don't have hope for the future of their students or don't provide them with opportunities for growth or the chance to pursue excellence – this issue then affects the student's academic career and their life, therefore making this study and research relevant and important. Every student deserves to have representation and understanding of who they are, what cultural norms they bring to their educational process, and how educators can use that knowledge to assist the delivery of content.

Conclusion

This researcher looks forward to this research informing higher education leaders so they are equipped with the information they need to consider what needs to be done for their program. The findings of this study are consistent with the current research. Preservice educators need Culturally Responsive Pedagogy training now more than ever before. The current policy changes and pivot over the last five years, starting in 2018 with the introduction of the New York State Education Department Culturally Responsive Sustaining Education Framework that states, “This system of inequity — which routinely confers advantage and disadvantage based on linguistic background, gender, skin color, and other characteristics — must be clearly understood, directly challenged, and fundamentally transformed.” To be clearly understood, preservice teachers must have training. This lack of explicit training causes a disconnect for in-service educators who can struggle to find effective ways to create a diverse, inclusive, and equitable classroom with a curriculum that represents all students. The proposed result would be to encourage enhancements in including culturally responsive pedagogy to the university's Teacher Preparation Program, which is the focus of this case study, and influence other universities and colleges nationwide to do the same. Fulfilling the

mission is important to the preservice teacher but even more important for the students who continue to change the populations that these preservice teachers will serve. Those students have the potential to be gifted and talented in so many varied ways, and all those cultural norms and culturally informed traditions could be used to support the students to greatness instead of those norms possibly being misunderstood and contributing to denying access to better communication between the educator and the student or even worse, being viewed as problematic behaviors.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

The premise of this study, shared in Chapter 1, was to examine the impact of culturally responsive training for the preservice and the new in-field teacher. Chapter 2 provided a review of the related literature on culturally relevant pedagogy training in teacher preparation programs as a necessity for preservice teachers facing the changing demographics across the country. The researcher conducted a single descriptive case study methodology of the experiences of current preservice teachers finishing their teacher preparation program course of study and new in-field teachers through interviews and analysis of the mandatory teacher preparation programs course descriptions. In this document, the university is given the pseudonym Ravenwood College.

In Chapter 3, the research methods were described. Qualitative data was gathered through individual semi-structured interviews and analysis of program course descriptions. The researcher interviewed preservice and in-service teachers and analyzed departmental artifacts. Interviews were conducted for five weeks, asking questions about their views and beliefs concerning culturally relevant pedagogy, how it was addressed, and their experience with it in their teacher preparation program. Course descriptions for four mandatory courses were also reviewed. The courses are designed for both graduate and undergraduate preservice teachers. The courses are Education: Theory and Practice, Human Development, Language Acquisition and Literacy, and Principles and Practices of Special Education. These courses fulfill the New York State Education requirements for all preservice candidates for teacher certification. These courses provide the foundational elements educators need to teach the content, acquire the tools necessary to share the curriculum within the changing landscape of social change and political

climate, and learn how to navigate their future goals as teaching professionals. One course, Human Development, examines adolescent development by examining children's biological and psychological development. Another course, Language Acquisition, explores literacy and language development, focusing on native English speakers, English Language Learners, and students with special needs.

One elective course with culturally responsive pedagogy, Teaching the At-Risk Student, is listed in the course description. This course part of the description states, "Due to the diversity of the at-risk population, including culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students, a variety of evidence-based pedagogical approaches will be explored that have proven effective with these students." Public Education-Current Concerns: Roles and Responsibilities of Players,

After creating open and axial coding, the researcher separated the data into the following four themes: Concern for Equity, Diversity in Curriculum, Building Relationships, and Exposure to Other Cultures. Each theme has two to three subthemes: Concern for Equity (Lack of Diverse Teachers, Long Island's Increasing Diversity), Diversity in Curriculum (Creating More Diverse Curriculum, Cultural Holidays), Building Relationships (Learning About Student Backgrounds, Including/Connecting with Families), Exposure to Other Cultures (Personal Travel, Learning About Other Cultures).

Table 1*Coding Themes and Subthemes*

| Themes | Subthemes | Data Sources | Trustworthiness |
|-------------------------|---|---|----------------------|
| Concern for Equity | Lack of Diverse Teachers, Teacher Preparation Program | Interviews, Course Descriptions, Teacher Preparation Program Requirements | Participant Check In |
| Diversity in Curriculum | Diversity in Literature, Using Different Cultural Holidays | Interviews, Course Descriptions, Teacher Preparation Program Requirements | Participant Check In |
| Building Relationships | Learning About Students' Backgrounds, Family Members in Education | Interviews, Course Descriptions, Teacher Preparation | Participant Check In |

| Themes | Subthemes | Data Sources | Trustworthiness |
|-------------------------------|--|---|----------------------|
| | | Program Requirements | |
| Exposure to Other Cultures | Personal Travel, Working with English Language Learners | Interviews, Course Descriptions, Teacher Preparation Program Requirements | Participant Check In |

Findings

Theme 1 Concern for Equity

The first theme focuses on preservice and first-year in-service educators concerned about equity. The concern has increased over the years due to this region's influx of diverse students. Student safety is a paramount concern for educators. Within the context of safety, there is a presupposition not to harm. While educating students, teachers simultaneously inform them of their present and future, including self-awareness and awareness of others. With increasing global connections and the rising diversity of the student population, there is an expectation to prepare students to be global citizens. The Conditions of Education outlined the decrease in the White student population and the sharp increase in Hispanic students in the United States. This phenomenon has been seen in the Long Island region. There is also heightened sensitivity to students being able

to identify with their teachers and the curriculum. Harper commented, "...it's really important for students to feel represented, um, and also to have content and curriculum that does include students of all backgrounds and not just appeals to students from one particular sector of life." This concern has made it necessary for educators to look more deeply at themselves and what they teach to find more contact points with the students. The following phrases characterized data falling within this theme, "...drawing in more teachers who look like them, sound like them, can relate to them..." and "equitably serving these students." Further, the participants' concerns for equity are described in more detail in the following subthemes.

Subtheme A is described as a Lack of Diverse Teachers. The educators interviewed acknowledged having little exposure to or no teachers with diverse cultural heritage and recognizing a lack of diverse teachers today. Nia shared, "When I got to high school, I had one Black teacher, not personally, but I saw her, and she taught computers." Within this theme, the data suggests that educators had limited exposure to diverse teachers and less of a connection to understanding the needs of students from diverse backgrounds. In a similar observation, Hermes shared, "And I don't know, I just noticed the discrepancy as, you know, kids being targeted for play fighting, the language they're using, or how they're interacting with each other. You could tell there was a huge disconnect between the teachers and the students, like they did not understand each other." This disconnect can interfere with not just disciplinary issues but can also create a disconnect in relaying the content of the curriculum.

Subtheme B is described as Teacher Preparation Program. When discussing providing an equitable education for students on cultural diversity, interviewee

Hawthorne shared the following views concerning preparing future teachers of the profession. “I will go on educational instruction...that will go back to like teacher preparation programs should prepare teachers to create a curriculum with like diversity. You may not know where you want to teach, but diversity should still be included there.” Preparing preservice and in-service teachers for culturally diverse student demographics could require more specific training to build that methodology. Hawthorne shared, “Rather than just giving workshops, something like special courses about incorporating diversity... We have to go beyond what we are commonly taught, what’s commonly seen in the textbooks...” Hawthorne then shared a practical suggestion for teacher preparation programs. “Maybe when we do the two placements, at least one must be in a rich school and one that’s poor or, um, have the students prepare a lesson or a unit that showcases diversity or where the lessons were from diverse backgrounds. That should be a requirement. Um. Also, give more readings on how to work with diverse students. Have meetings on how to work with diverse populations...” This perspective is shared by Ladson-Billings’s literature, where she points out that the student population has become predominantly non-White.

At the same time, the teaching faculty has remained primarily White and female. In agreement with Hawthorne, Nia shared, “If there was some like teacher rotation for a different focus. I feel like that would help people better understand when you have to be, you know, proximity is real when you have to be in close proximity of these students and support them.” Closing the gap between teachers’ experiences and students’ experiences can make a huge difference in how effective the teacher can be in sharing the content of the class. The ultimate goal is to improve student achievement. Successful educators

know they must build relationships to achieve this goal. Preservice educators need proper training to make this goal a reality.

Theme 2 Diversity in Curriculum

The second theme focuses on the curriculum of the preservice and in-service educators and how the curriculum can be recentered to include and have more sensitivity to creating an inclusive environment through diversifying the curriculum to reflect the students' cultural backgrounds and be inclusive of varying global cultures. The researcher examined the responses received, and there were multiple mentions concerning the present curriculum landscape and how to incorporate differing cultural backgrounds into the present scope and sequence. The data in this theme included different ways that educators could represent the varying cultures in their classroom and find ways to connect the students with the curriculum. Sasha shared, "So, I made sure, like on the Chinese New Year, to teach the whole class about the holiday. So, like fostering a sense of cultural awareness for the whole class." Although this is a commendable way to include culture in the classroom, this quote contrasts the research of Gloria Ladson-Billings, which expresses the need to create a culturally responsive curriculum. Educators must encourage a curriculum that includes mathematics social and political issues affecting the students and their community, not just the observances of holidays. To think about more ways to incorporate cultures, Dora shared, "...we did this already, you know, three, three European or three American history units; maybe we can do a South American history unit for the next one." In this way, this participant is in line with author Geneva Gay, who states the importance of "[preservice teachers] developing a knowledge base for culturally responsive teaching is acquiring detailed factual information about the

cultural particularities of specific ethnic groups” by thinking of more impactful ways to make their curriculum more inclusive of different cultures. The education of all students includes exposure to information from the global community to prepare students to live in an increasingly diverse region and country.

Subtheme A of this topic is characterized as Diversity in Literature. Diversifying literature became the most popular way to include different cultures in school curriculums. Diversity includes cultural representation and increasing exposure to differing lifestyles and socioeconomic communities. Educators were willing to increase diversity in the literature students are exposed to in various ways. Participants were looking to find seamless ways to incorporate different cultures represented in their classrooms and use others in the greater global community to create a cross-section and variety of cultures in literature.

Dora shared the idea of incorporating more diversity into the curriculum. “You know, if you do, even just like a small little mini-lesson of, um, of different inventors or different famous historians or important people and pull from not just, you know, the White American or White European people, the people from South America, from Southwest Asia, from Eastern Asia and that kind of stuff, just to diversify the learning kind of...” Diversifying students’ learning is increasingly important when looking at the changing population of students entering the schools in this region. Prior research in Chapter 1 addressed that the teaching staff in Long Island is mainly White, making up 92% of the teaching population. The cultural differences between the teaching population and their students are a gap that can be filled by hiring more teachers of culture, but that will not be the only remedy. Those teachers will still need training in culturally

responsive pedagogy to create an inclusive environment to reach and educate their students. Embracing the culture is only one part of this pedagogy.

Subtheme B in this topic is characterized as Using Different Cultural Holidays. Participants were open to including holidays and cultural celebrations in their classroom and curriculum. Many felt this was an easy way to include students' backgrounds and be informative to students who do not celebrate these holidays and special days. While answering the interview question, Dora brainstormed, "You know, we're going to be reading books about, you know, India and the Indian culture and maybe year-round times like Eid or Ramadan or stuff like that." These celebrations are included in the regional school calendar, and reading about the history and traditions can make students who do not personally celebrate these holidays more aware of the religions and the people who do celebrate.

Learning about and discussing these events provides knowledge about these holidays and the people who celebrate them and can foster deeper sensitivity from the students about their peers or anyone they may encounter in the future. Holiday celebrations also allow for other cultural elements to be introduced. Participants spoke about food, music, dance, and traditional attire as components to add to cultural celebrations and to have students use as a means of expression in the classroom. Cultural celebrations are a basic way to represent students' heritage in the classroom. Culturally responsive pedagogy training would enhance the educators' awareness of using more in-depth ways to represent and acknowledge students' lived experiences and incorporate them into the learning environment.

Theme 3 Building Relationships

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is necessary in the K-12 classroom pre- and post-COVID era. Rita F. Pierson, a professional educator since 1972, taught elementary school, junior high, and special education once. During her famous TED Talk, *Why Every Student Deserves a Champion*, a colleague told her, "They don't pay me to like the kids." Her response: "Kids don't learn from people they don't like." Before it had the name SEL, educators knew creating a rapport with their students was hugely important. Establishing class rules and building a sense of community and trust between the teacher and the students and amongst the classmates is a hallmark of creating a good teaching and learning environment.

Participants overwhelmingly mentioned creating relationships with their students as important to establishing respect and engagement. Positive relationships between students and their teachers are fundamental to academic success. When students feel understood, seen, and supported, they are willing to engage in the learning environment and will have better academic results. When teachers establish relationships with their students, more learning can occur because the teachers have fewer behavioral problems due to a positive environment. Gloria Ladson-Billings's research supports this action. Teachers in her study consistently showed their willingness to engage with the community in meaningful ways by living, shopping, and spending leisure time in their students' community, demonstrating their belief that the community their students live in is "important and worthwhile."

Subtheme A of this topic is Learning About Student Familial and Cultural Backgrounds. Creating relationships means educators must intentionally create an

environment of inclusivity by researching their students and providing opportunities for students to share about things in their lives. Hawthorne mentioned, “I know at the beginning of the year, which was great, I am always going to put a cultural diversity project where each student gets to share in a culture where their family comes from. The foods they eat, religions they practice, and where their families are from. So, having students of color in the classroom brings that diversity and helps other students learn about diversity. So, it is not forced exposure to that culture, and they understand each other much better.” The teacher, in turn, must also be willing to self-disclose, share, and reveal appropriate details from their lives. Students of all backgrounds can benefit from exposure to teachers and peers of other cultures. When a class is assigned a project where family origins and cultural details are displayed, that project increases the knowledge of all involved, representation, and a sense of belonging. In Sleeter’s article, she states, “White preservice students tend to use colorblindness as a way of coping with fear and ignorance. These problems carry over into the classroom.”

In contrast, Hawthorne shared, “My high school experience was one of the best, and I attribute a lot of that to my teachers that I had, is creating that sense of belonging and creating that space for us where we felt like we could just be ourselves.” Sharing can also be done in innocuous ways. Teachers can also learn about students unrelated to an assignment or project. “For me personally, I have always looked at what my students’ backgrounds are, and I try and bring, you know, music into the class. I love using music with my high schoolers, and I always say, okay, we will make a playlist. You know, your favorite song from your like that you used to listen to at home in your own country.” The class listening to music representing their family, heritage, or just music they like can

help them feel connected. It can help an educator become more knowledgeable about their students personally.

Subtheme B of this topic is Family Members in Educational Careers. An inspiration to become an educator can come from any number of sources. Many are inspired to follow a career in education through positive experiences during their educational journey. Family members who presently work in education or who worked as an educator in the past inspired our preservice and in-service participants to follow in those footsteps. Hermes comes from a family of educators. “My mom was a teacher in Nigeria, so they had really, you know, good jobs in education, and when they finished school, they immigrated...” When one experiences the field of education through a parent’s life, the child can see the struggles educators endure and the emotional and emotional rewards they receive. Watching or learning about how parents dedicate themselves to continuing their education to become highly qualified teachers allows the children to be prepared for what will be expected of them. There is a willingness to achieve the same academic success and loyalty to attaining the credentials necessary. Sasha was inspired to be a teacher by watching her mother. “My mother went to school for education. She is a reading teacher. She is in [a local] school district. So, I kind of not only wanted to be a teacher on my own, but also because, you know, my mother was a teacher, and that’s kind of how I initially got into it.” Dora shared, “... my mother is a teacher. So that had a big part in my wanting to become a teacher later in life.” The same passion for being a lifelong learner can be passed from one generation to the other because of the lived experiences of the preservice and in-service teachers. That same

passion and zeal for education is contagious and can be passed from educators to their students.

Theme 4 Exposure to Other Cultures

The interviewees shared their ideas about traveling and being exposed to other cultures as a way of becoming more familiar with other cultures. With the introduction of the internet, the world has experienced increasing connectivity. The introduction of the World Wide Web ushered in the age of the Global Community; it no longer exists as a theory; it has become a reality. Having a traveling experience has become something the ‘ordinary’ person could, at one time, only wish for, and now this too has become a reality. In the region this study is focused on, there has been a definite change in the demographics of the local population, and the number of immigrants coming to live, work, and settle in this area of America has had both a visual and physical impact on the community. This trend doesn’t seem to be slowing, and the population has steadily increased. Exposure to other cultures is happening in the greater society, and that trend has also influenced the composure of the students in public education classrooms.

Many interviewees have some experience traveling outside the United States or having meaningful encounters with other cultures, which led to Subtheme A: The Impact of Personal Travel/Study Abroad Opportunities. Some disclosed having participated in Study Abroad, traveled with their family, worked abroad, or had direct contact with the knowledge that their family immigrated here. There was a demonstration of a desire to spend time outside of the United States for pleasure, in connection to their academic studies, or even for a job opportunity. This willingness to explore the world translated into a desire to become a teacher shared, “My dad is also a pilot, so we have always

traveled, and with my mom as a teacher, every vacation was like a field trip. So that influenced what I wanted to do for myself in the future.”

Studying abroad had a huge effect on one interviewee. Sasha spent time on not one but two study-abroad opportunities. To connect with future students and understand the issues one can face in a new country, Sasha said, “I wanted to gain a perspective into, you know, the different countries that maybe my students could come from. So, I wanted to go somewhere I had a Spanish-speaking experience....” “So, I did do two short programs. One, I went to Costa Rica and got to teach there, which is cool. And then the other one, I went to China and Taiwan...” A passion for helping students who struggled academically, like Sasha did during her academic experience, made making a career in teaching a top priority.

The English Language Learner (ELL) population has grown significantly over the past 10-15 years in the Long Island, NY, region that this study focuses on. Subtheme B: Working with English Language Learners. ELLs can come from any location on the globe. A major influx of immigrants has recently arrived from Central and South America. This has had an impact on everything in this region. Demographics, politics, construction, the workforce, economy, and education. Immigrants come looking for better jobs and economic advancement to escape civil unrest, dangerous conditions, and possibly natural disasters. Whatever the reason, the demographics of this region and the surrounding areas have gone through a transformation, and what was a predominately White population has become increasingly Brown. Participant Nia commented, “...working with English language learners, you know, you have to be sensitive to the things they experience, just as you have to do with any other culture. Allowing them to

bring their home language into the classroom and feel proud of it...encourage, support, and celebrate daily.” Nia also added, “So, if we are focused on community helpers, I’m looking for community helpers on Google who are of Hispanic race, who are Asian, who you know, are black, who are White like I’m looking for visuals that support everybody...a classroom setting is just so different. So, I want these children to be able to visualize that from an earlier age. So that is one example.” About Sleeter’s article, Nia’s statement, being a Black Woman, “Preservice students of color bring a richer multicultural knowledge base to teacher education than White students.” But conversely, “Preservice students of color do not necessarily bring more knowledge about pedagogical practices than do White preservice students; however, both groups need well-designed preservice teacher education.” All preservice teachers need training in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy.

Increasing these students from culturally diverse backgrounds introduces different challenges and special opportunities. Students, as well as educators, are being exposed to more diversity in their classrooms. Dora stated, “I have a Spanish ELL and then a Chinese speaker, and when I have snacks in my room, I sometimes just see their snacks. It is so different what, you know, the Spanish speaker will bring in versus what the Chinese student will bring in.” Having ELLs in mainstream classes has become more prevalent. Participants expressed the need for sensitivity to understand these students and create a more inclusive environment for them.

Having the experience of an ELL in your classroom requires a heightened sensitivity and considerations that must be made concerning curriculum and lesson delivery. Some assignments like My Family Tree can spark emotions from a recent

immigrant who has left some important family members behind. Assignments about how one's family arrived in America can also be extremely uncomfortable for a new immigrant, as well as some Black students who may not have that information or who can only equate their family lineage to the history of American Slavery. Students with limited English may need support from translated text and using a translation service. Educators are faced with educating and doing no harm while uncovering the curriculum and finding ways to include and connect with all students. Interviewee Sasha shared, "Like when I was a substitute at the elementary school, I had Chinese students. So, I taught the whole class about the Chinese New Year holiday. So, it is like fostering a sense of cultural awareness for the whole class. Um, like having, like teaching appreciation for student's cultures."

Conclusion

This chapter focused on the thematic elements resulting from the data collected in this case study. The researcher found that the preservice and in-service teachers interviewed knew that their classes were culturally diverse in the student demographics and that there was a need to be more culturally sensitive. The consequences of a lack of explicit training in culturally responsive pedagogy limit the preservice educator from reaching the goals set by the policymakers developing policy around diversity, equity, and inclusion. The charge to infuse this policy through all areas of the school culture becomes difficult for preservice and in-service teachers who have not been exposed to this training before certification. The following chapter contains a greater analysis of the connections between that awareness and the ability of the teacher preparation program to prepare them for that reality.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

The present study was a single descriptive case study methodology involving a university teacher preparation program unrelated to a school of education. The study examined the impact of culturally responsive training for the preservice and the new in-field teacher. In Chapter 1, the following research questions were proposed: How do preservice and in-service teachers perceive culturally relevant pedagogy was addressed in the curriculum of university-based teacher preparation programs, and how do preservice teacher preparation program students express their knowledge about culturally relevant pedagogy and bring it to their practice in the classroom? The research questions are answered by the evidence of the themes examined in Chapter 4. Existing research on culturally responsive Pedagogy was reviewed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 3 describes the research methodology of the study. Data was gathered through interviews and an analysis of four-course descriptions. Six interviews were conducted with three preservice teachers and three in-service teachers. Data analysis through four coding cycles produced four themes described in Chapter 4. The first theme, Concern for Equity, is related to the changing demographic of the student population and the lack of reflection of those changes in the teaching population. The second theme, Diversity in Curriculum, focused on how the literature in the public-school curriculum can better reflect the inclusion of diversity. Building relationships' third theme involved social-emotional learning and learning about students' cultural backgrounds. The fourth and final theme, Exposure to Other Cultures, explored personal travel experiences, study abroad opportunities, and how learning about other cultures influences the educator's life.

Chapter 5, the final chapter of this research, gives the interpretations of the results in Chapter 4, along with the two research questions that were the guiding influence of this case study. This chapter includes how this study can complement the existing body of knowledge with the limitations and implications for future research and current practice.

When reviewing the study findings, they answer the research questions this way. Research Question 1 states How do preservice and in-service teachers perceive culturally relevant pedagogy addressed in university-based teacher preparation programs? The participants overwhelmingly could not identify definite ways that culturally relevant pedagogy was addressed explicitly in their teacher preparation program. There was no lack of awareness or discussions around race and culture and how that can affect the classroom. Still, there was no clear demonstration that the teacher preparation program included the practices of teaching the preservice teachers in the ways outlined by Gloria Ladson-Billings and Geneva Gay. Research Question 2 states the following: How do preservice teacher preparation program students express their knowledge about culturally relevant pedagogy and bring it to their practice in the classroom? The participants demonstrated throughout their interviews that they are all very aware of the demographics of the Long Island region, the varying cultures represented in their classrooms, and the need for educators to be sensitive to the perceived needs of those students to be represented in the curriculum and the classroom. As indicated in the findings, educators are aware and more than willing to create an inclusive classroom environment and diversify the curriculum. These preservice teachers need the training to make sound choices in deciding ways to most effectively represent their students and create a culture of inclusivity to permeate throughout.

Implications of Findings

The result of the present study highlights the importance of providing preservice teachers with cultural responsiveness pedagogy training to be prepared to connect with and educate the students who are increasingly becoming a multicultural demographic. As stated in Chapter 1 of this research, the significance of the study is that the nation has struggled to meet the needs of diverse children and families for decades. The system of biases and inequity is embedded in the history, culture, government policies, and various institutions. As outlined in various documents distributed by the New York State Education Department, education is needed to center inclusion in all educational decisions. In May 2021, the NYSED Board adopted a diversity, equity, and inclusion policy that outlined the expectation that all school districts in New York would implement practices that would include DEI in teaching and learning. Broader implications of the study are primarily for the field of education, in particular for the diverse and rapidly changing demographic settings. This research could provide valuable insights for policymakers and educational leaders.

The following are three tips based on the current study and the research and knowledge of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. Here are some suggestions derived from this study. 1. There can be a reduction of bias in teachers and a reduction of the incidences of harm to students, 2. By increasing cultural competency, empathy, and understanding, of educators this will also strengthen school community partnerships with teachers feeling more comfortable engaging with their students, 3. Teachers who have more cultural competence can have a positive effect on student success on class assignments, on state exams, classroom behavior and between students and staff.

The results of the present study have implications not only for the teacher preparation program that is the focus of this research but also for the entire field of teacher preparation and the theoretical framework described in Chapter 1. The study was built on the culturally relevant pedagogy educational theory that expresses that there is a need for a focus in teacher preparation on preparing preservice teachers to educate students that represent various cultural backgrounds by “re-educating typical teacher candidates for the various student populations in U.S. public schools” (Ladson-Billings, 1995) in the classroom. Educators interviewed acknowledged having little to no exposure to being trained with culturally responsive pedagogy. The act of raising awareness is just one part of the framework. This multi-layered training moves preservice teachers through varied activities to build awareness while providing the tools necessary to create culturally responsive practices throughout their work and lives. The New York State Education Department, in developing policies enforcing diversity, equity, and inclusion to be infused into every facet of school life, has made it clear that student success and hiring and retaining culturally sensitive teachers is of clear importance.

Relationship to Prior Research

The present study relates to the theoretical framework described above and the existing literature described in Chapter 2. The results support the claims made by prior researchers on culturally responsive pedagogy. Participants used holidays, music, and language as examples of how to create a more inclusive and diverse classroom. Sleeter (2012) described this simplistic view of inclusion that separates and disconnects culture from academics. Without improving the knowledge and skills of preservice teachers, in-service teachers will have challenges in providing an academically equitable curriculum.

Marginalized students are underrepresented in the teaching staff, and this further creates a distance in how the two can interact and create meaningful relationships. A majority of studies look at teacher preparation programs that are connected to a School of Education. This study looks at a school environment that does not have a School of Education and has teacher preparation start at the end of the students' course of study in their content area. This study adds to the body of research by acknowledging teachers' experiences in the latter. Prior research has varied experience levels of educators being interviewed and observed; conversely, the participants in this study are both preservice and newly in-service teachers, providing a unique perspective. This research is timely based on the social and political climate of the country.

Limitations of the Study

The research fulfilled its purpose, although there were some challenges. There were multiple changes in the leadership of the Distributed Teacher and Leader Education (D-TALE) Department. This caused a communication gap, and the researcher was tasked with updating each new leader with the research details and what the previous leader had approved. At one point, the leadership seemed interested in this research and was reluctant to share documents, such as syllabi and specific course requirements. There was also approval to conduct focus groups on campus with seminar students, which was rescinded. Multiple emails to follow up with D-TALE leadership went unanswered. Pandemic restrictions, at one time, limited access to observe in seminar classes, to campus resources, visiting classrooms to observe educators, and conducting face-to-face interviews.

Another limitation of the study was the re-accreditation process that the School of Professional Development participated in, which consumed much leadership time. That process keeps the school operating its teacher preparation program. During this process, the staff was unavailable, and access to the leaders via email was limited. The current political and social climate also provided challenges to this research. The backlash and weaponizing of critical race theory provided misunderstandings. Participants who declined to participate stated that they did not believe in cultural responsiveness training, mistaking the name of the study for critical race theory. One participant who declined to allow their interview to be used was apprehensive about diversity, equity, and inclusion work in the education field and later felt uncomfortable. The researcher assured the confidentiality of their personal information in the informed consent letter.

Self-reflection regularly checked researcher bias to ensure the interviews were conducted equally. The researcher had to ensure her past affiliation with the university did not influence her analysis, as an unaffiliated researcher would have been more objective from the start. However, the researcher's prior affiliation did provide a benefit in building rapport with the department leaders and interviewees.

Recommendations for Future Practice

Teacher preparation programs that include specific instruction on culturally responsive pedagogy and methodologies that can be effective in incorporating culturally sensitive readings/texts, guest speakers, and course offerings, along with the already mandated adolescent development, methodology, and school law classes as well as including different cultural development strategies that would also include training in social and emotional learning, organic relationship building. In the future, all teacher

preparation will continue to need training in creating a more culturally inclusive and equitable classroom management and curriculum. Changes in the certification process have not mandated explicit culturally responsive pedagogy training, but the education policies are changing to represent diversity, equity, and inclusion. Teacher preparation programs are responsible for preparing preservice teachers to meet this demand.

Recommendations for Future Research

The results contained in the present study can lead to several recommendations for future research by teacher preparation program leaders, state education departments, school district boards of education, and professors teaching in this area. Teacher preparation program leaders could find a method for including a course on culturally relevant pedagogy to allow students access to various methods of incorporating cultural sensitivity in their classroom culture and curriculum. For example, educators could be taught how to move beyond the superficial addition of cultural holidays, food, clothing, and music and find more meaningful ways to be inclusive.

Educators having more cultural sensitivity will allow relationships with students to be developed more deeply and organically. The sense of belonging would increase a sense of being seen and understood, which could lead to improved academic performance. The increase in cultural sensitivity could also influence behavioral issues that lead to suspension – removing students from the academics taught in the classroom leads to decreased performance by the students and the school. Building relationships with students is a key factor in students' attendance, attitude, and achievement. Understanding students culturally would make a huge difference in showing them they are valuable stakeholders in the school community.

Researchers looking at this research could move the research forward by conducting focus groups with preservice teachers. This would allow for a dialogue between the participants that can encourage more understanding of all racial backgrounds. Visiting the seminar classes to conduct focus groups because the formation of that existing community allows different perspectives to be inspired through the discussion. Site visits to observe teacher preparation program classes would also benefit the researcher. This would allow the expansion of the research to possibly include the faculty teaching the classes to share their opinions and provide access to the syllabus and texts used in the classes.

Conclusions

The present study examined the impact of culturally responsive training for the preservice and the new in-field teacher. The research was constructed on culturally relevant pedagogy that came to the forefront in 1990 to inform a new and somewhat unique position in how teachers could deliver content to students in a way that informed them and was sensitive to their diverse cultural communities (Ladson-Billing, 1995). Interviews and course description analysis were included in this single descriptive case study methodology to gather data about the experiences of preservice and in-service teachers. The participants were found to know about cultural sensitivity, while in most cases, based on their responses, it was not expressly taught to them in their teacher preparation program. Only one participant shared that culturally relevant pedagogy was integral to the professor's class based on proximity to the social justice issues concerning Mike Brown in Ferguson, Missouri.

The results of this study led to a clearer understanding of how preservice and in-service teachers understand and express cultural sensitivity in their personal and professional lives and how that affects their classroom environment and interactions with and building relationships with students. Some practical steps or strategies for integrating culturally responsive pedagogy into existing curricula could be the following four tips based on the research, this study and the researcher's knowledge of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. 1. Preservice educators can engage in critical reflection of bias and power in society and recognize their own implicit bias through self-reflection activities, 2. Teacher Preparation Programs can find ways of integrating diverse topics into required curriculum in measurable ways by showing how it can be done effectively and by allowing preservice teachers access to tools that will show them how to do it themselves, 3. Encourage preservice to attend and interact with students and families at various community engagement activities to ask questions relating to culture and to observe without judgement, and lastly 4. Provide preservice educators with training in respect to restorative justice where accountability and rehabilitative practices can be used to help both the teacher and student understand the others cultural norms and how they can best bridge the miscommunication.

Teacher preparation programs have the arduous task of preparing educators to inspire the next generation for leadership in an ever-changing, culturally diverse, and sometimes volatile world.

Appendix A Informed Consent



**ST. JOHN'S
UNIVERSITY**

School of Education

Department of Administrative and Instructional Leadership

Title of Research Topic: Cultural Responsiveness Training in Teacher Preparation Programs Qualitative Research - A Case Study

Researcher: Loraine Keriece Richardson McCray

Institution: St. John's University, Queens, New York

You are invited to participate in a study that explores cultural responsiveness training in Teacher Preparation Programs. This study will be conducted by Loraine Keriece Richardson McCray, a St. John's University doctoral student. As part of this study, the researcher will interview faculty, students, and recent alums of your teacher education program regarding using Culturally relevant pedagogy in the academic program. The study aims to detail the students' experience in the program and their access to culturally responsive training while in the program.

You will be asked to participate in an individual interview if you agree. The interview will consist of a series of short open-ended questions provided by the researcher. The session should take approximately 30-45 minutes and will be audio and video recorded using Webex, a digital video conferencing platform, at a designated date and time.

Participation in this study has no perceived risks beyond those of everyday life. However, I will ask you to give up some valuable time. The benefit of participation in this study will be that your perceptions and experiences will assist researchers and educators in learning how, if at all, students, faculty, and alums make meaning of how CRP is introduced and used in teacher preparation. If you choose to participate, the study is completely voluntary; you may withdraw from the study at any time.

Your identity as a participant will remain confidential. Your name and the name of your employer, course, or instructor will not be disclosed. All participants will be given a pseudonym that will be used in transcription, data analysis, and in presenting the data.

The researcher will store this form securely in Microsoft One Drive, the university-approved cloud-based software system.

If you have questions about the purpose of this research study, you may contact the principal researcher, Loraine Keriece Richardson McCray, at Loraine.Richardson17@st.johns.edu. Suppose you have questions concerning your rights as a human participant. In that case, you may contact the University's Human Subjects Review Board at St. John's University at 718.990.1440, specifically Dr. Raymond DiGiuseppe, 718-990-1955, or digiuser@stjohns.edu, or the researcher's dissertation mentor, Dr. Ceceilia Parnter at parnthec@stjohns.edu.

Agreement to Participate

Your signature acknowledges receipt of a copy of the consent form as well as your willingness to participate:

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

Printed Name of Researcher

Signature of Participant

Date

Appendix B Individual Interview Protocol

Cultural Responsiveness Training in Teacher Preparation Programs Sample Recruitment Email/Follow Up

Recruitment Email

Greetings (Participant Name):

You are being invited to participate in a research study titled *Cultural Responsiveness Training in Teacher Preparation Programs Qualitative Research – A Case Study*. This study is being done by *Loraine Keriece Richardson McCray* from *St. John's University* as a part of her doctoral dissertation. I am currently conducting a research study centered on Cultural Responsiveness Training in Teacher Preparation Programs. Interviews will take around 45 minutes to 1 hour. If you are interested in being interviewed, please contact the investigator by clicking the link below and further instructions will follow in a separate email. There are no known risks involved in this research.

If you have questions about this project or if you have a research-related problem, you may contact the researcher at, Loraine Richardson McCray at Loraine.Richardson17@stjohns.edu.

Verbal Consent Following Recruitment

OPENING:

Hi! My name is Loraine Keriece Richardson McCray from St. John's University. I am conducting a research study on Cultural Responsiveness Training in Teacher Preparation Programs. Participation would involve you participating in an interview and will take about 45 minutes to 1 hour. There are no known risks involved and participation is completely voluntary. Would you be interested in participating?

CLOSING:

Do you have any questions you would like answered now?

If you do have any questions about this project or if you have a research-related problem, you may contact me at Loraine.Richardson17@stjohns.edu.

Reminder Message

This is a reminder that you have signed up to participate in a research study about Cultural Responsiveness Training in Teacher Preparation Programs. You are scheduled to complete the study on (insert date) at (insert time). The study will be conducted virtually.

If you do have any questions about this project or if you have a research-related problem, you may contact me at Loraine.Richardson17@stjohns.edu.

Appendix C Document Analysis Protocol

1. Collect publicly accessible information.
 - a. Mission Statement
 - b. Strategic Place
 - c. Accreditation documents related to CRP.
 - d. Course catalog language
 - e. Publicly available syllabi
 - f. Institution/School professional development announcements
2. Align documents to theory, research questions, and related literature groups.
 - a. Upload documents to NVivo to store and organize all document data.
3. Explore background information of documents.
4. Ask questions about the document:
 - a. Who produced it? Why? When? Type of data?
5. Analyze document content.
 - a. Data analysis through multiple rounds of descriptive coding
 - i. Develop theme codes.
 1. Noting patterns/themes
 2. Refine and recode
 3. Making contrasts/comparisons
 4. Counting
 5. Clustering/pattern making

Appendix D Interview Questions

Cultural Responsiveness Training in Teacher Preparation Programs **Interview Questions**

Introduction Question

Tell me about your background. Where were you raised and educated and why you decided to become an educator?

1. Are you aware of the current cultural and linguistically diverse populations represented in Long Island?
2. What are your opinions on how we can more effectively provide an equitable education for students?
3. What is your understanding of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy? What does Culturally Responsive Pedagogy look like to you? Could you provide an example of what it would look like in your classroom?
4. How does it inform your understanding of how to create and scaffold curriculum or develop lessons?
5. Can you think of any characteristic's students of color, as a group, bring to the classroom?
6. How much do you know about facilitating academic success for African American students? Would this process look different from other ways you would facilitate a class lesson?
7. How much of what you know about teaching a student of color is because of your training in the teacher preparation program?
8. If you could change or influence the teacher preparation program to include or enhance Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, how would you do it?
9. What do you think would be necessary for a preservice teacher to experience to make you more prepared to work with diverse populations?
10. What is your perception of the classroom environment when culturally responsive strategies are used?
11. How do you describe your teaching philosophy and does that differ from teaching students of color?

Appendix E Interviews

Dora

- SPEAKER1 00:00 Okay. All right. Wonderful. So, the first question is tell me a little bit about your background, like where you were raised and educated and why you decided to become an educator.
- SPEAKER2 00:41 Okay. So, I was well, the first seven years of my life, actually, more than that I lived. I lived in the northeast until I was in third grade. And then fourth grade I moved to Long Island. And then that's where I kind of grew up for most of my life. I come from a family of immigrants. Both of my parents are first generation American. And my mother is actually a teacher. So that had a big part in me wanting to become a teacher later on in life. But my dad's side of the family is from Poland and my mom's side of family is from Ireland. And we actually just did the ancestry DNA thing, you know, about that kind of stuff. But we found out I am exactly half and half. So, it was the truth. And so, after I graduated high school, I ended up going to college at Ravenwood College. And I wasn't really sure exactly what I wanted to go for at that point. But I had gone with my church for the two years before that, two summers, I had the opportunity to go over to the Europe and do an English camp basically with other students there that were around my age or a little bit younger, or a little bit older. So that was really my first introduction into teaching itself, and I ended up majoring in Spanish for my bachelor's because I really like language just in general and with my family background. I love kind of like the linguistic part, like learning about different cultures, all that kind of stuff. My dad is also a pilot, so we've always traveled and with my mom as a teacher, every vacation was kind of like a field trip in itself. So that definitely had a big influence on what I wanted to do for myself in the future. And so after about three years in college, I finally decided, okay, I definitely want to be a teacher because it was always in the back of my mind. And I worked as a nanny for a full year. So I worked with children before and I knew that it was something that I loved to do. So my junior year, I kind of decided. The program, I would have had to stay an extra year or even more to graduate with that degree. And I figured that you had to get a master's anyway, so I might as well just stay and get my masters afterwards.
- SPEAKER1 03:59 We lost connection for a minute and you froze. The last thing was when you went to Europe and you decided that you were just going to do the master's program. But right in between there, I didn't hear. Can you repeat a little in case we missed something?
- SPEAKER2 04:09 Okay. So I went to the Europe and we did an English camp there. So that was my first kind of social or initial introduction. And I really loved it. I loved working with the students there around my age, So it

was kind of social as well. And it wasn't any formal teaching, but it was, you know, an introduction into art. And so, like I said, right after I graduated high school, I went to Ravenwood College for college. I got my bachelor's in Spanish because I always loved languages in general. I don't know if you heard this part, but my dad's a pilot, so we traveled a lot and with my mom as a teacher, it was always a learning experience. And then in my third year of college, I kind of locked in that I wanted to become a teacher, but I didn't want to stay extra years at school. So I ended up just deciding to get my master's in education.

- SPEAKER1 05:13 And you're doing your Teachers Certification in education at Ravenwood College?
- SPEAKER2 05:16 Yes, I'm finishing up the program soon.
- SPEAKER1 05:24 Are you going to be an ESL teacher?
- SPEAKER2 05:28 Yes. Yes. You know.
- SPEAKER1 05:30 All wonderful. So, then these questions will be right up your alley. So, the first question is, are you aware of the current cultural and linguistic all diverse populations represented in Long Island?
- SPEAKER2 05:43 Oh yeah. There's like a billion. Every school I go to, there's always different ones. Most of the time it's always going to be Spanish. And there I've had Bengali speakers that I've worked with in my observations. I've had a lot of Chinese speakers, I've had some Farsi speakers. Um, I think I had one Tagalog speaker that I work with, but I know that is it. And it is an extremely diverse population on Long Island. I know a lot of people think, you know, oh, it's majority Spanish, but really it depends on the community you're in and what kind of immigrant community gets landed there, you know? Mm hmm.
- SPEAKER1 06:21 How do you think that we can more effectively provide equitable education for our students.
- SPEAKER2 06:28 In terms of like, language learning or just overall content?
- SPEAKER1 06:33 I think overall, whichever way you want to go with it.
- SPEAKER2 06:36 Okay. So, I mean, I think diversifying like reading, for example, it can be really easy to bring in cultural context into reading because there's so many books about different, you know, different cultures or even during holidays, you can bring that into the classroom. Um, you know, to celebrate even and do a social studies plus reading kind of thing. You know, we're going to be reading books about, you know, India and the Indian culture and maybe year round times like like Eid or Ramadan or stuff like that. Um, I think there's so many different ways. For me personally, I've always looked at what my students backgrounds are and I try and bring, you know, music into the class. I love using music with my high schoolers that I would always say, okay, we're going to make a playlist. You know, your favorite song

from your like that you used to listen to at home in your own country, even hear at elementary school that I'm working at right now. One of my students is from Ecuador, and he does like traditional folk dancing, So I'll use that sometimes, you know, as a reward. If he's doing really well with what we're working on that day. And I'm like, okay, we can, you know, watch some videos and you can tell me about it. So, I think just knowing your students, knowing their backgrounds and their languages and cultures and trying to bring that into the classroom through your classroom content. Obviously, there are New York State standards and curriculum and all that stuff you have to follow, but there is flexibility and reading material and you know what countries and that kind of stuff. You want to study for social studies, even in math, you can you can bring in, you know, just bringing the awareness to it, I think it helps students to be like, oh, there's other places other than America, you know, or other places other than North America or Europe, you know. So just generally trying to see what your students know about across the world and then trying to provide support for that.

SPEAKER1 08:50 My next question has to do with culturally responsive pedagogy. How do you think your teacher preparation program has done in introducing culturally responsive pedagogy, and what does it look like for you? How do you think you'll be able to add that to your classroom?

SPEAKER2 09:13 So, for me, being in the TESOL program, obviously there probably is a lot more culturally responsive pedagogy strategies taught to us in our methods classes. We even had to do like a CRT, not critical race, you know, culturally responsive training. And we had to do a project on how to bring that information to other teachers and also other parents as well. So we had to do basically like make a mini version, I guess, of what you're probably doing now or we, you know, give suggestions to teachers of how they can do this and what parents should expect or how they can help if they're ELL's [English Language Learners] You know, if their families are ELL's how they can maybe help bring awareness to other general students who might not have that background. And then in regards to how I bring it into my classroom, like I said, you know, I try and get to know my students at the beginning of the year or whatever I get to meet. I like to do like a getting to know you activity where you're from, what languages you speak, what languages your parents or grandparents speak, where do you live, what they eat, what kinds of foods you usually like to have at home. Because it can differ even with my two students. I have a Spanish ELL and then a Chinese speaker and when I have snack in my room sometimes just even seeing their snacks. It's so different what, you know, the Spanish speaker will bring in versus

what the Chinese student will bring in. So, it's interesting to see like the variation, obviously. But like I said, bringing it in with reading with books is a great way to do it with with videos or movies or history. You know, if you do, even just like a small little mini lesson of, um, of different inventors or different famous historians or important people and pull from not just, you know, the White American or White European people, the people from South America, from Southwest Asia, from Eastern Asia and that kind of stuff, just to kind of diversify the learning and not keep it to just, you know, I guess the White people is what I guess I'm trying to say, right?

SPEAKER1 11:32

Is this an attempt to create a more inclusive environment?

SPEAKER2 11:36

Mm Yeah. And then even in high school, I know like all of the, all of the required readings and stuff, you know, it's Robert Frost and, you know, he's a great writer, obviously, but there's so many poets from South America. I was a Latin American studies minor, actually, so I have a lot of background on that too, of, you know, different just different world views that you can bring into the classroom. So it's not just single minded I guess.

SPEAKER1 12:05

That is wonderful. Actually, you I'm looking through all of my questions and your answers have been just touching on so many different topics. So I'm trying to look to see if there is one other question that I could ask you, because you've already talked about your teaching philosophy, how you would differentiate in your classroom for diverse populations.

SPEAKER2 12:40

I would say above, you know, even not shaming other teachers, obviously, but even just working with one of the teachers I have now, you know, they don't know what a silent period is when with a newcomer, a student, and she's like, you know, he doesn't ever talk in class. He doesn't participate, all this kind of stuff. I'm like, well, he's never been in a formal education setting before. He needs this time like he's receiving all of this input right now. And once he gets to that comfortability point where he feels that he can communicate or even just participate more, so like that's when he'll start to open up. But they don't realize how long, you know, these things can take. And just it's, it's, it's hard to bring awareness sometimes, especially when someone is so set in their ways. If they're like a veteran teacher. You know, some people obviously are open to it. But it just depends, I guess.

SPEAKER1 13:31

What do you think the teacher preparation programs overall could do to provide more instruction for prospective teachers, for pre-service teachers, in preparation for the mind frame or the lens of culturally responsive pedagogy?

SPEAKER2 13:53

I think generally maybe just taking a look through the curriculum of whatever subject they may be teaching. I know for teens, though, we

don't have any, which is unfortunate, but it's very like student centered on their needs. But for even English, social studies, math, that kind of stuff, looking through and seeing what kinds of books or what kind of units you have and then seeing, okay, we did this already did, you know, three, three European or like three American history units, Maybe we can do a South American history unit for the next one. And it would still provide the necessary learning and content that the students need. But giving a more diverse world view, I guess, you know, maybe just going through together and collecting resources that the teachers could use themselves, such as books or music or website, that kind of stuff within the teacher program. So, that they have that when it's actually needed in the classroom.

- SPEAKER1 14:59 So they can create their own toolbox.
- SPEAKER2 15:00 Yes. It's hard sometimes I think teachers just on their own. But maybe if working together as a group to compile like a master document or something like that, that can be saved and shared in the future or shared with other teachers. I think that would be really helpful because a lot of people aren't really aware of the curriculum before they go into the actual position.
- SPEAKER1 15:28 Very true. Very, very true. Thank you so much. I appreciate your time. I really do appreciate you answering the questions.
- SPEAKER2 15:37 My instructor has been telling us about this. And she told us, I think like three weeks ago. I was like, oh, I'll definitely do that. And I meant to reach out to you earlier, but I totally forgot. And she sent a reminder last night. I was like, oh my gosh, I need to get on this.
- SPEAKER1 15:52 Thank you so much. I really appreciate it. I have to tell her thank you so much.

Sasha

- SPEAKER1 00:00 So, I'm going to ask for you to think about your time in your preparation program when you were getting prepared for becoming a teacher. Tell me about your own background. Like, where were you raised and educated and why did you decide to become a teacher?
- SPEAKER2 00:38 So, I went to Ravenwood College, and that's where I did my undergrad. So, during Ravenwood College, I actually studied abroad. I wanted to kind of gain a perspective into, you know, the different countries that maybe my students could possibly come from. So, I wanted to go somewhere where I had like a Spanish speaking experience, but then also like more like the Asian cultures. So, I did do two short programs. One, I went to Costa Rica, and I got to teach there, which is really cool. And then the other one, I went to China and Taiwan, and we got to talk to the students there, go to their schools, you know, visit different sites. And yeah, I wanted to become a teacher just because I've always been, like passionate about helping

students, specifically students who struggle because, you know, I struggled as a child as well. I had ADHD. So, you know, I struggled with like taking tests and just being silly in class. I just wanted to help like those types of students. Mhm. So that's why I want to, you know, and then that's why I want to do my master's in special education.

SPEAKER1 02:08 I'm sorry I forgot to reiterate that there won't be any identifying information when I do the writing about the interviews. Everyone will receive a pseudonym and there won't be anything in my research that will focus, that will lead anyone back directly to you.

SPEAKER2 02:38 Yeah. That's fine. So, I grew up in Long Island. Mm hmm. And I just moved to _____ with my husband. My mother went to the local school for education. She's a reading teacher. She's in [a local] school district. So, I kind of not only wanted to be a teacher on my own, but also because, you know, my mother was a teacher, and that's kind of how I initially got into it.

SPEAKER1 03:03 Okay. Mom was a teacher as well. Okay. So, you grew up here in Long Island? Yes. All right. So, my first question is, are you aware of the culturally and linguistically diverse populations that are represented in Long Island?

SPEAKER2 03:23 Um, I don't know exactly, but I, I guess I have a general idea because I've been a substitute, at a couple of different school districts, I've done my, um, my student teaching in _____, very diverse. Um, I worked at, um, the _____, and the _____. And my students were from many different languages, Uzbek. I had Hebrew, Spanish, uh, Chinese. And I translated a lot into all these different languages. And then, um, yes, I have somewhat of an idea, but not, you know, not like statistics, numbers, things like that.

SPEAKER1 04:20 Oh okay, that's no problem. What are your opinions on how we can be more effective and provide a more equitable education for all of our students?

SPEAKER2 04:32 That's a good question. Um, just basically giving students like, I guess for teachers to really find out about their, their students and like their cultures and like their interest. Um, like, really forming that connection with the students is really important. Um, and, and giving them like multiple opportunities to. Show their knowledge because I know from like just multiple-choice questions could be really hard for them. So, like giving them opportunities to show their knowledge in different ways, maybe like I do portfolios with my students, you know, informally, like checking their checking for understanding, you know, checking in with them throughout the day, throughout the week. Like personally as well as like, you know, how they're doing academically.

SPEAKER1 05:29 Okay. What's your understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy?

SPEAKER2 05:36 Um, I would say.

SPEAKER1 05:43 Or maybe what does it look like to you?

SPEAKER2 05:47 I think just like running a classroom where, you know, it's more like culturally sensitive. Um, you know, maybe incorporating like into lessons, like students' backgrounds. So, if students are reading like a story, you know, make it related to maybe one of their cultures or like if you're doing like a math problem or word problem, kind of like incorporating like culture into that, celebrating the holidays, like knowing about your students. Like when I was a substitute at the elementary school, I had Chinese students. So, I made sure, like on the Chinese New Year to teach the whole class about the holiday. So, kind of like fostering like a sense of like cultural awareness for the whole class. Um, like having, like teaching appreciation for student's cultures. Um, acceptance. Mhm. Um.

SPEAKER1 06:42 Thank you. You gave a good example of what that would look like in your classroom and what that means to you. And you already talked about creating scaffolding and making sure that you're reinforcing things for your classroom. Can you think of any characteristic's students of color as a group bring to the classroom?

SPEAKER2 07:05 Yeah. Um, they definitely bring like, um, a unique experience. Like every every student comes with their own, like, unique experiences and backgrounds, and it's really up to the teacher to come and ask those, like, engaging questions to kind of challenge some students or like, give them opportunities to share about their cultures, about like, you know, what they feel comfortable sharing to the classroom maybe through like journal writing. And students are like comfortable sharing out loud, um, you know, their experiences and then kind of, you know, as a teacher, like thinking about what you can add into your lessons based off of that information.

SPEAKER1 07:50 How would you facilitate academic success for African American students?

SPEAKER2 08:02 Um.

SPEAKER1 08:03 And would it be different from how you would facilitate any other class lesson?

SPEAKER2 08:16 I mean, I don't know, like and you're saying like, again, it would be similar that I would like to incorporate, like, I guess more like stories about like, I guess an example would be in science. We would have posted a lesson for the students on Google Classroom. I gave them like 5 or 6 different African American scientists. And then I mean, again, this is like how I would teach for all of the, the students. Mhm. And they would do their research on those African Americans who made like an impact in the science fields, you know, if they were in a different subject, you know, math we would do that as well. And then kind of sharing what, you know, they brought into the field of education.

- SPEAKER1 09:07 Okay. That is really helpful. Thank you. Just a couple more questions. If you could change or influence a teacher preparation program to include or enhance culturally responsive pedagogy like you're from coming from your teacher preparation program, what would you do to change it? Or was there enough of that information shared during your teacher preparation program?
- SPEAKER2 09:36 Um, I think there's always like there's always room for more preparation when it comes to like being culturally sensitive. Um, it's hard to say that, like, I'm fully prepared, you know, to know all of that information. Um, so maybe more like opportunity for interaction with different kinds of students? Um, specifically African Americans, you know, students with color, you know, like different ways to include students backgrounds, maybe, you know, like different ideas, like journal writing or just like finding out about students like backgrounds, making sure like the holidays are being celebrated and learning about like more education on like different holidays, different things like that. Um. Okay. I think what else? I think another thing that's really important is involving their family. Mm hmm. And making sure that, like, teachers are educated on different ways to involve the family, especially with English language learners, because that could be more challenging in a lot of the families. You know, some of them don't get involved. And, you know, there's still ways to send like let them know about different resources or to send things home in like both languages, you know? Things like that.
- SPEAKER1 11:01 What do you think would be necessary for a pre-service teacher to experience during their student teaching or during their coursework for them to be more prepared to work with diverse populations? Now that you have a little experience. What do you think could have happened during your teacher preparation program that would have helped you to be more prepared?
- SPEAKER2 11:25 I think just encouraging teachers definitely to find out about study abroad, because I feel like that that like really opens your eyes to see how things are so different in other cultures and other countries. And like, you know, when you're in another country where you don't speak the language, you know, you feel like the new student in the class whenever we get a new entrant. Like I can relate to them because I know what it's like to be in a country where, you know, you don't speak the language and how challenging that could be. Like just navigating, you know, cultural norms and things like that. So just like learning about like study abroad is really important for me.
- SPEAKER1 12:06 And I didn't get to do study abroad and that is one of my major regrets that I did not do it.
- SPEAKER2 12:17 Yeah, definitely. Like, I mean, it's really it doesn't have to be only in college. Like it's really never too late, I feel like to say travel or do

something, but it's really important for like the first year teacher to, to do like some sort of student tutoring in like a diverse school like Central Islip, like definitely be exposed to students like from all over, maybe like specific areas, even if it's just observation hours. Mm hmm. You know?

SPEAKER1 12:49 Mm hmm. Something like that. Just to give them. Give them a little bit of exposure to it.

SPEAKER2 12:55 Yeah, definitely.

SPEAKER1 12:56 All right. Well, thank you so much. That concludes our interview.

Nia

SPEAKER1 00:00 Good afternoon. How are you?

SPEAKER2 00:04 I'm well. How are you?

SPEAKER1 00:05 I'm doing well. I'm going to ask you a couple of questions about cultural responsiveness, training and teacher preparation programs focusing on culturally responsive pedagogy. So just to start off, can you tell me a little bit about your background, like where you were raised and educated and then maybe why you decided to become an educator?

SPEAKER2 00:28 Sure. So, I was raised in Central Islip, New York, so Suffolk County, Long Island, and it's a pretty diverse area. Lots and lots of cultures out here. Education wise, I went to private school just about all my life, so that was in my favor. And then, I went to live in the city. So that was very diverse, and it was truly a melting pot, very enjoyable. And then I did my degree at Ravenwood College. What drew me to teaching was the Lord, I had zero plans to be a teacher, not because I didn't want to be. I just never saw that for myself. I don't know if it contributes or if it's contributed by the fact that I never really had a black teacher until graduate school. So that could play a part. But I started out venturing into speech pathology, and wasn't able to because undergrad I had to, you know, work hard so that I could pay for school. And so, you know, I got the chance to live in New York. And so, I looked through the list of programs and heard of applied linguistics and got interested in that and a counselor pulled me to the side and said, if you take two more classes, you know, you can teach English to students of other languages from like kindergarten through adulthood. It was like, okay, that sounds pretty interesting. And as I got into the curriculum, I was just so blown away and so excited by the opportunity. And by the time student teaching came around, I was just really in love. And so that's how I got into teaching.

SPEAKER1 02:38 Oh yeah, that's a wonderful like that's the path there, you know, kind of twisting and turning. But it just kind of blossomed. Yeah, that's beautiful. So, it sounds like you're already really aware of the current culturally and linguistically different and diverse populations

- represented in Long Island. What is your opinion on how we can more effectively provide equitable education for those students?
- SPEAKER2 03:09 I think by drawing in more teachers who look like them, sound like them, can relate to them in those ways just so that their content and their delivery of instruction is not so cookie cutter. And you know what? America is, you know, trying to fix students rather, we have to create something that is more relatable, and it fits their needs. And I feel like we're starting to see a little more of that, and that excites me. But I feel like there needs to be more initiatives to bring these teachers, you know, together and create new teachers. School has to have the same mindset of serving these students in an equitable fashion.
- SPEAKER2 03:55 I think so, too. Like we definitely have made some strides when it comes to having job fairs for, you know, more diverse teachers. But I haven't seen like I personally haven't seen the follow through. Like, yeah, it just it seems like there's like the Black History Month. The talk is really good, but then the action is not as substantial.
- SPEAKER1 04:22 So, like you see the talk, but you don't, you don't see the product. How does culturally responsive pedagogy inform your teaching?
- SPEAKER2 04:25 Yeah, yeah. It's a lot of talk like we're getting a little walk, but the walk almost feels superficial to me. It doesn't feel like it is as deep or as serious as it as the situation is.
- SPEAKER2 04:48 Oh, man. Every day. I mean, working with English language learners, you know, you have to be sensitive to the things that they experience, just as you have to do with any other culture. Allowing them to bring their home language into the classroom and feel proud of it. That's something that I have to, you know, encourage and support and celebrate on the daily. So that's just one of the many ways.
- SPEAKER1 05:16 And I'm just looking to see because your kind of touching on some of the questions. How do you scaffold curriculum for students of a diverse, linguistic, diverse linguistic population? How do you scaffold it? How do you create curriculum for them? How do you develop those lessons?
- SPEAKER2 05:36 So, one example is I love to look for lots and lots of visuals that they can relate to and that they can also look up to. So, for example, if we're doing a theme on community helpers, like I push them for kindergarten and first graders. So, if we're focused on community helpers, I'm looking for community helpers on Google who are of Hispanic race, who are Asian, who you know, are black, who are white, like I'm looking for visuals that support everybody because like I said, I haven't I didn't see or experience a black teacher until Ravenwood College. And I can visualize that. Yes. But to see that in a classroom setting is just so different. So, I want these children to be able to visualize that from an earlier age. So that's one example.

SPEAKER1 06:31 Wow. So, you did not have a teacher of color at all or just a black teacher until college?

SPEAKER2 06:41 So, in elementary school I had Hispanic teachers. But they only taught Spanish. Okay. So that gave the mindset of that's all they're limited to do when that's not the truth. When I got to high school, I had one black teacher, not personally, but I saw her, and she taught computers. I thought that was very interesting. But again, I didn't have her, so I didn't get to experience, like the teaching of a black teacher, you know? Mm hmm. Mm hmm. I saw a few here and there, but it was in passing, and I didn't really hear much about them. You know, like, there was minority support staff or teacher assistants or things of that nature. But I haven't seen and experience and gotten to take a class from a black teacher, a professor until Ravenwood College. Yeah. So crazy.

SPEAKER1 07:42 Wow, That's really interesting. Wow. When thinking about your teacher preparation program experience, how much of what informs what you do in the classroom came as a result of what you learned from your teacher preparation program?

SPEAKER2 08:01 Oh, I feel like a guru now. Can I say everything you know, just because I do think that I'm a teacher by nature in some regard. So, some of it is just life experience. Some of it is just innate. But I will say my teacher program, especially my professors they did a really good job, in my opinion. A lot of their courses, were more inclusive or informative, were culturally sensitive, which was nice, you know? And I think that's what really excited me because I've always loved people, love cultures, love languages, etc. So, to see that in a classroom setting and then I learned that I can be a part of that really was inspirational.

SPEAKER1 08:53 Is there anything that you can think of that would that you would change or include or enhance that culturally responsive pedagogy being taught during a teacher preparation program?

SPEAKER2 09:07 Oh, you know, I think because my program was specifically for developing ELL teachers, I think that's why I was so fortunate to have those experiences. I don't know if it's the same experience as those who embark on like a general education journey. So as far as my experience, I don't think there's anything I would actually change because they did a great job really covering the basics of everything. Like we had classes stemming from linguistics to bilingualism and teaching pronunciation and second language acquisition, you know, and even our research, our research got to be, you know, founded on, you know, principles and, and different subjects related to that. So, in terms of my experience with school curriculum for becoming an, you know, teacher, it was honestly perfect.

SPEAKER1 10:08 Oh, that's really good. If you were a teacher and I think we can only probably assume, but. If you are a pre-service teacher that didn't have that same access to those kinds of classes, what do you think would make them more prepared for a diverse population if you weren't going into ESL now?

SPEAKER2 10:33 Oh, I think that's a good question. I think that student teaching, maybe having specific groups that you have to students teach for a certain amount of time. And that would be interesting, like having to, you know, like like almost like when you are a substitute teacher, you don't know what you're going to get, but you kind of go in there and you learn and you figure it out and you know, you have the basis of plans, you know, for the classroom teacher to go off of. But almost something like that where like, you know, how medical students have their clinical rotations purposes. Mhm. If there was some sort of like teacher rotation for different focus. I feel like that would really help people to get a better understanding when you have to be, you know, proximity is real when you have to be in close proximity of these students and support them.

SPEAKER1 11:31 Yeah, I think I've heard a couple of things with having the micro teaching and the observations.

SPEAKER2 11:57 We are all teachers of diverse learners in some capacity. Mhm. And so yes, we take, you know certain courses or certifications or whatnot to make sure that we're in compliance with, you know, what teaching requires. But to have that hands on experience, you know, I think that's really important. If you're not exposed to a number of different diverse populations that can affect how you're going to go into your teaching, especially if the population that you that you're teaching is not related to the population that you've been experiencing.

SPEAKER1 12:20 That makes it, it makes a huge difference. I think you already answered most of my other questions, which is wonderful. Oh, yeah. So that that's really it. Thank you so much. I appreciate you taking time from your busy schedule.

Harper

SPEAKER1 00:00 So, we are talking about cultural responsiveness, training, and teacher preparation programs. So, I just wanted to get some of your background information first. Like, where were you raised and educated and maybe why did you decide to become an educator?

SPEAKER2 00:26 Okay. So, I was born in Long Island, New York, and I decided to get into education because my oldest sister is an educator. And she actually inspired me to get into education because she would come home and talk about her experiences with the kids and how meaningful the practice was. And so, at the time, I was actually going to school well, thinking about going to school for another major. And

then I decided that I wanted something a little bit more fulfilling than just working in a corporate office. So, I decided to get into education.

SPEAKER1 01:11 How did you get over to Spain? How did that happen?

SPEAKER2 01:17 Spain?

SPEAKER1 01:17 Mm hmm. How did you get there?

SPEAKER2 01:20 Okay, so I applied to a program called The Artistic Conversation, and it's a one-year program where as long as you're a native speaker and you have a college degree, you can teach in secondary or elementary schools in Spain. And I decided to apply for the program because I just wanted to change. And I've always wanted to live abroad and have new cultural experiences outside of my home country. And I applied for the program. I got accepted to my first choice, which was the trade. And there I was, a language assistant teacher for ten months in a secondary bilingual school, and I taught kids from sixth grade all the way up until 12th grade.

SPEAKER1 02:10 Wow. How do you think that impacts how you teach here in Long Island?

SPEAKER2 02:23 Oh, yeah. I think it has a huge effect. When I was in Spain, I had this amazing cultural exchange experiences with the local people and it just really impacted my ability to see other people from different cultures in a new light. Not that I hadn't seen that before, but it just really enhanced my overall understanding of people from other cultures and other backgrounds and helped my appreciation for them even more. And I was also immersed in that society. So, I had to remove myself from everything that I knew my comfort zone here in America. And so, in a way, I feel that it allowed me to actually put myself in the shoes of my students because many of my students, some that are not born in the US, you know, come to a whole new environment, a whole new country, and they almost feel like a fish out of water sometimes. So, I felt that I had that experience in Spain in a way. And through that immersion and that ability to adapt or assimilate, really, I had to push myself. And so, within my practice today, it really helps me to understand where my students come from. It also helps me understand language acquisition better and how a person is important and important piece in language acquisition as well. And also, it improved my ability to speak Spanish and communicate and connect and build better relationships with my students as well.

SPEAKER1 03:55 Yeah, definitely. What I was thinking for sure, like with the parents and with the family and knowing the cultural stuff in the background.

SPEAKER2 04:03 Mm hmm.

SPEAKER1 04:04 So are you aware of the current culturally and linguistically diverse populations represented in Long Island?

SPEAKER2 04:20 Yes, I am aware.

SPEAKER1 04:22 And how do you feel like you were first introduced to knowing that?

SPEAKER2 04:29 I think I was first introduced to knowing that by growing up in the neighborhood or the community that my students are from. So, I had my own experience as a student, and it wasn't as it was now exactly the same blueprint. But from living in Long Island for so long and seeing media reports and interacting with people, you know, I came to see that the population was changing. And also, within our political landscape, you know, there's different things that you see happening in the news every day. I think it's really important for me as a teacher of color and being from the community, it really helps me to build relationships with the students and understand their backgrounds. And so, I'm more aware of what's actually taking place and what the community needs.

SPEAKER1 05:18 So, what is your opinion on how we as educators can provide a more effective, equitable education for our students?

SPEAKER2 05:32 And I think for me, equity is really just about representation and inclusion. I know for me right now the most important thing is diverse literature. That's always been at the forefront of, um, you know, pushing that agenda forward. Because I just think back to when I was a kid in high school or middle school, and I never saw myself in books. So it's really important for students to feel represented, um, and also to have content and curriculum that does include students of all backgrounds and not just appeals to students from one particular sector of life. Mm hmm. So that's really what I feel is most important right now.

SPEAKER1 06:25 So, when you were in your teacher preparation program, what was your understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy.

SPEAKER2 06:36 At the time? I think the only thing we really discussed was, um, not bringing bias into the classroom. So, I remember in my teacher preparation program, we had a, a seminar class where it was specifically for dealing with bias in the classroom. And I remember that we had to look at a lot of peer reviewed studies of different practices within the education system that were biased, and you had to kind of evaluate them. So, we would learn different ethical, I guess you would say different ethical. Like I'm trying to think of the words I studied, I guess. Mm hmm.

SPEAKER1 07:21 Or like, protocols or processes or something.

SPEAKER2 07:25 Right. Questions like where bias was prevalent. And so, we would just talk about, you know, how can we not bring bias to our class or how can we treat all students equally and teach them effectively. And so, um, I really only got that from my college courses, but I don't think they really prepared me in the sense of many of the things that I had to face within the classroom itself. I think it was a very limited perspective that we got. And sometimes I feel like that really can't be

taught. It kind of has to be an innate thing that you have in you to not necessarily bring those things into a classroom. But at the same time, I don't think that it's wrong to learn to be culturally aware if you maybe aren't aware and have lived in a bubble in a sense your whole life.

- SPEAKER1 08:14 Yes, I understand.
- SPEAKER2 08:15 It's kind of a limited teaching point that we've got.
- SPEAKER1 08:19 Can you think of any ideas that could influence the teacher preparation program to include or enhance culturally responsive pedagogy? I know you were saying it has to be kind of innate, but do you think there's anything that they can possibly institute to make it more something that is teachable?
- SPEAKER2 08:39 Mm hmm. Uh, let me think for a second. Mm hmm.
- SPEAKER1 08:47 Maybe another question on top of that, and you can come back to it. What do you think would be necessary for a pre-service teacher to experience to make them more prepared to work with all these different diverse populations?
- SPEAKER2 09:02 I think just maybe perhaps doing like their observation hours or doing student teaching in particularly schools where there's a maybe lower socioeconomic group of students or schools that are more culturally diverse because in my opinion, you know, that is America. That is the world that we live in. Um, but I think they need to be exposed in a real-world setting because I think in school, we're really given a lot of theoretical pedagogy from books and sometimes it doesn't necessarily translate. Um, you know, it kind of goes in one ear and out the other. But I think if you're actually there and you actually get to interact with the students at those particular schools and see where they come from, see what their mindset is, see what kind of issues they're dealing with in their home life. You know, I think it's a better practice to learn from than just reading a book. Mm hmm.
- SPEAKER1 10:01 So, it's like some. Some hands-on experiences.
- SPEAKER2 10:05 Yeah, hands on. And just really having conversations with those students, with the families and learning that way.
- SPEAKER1 10:13 Okay. Just two more questions. Can you think of any specific characteristics that students of color as a group bring to the classroom?
- SPEAKER2 10:29 I mean, let me think about that for a second. Any specific traits that they bring to the classroom? Mm hmm.
- SPEAKER1 10:36 Like in any group, if you were thinking of your, you know, one of your classes, is there something specific culturally maybe that they bring to the classroom that you have to be aware of in your creation of lessons or how you interact with them?
- SPEAKER2 11:00 Yes. It's hard for me to put it into words. I think that there are I think that, you know, I don't want to set low expectations, but many of the

students come from a limited background knowledge, sometimes of things, whereas other students don't. Mm hmm. And so certain things have to be front loaded to them, you know, whereas if they were in a higher socioeconomic environment, I guess it would be different. Um, sometimes students also come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Hmm. And so that plays into, um, into teaching them. But there are many factors. It's just, ah, it's hard for me to really put it into words.

- SPEAKER1 11:50 That's okay.
- SPEAKER2 11:51 I would really have to sit down and think.
- SPEAKER1 11:54 Like, think about how, how that affect that. If it's not familiar to you, you don't even realize that you're doing it. We're doing things, but we don't even almost know how we're doing it.
- SPEAKER2 12:13 Right. Yeah. Yeah. It's almost like subconsciously you don't. You don't know why. It's just there. But yeah, you don't really think about it. Yeah. You just. I mean for me, I just see all students as just students. But yet I know it's kind of like a switch in my brain. When there are students and culturally diverse students in front of me. Because there's, um, you know, there is a different culture in front of you. And so, you do have to interact with them in a different way, where you almost have to show the students that you understand them, and you understand their differences in a way. Mm hmm. Not to say all students don't have differences, but, you know, let's say even like something, for example, like relating to the food that they like, you know, like our Hispanic students. They love certain dishes that other students wouldn't, you know, different cultures. So just appealing and knowing, you know, who's popular, certain sports they like. Um, I feel like it's just being culturally aware that not all students are the same and they do come from different backgrounds and being able to connect and relate to them.
- SPEAKER1 13:12 Yeah. Do you think being a black girl helps us to have that more innately than other groups?
- SPEAKER2 13:20 I'm sorry.
- SPEAKER1 13:21 Do you think being a black girl helps us to have that more innately? Like to make us more sensitive to it than other groups?
- SPEAKER2 13:31 Oh, yeah, I definitely do. I definitely do, because I feel like the student seeing me as a person of color as well as themselves. And I feel like we can relate more. Um, I feel like it's also a different approach that I take towards working with my students in a sense that, you know, I just approach things through my own lens based on my own life experiences. And not to say that, you know, other teachers don't. Mm hmm. Um, but I think sometimes when you come from a background where you haven't been exposed to students like ours or you live in a bubble, you know, it's it's hard to really relate to our students. And one thing I've learned is that our students really

gravitate towards those who really understand them, and they are interested in their culture and interested in speaking Spanish, you know? I've had students who have met me for the first time, and the first thing they ask me is, do you know Spanish? You know, because they want to see like, do you even care about my culture, or do you only want me to learn English? Right. So, I try to emphasize that both languages are important and they're important as individuals because they're beautiful, wonderful, lovely, intelligent people. And no matter where you come from, no matter your background, your race, you know, you're still an intelligent human being. And there shouldn't be low expectations for anyone. You know, I think, yeah, being a black girl, it helps a lot. Tremendously.

SPEAKER1 15:02 Yeah, I appreciate your time. Thank you so, so much.

SPEAKER2 15:08 You're welcome.

Hawthorne

SPEAKER1 00:00 All participants are going to get pseudonyms, so nobody should be identifiable from that or from their remarks or anything like that.

SPEAKER2 00:35 Oh, okay.

SPEAKER1 00:37 All right. So, my first question is just the introduction question for you to tell me a little bit about your background, where you were raised and educated and how or why you decided to become an educator.

SPEAKER2 01:22 And so, I was born and raised right here on Long Island, New York, and went to high school, graduated and went on to community college, first, then on to Ravenwood College for my bachelor's in history.

SPEAKER1 01:55 What got you on that path of teaching?

SPEAKER2 01:59 So, I loved high school. My high school experience was one of the best, and I attribute a lot of that to my teachers that I had, creating that sense of belonging and creating that safe space for us where we felt like we could just be ourselves. And I said, you know, I really think I want to do this for a living. So, I think that's an inspiration for my own. Teachers trickled down to me and that's why I pursued teaching. I just love history as well, and I love how diverse it is. Like there's so many different things you could talk about in the classroom it's not a stretch to the curriculum. I really think it's all about how things are relevant, things are relevant to them. With all the things that are going on in the world today. So, I just love having that conversation.

SPEAKER1 02:44 And I think the fact that it's not tied to a test is great, right? So, you don't have those constraints on you.

SPEAKER2 02:52 Right? Yeah.

SPEAKER1 02:55 Yeah.

SPEAKER2 02:55 Even the courses that are, you can make relate to things that are happening to us. Whatever I'm teaching in courses from the past, like I just enjoy it because I can connect it with anything happening now like those two leaders and how they relate a lot to what is going on in Russia and Ukraine and their battles.

SPEAKER1 03:10 Wow, yes, I can see how it's really relatable.

SPEAKER2 03:12 Yeah.

SPEAKER1 03:13 So, it's really nice to be able to have that, that openness. Okay. So being that you were born and raised here, are you aware of the current cultural and linguistically diverse populations represented in Long Island?

SPEAKER2 03:34 Oh well, yeah. It is very diverse, it's becoming very high in Hispanic. But I was growing up in a school where I saw everybody, you know, it wasn't like all white, wasn't all black. I found a lot of my friends are from multiple backgrounds. And then I just knew that I was going on to become a teacher, that's what I want to do. And just from that diversity. So, our country changing and for me it kind of reminds me of where I went to school. So, my neighborhood was kinda in a poor area, but it is diverse.

SPEAKER1 04:15 Do you know that there's any other kinds of backgrounds or any other kinds of linguistic populations in our area?

SPEAKER2 04:26 Mostly Hispanic, black, white, Indian, Indian American? I don't see a lot of Asian population. Sometimes we see some here and there but I'm not sure of percentages.

SPEAKER1 04:48 Oh, no, no percentage. Just like in, in your in your comings and goings.

SPEAKER2 04:54 Yeah. Yeah.

SPEAKER1 04:55 Okay. What's your opinion on how we can provide an equitable education for students?

SPEAKER2 05:07 In terms of cultural diversity?

SPEAKER1 05:13 Cultural diversity, or just how can we, you know, give them more of what they need as students? How can we provide something that is more, more equitable for our student populations, whatever way you want to go with it?

SPEAKER2 05:35 I'll go on educational instruction. Mm hmm. So that will go back to like teacher preparation programs should be preparing teachers to create a curriculum with like diversity. Now, you may not know where you want to be teaching, but still, diversity should be included there. As far as where the schools are concerned. We need to have, I guess, more professional development on how our lessons can reflect the students that we are teaching because that's what's really going to pull them in to see themselves in the curriculum. So, for us it's like teaching the more nuanced parts of history, like talking about, you know, pulling out like, you know, what's going on in El Salvador, or

if they just had a presidential election in 2020 or, things like allowing students to connect with where they come from. Um, and then also, I guess, homing in on some of those prominent figures from the past who have made accomplishments from diverse backgrounds to show to students, you know, give them some inspiration or source of inspiration. Mm hmm. So, I think those will also be helpful. I can complain for about an hour about the lack of diversity. But it's needed because look what we have in our district. So, they are going to be needing just more preparation. And then how do we evaluate its effectiveness? Is it effective? Is it working? So, I think we just need more comprehension of how to do it effectively.

- SPEAKER1 07:17 Since you brought up the teacher preparation programs. How would you change or influence a teacher preparation program to include or enhance their culturally responsive pedagogy?
- SPEAKER2 07:44 Rather than just giving workshops something like maybe special courses about how to incorporate diversity. So far as I can remember, it was straight history, like the stuff that we already know or the stuff that was more commonly taught. And like I said before, I think maybe there should be more focus on the more nuanced parts that are not often talked about and how to include it. Like everybody knows about Nelson Mandela, but what about other people in South Africa? Right. We all know about him, but who else was there? I was talking off the top of my head. I just think that we have to go beyond what we are commonly taught, what's commonly seen in the textbooks, um, even including more women and bringing them out more in history. Because if you look at textbook and you just see a whole lot of men. Mhm. So, I think that's where we can start, I think.
- SPEAKER1 08:38 What do you think would be necessary for a pre-service teacher to experience, to make them more prepared to work with diverse populations?
- SPEAKER2 08:51 Mhm. That depends on where you live. Frankly, you may not be able to have access to that. That's quite possible. So, I'm not saying that you can't, but yeah. Maybe when we do the two placements, at least one of those placements must be in a school that's rich and one that's poor or, um, have the students prepare a lesson or a unit, um, that showcases diversity or where the lessons were from diverse backgrounds. Mhm. That should be a requirement. Um. Also give more readings on how to work with diverse students as well. Have meetings on how to work with diverse populations or recommended you to come and speak.
- SPEAKER1 09:58 So, if you had to describe your teaching philosophy, do you have a philosophy for your more mainstream students as opposed to your students of color? Or what is your philosophy, and do you integrate both together?

SPEAKER2 10:18 Yeah. I think now I can say when I first started, I was that way. But now I'm becoming more aware of how important it is to include, rather teach for all students, because this was really important to me, especially now in my first year. But now my philosophy has changed. I'm working on becoming more aware, but also want to be more aware of teaching in a more diverse population. Did you ask me what that looks like?

SPEAKER1 11:13 What does it look like? Like what is your philosophy? Do you have a philosophy that that's different for each group, or do you have like an integrated approach?

SPEAKER2 11:29 No, I don't think so. I can't say I have one either way. Um, I think I try to be more integrated because that is what I try to do, like, teach to all students. Mm hmm. And try to make sure that everyone is seeing themselves as well.

SPEAKER1 11:47 Can you think of any characteristic's students of color as a group bring to the classroom?

SPEAKER2 12:16 I can't think of any.

SPEAKER1 12:19 So let me give you a scenario. You are teaching, you know, a piece of history and you have a student that actually had experience, whether they've traveled there or lived there. How can you incorporate the experience of that student? Since they have some specialized information about that. How would you incorporate their experience with what you're teaching? Would you have them speak to the class? You know, like what kind of things would that student bring to the classroom?

SPEAKER2 12:56 So that would be one that they feel comfortable. They can share their experience with the class. I know at the beginning of the year, which was great, I'm always going to put a cultural diversity project where each student gets a sharing in a culture where their family comes from. The foods that they eat, religions they practice, if any, and where their families are from. So having students of color in the classroom, they bring that diversity, and it helps other students learn about diversity. So, it's not forced exposure to that culture, and they understand each other much better.

SPEAKER1 13:34 And how does that affect, like, the rest of the year? Do you ever use any of that information as you move forward through the year? Does that information ever inform anything that you do in class with them?

SPEAKER2 14:01 So, I don't use their information specifically, but what I will say is I start off with that because United States is diverse. And it wasn't just one group of people who built our nation to what we see today. So, I want them to see that we have had many hands that were in the pot when it comes to the founding and the building of our nation. And so, we talk about, you know, the Africans that were brought here and the Irish, Germans or Slavs, whoever else played a part in it. Asians also

played a part in building the nation. I really don't know if that is truly teaching diversity. But, you know, there's not just one group of people that helped the nation. And then you know you have to start with the Native Americans. So, I usually use this as cultural diversity because it's about the Native Americans, their different tribes all throughout the nation, and how they all adapted to the environment, different ways that's also a sense of diversity there. So, I think that connection existed in their nation.

- SPEAKER1 15:04 Interesting.
- SPEAKER2 15:08 Yeah.
- SPEAKER1 15:09 So, I'm looking through my question. You really have touched on a lot of the other questions already? So, I'll end with this question. What is your definition of culturally responsive pedagogy?
- SPEAKER2 15:24 I mean, that it includes students' experiences, backgrounds in and out of the classroom throughout instruction. Um, again, like I said before, a lot of them don't see themselves in the curriculum, allowing them to have a voice, to share their thoughts, their opinions it's creating that space where they have that sense of belonging in the classroom. That's cultural enough for me.
- SPEAKER1 16:01 Well, thank you so much. I appreciate you sharing your time with me.

Hermes

- SPEAKER1 00:00 So, tell me a little bit about your background, like where you were raised and educated and why you decided to become an educator.
- SPEAKER2 00:09 I grew up in Amityville, Long Island. My parents are immigrants from Nigeria, and they really emphasized education with that was higher education is the key to everything. You know, education is going to give you the tool that you needed so powerful it's going to help you, you know, do whatever no one can take it away from you. Take advantage of all opportunities. So, the school system I went to is very similar to ones in Long Island. Very diverse. I would say I think that one is more diverse because it is a very diverse town. But recently a lot of the white people, since the 50s, a lot of the white people started sending their kids to private school when the schools got integrated. So, it's mostly, you know, brown, black kids, Hispanics, small amount of Asians as well. A lot of white kids. But, you know, I felt like that it was okay. I've always remembered in high school, I used to beg my parents to, like, let me go to St Anthony's, but it was too expensive. But I just knew the quality wasn't that great. I felt like I wasn't being challenged. I mean, the sports were good, but when it came to classes and like academics like, it was pretty limited. Like I was in honors classes from fifth grade. And so, like, I stayed with the same 20 kids up until whole senior year for all the classes for the most part. There was I think there wasn't a lot of opportunity for other kids.

And one thing that I noticed between my household and then just, you know, being from Nigeria and when I had to learn black culture, that didn't come naturally to me. So, I think, you know, I had to pick up on the schooling and the food and all the stuff, the music, everything. But one thing that I noticed at a very young age, like, say, like middle school, the priority of my parents, like I said, they really emphasize education and, you know, going to church and whatnot. And I felt like with the kids that I went to school with, the values were opposite. Like they worried about the kids and the dreams and fighting and partying and all that stuff. And then when I would get to, like, know my classmates, at least, like I said, we were kind of secluded from the kids cause, you know, all the honors classes. But when I got to know them, I had two worlds. That's when I really started interacting with other kids. I just learned that their home was really different. Like I'm fortunate I had my parents. Everyone in my household has a degree. My parents both have a bachelors. At the time, my mom had an associate's degree, but they still went back to school. My mom was a teacher in Nigeria, so they had really, you know, good jobs in education and when they finished school they immigrated and, you know, they were working like a couple jobs each. And the other families just didn't have that same emphasis on education. I just think the priorities were wrong. And I also saw a disconnect between the teachers and the students. So, when I was in school, we had a good amount of diversity. When it came to teachers, I had a couple black teachers from a very young age, like kindergarten. I think throughout middle school, high school, not so much. But as the years kept going on, I noticed less and less and less teachers of color. And I don't know, I just noticed the discrepancy as like, you know, kids being targeted for like play fighting or the language that they're using or how they're interacting with each other. You could just tell there was a huge disconnect between the teachers and the students, like they just didn't understand each other. And I knew that the kids like it was just a sick cycle that I was seeing. Like, I wouldn't necessarily say school to prison pipeline. But people graduate, even to this day, and they aren't doing much, you know, work at anything or they go from job to job. They have a ton of kids. They're like on welfare, you know, they're living in the same spots. And another thing I noticed when I went to school was that like the whole families stayed in the same town. No one ever moved out. No one ever, you know, like explored different avenues. It's just like they didn't look beyond their environment. And I felt like that was because they didn't have anyone to show them. Like they didn't have anyone to say, hey, look, there's a world out there. Hey, look, if you do X, Y, Z, even if it's not going to school, if you, you know, you can go to the army or you can go to a

training program and just go out and explore. Like, I was fortunate enough to have that with my parents. And then the church I was involved in, it wasn't like a black church it was a predominantly white church. So, I didn't get to mix in with different groups of people and I thought that was a clear racial divide, but that's because of racial ignorance because they just don't like to know each other. They weren't familiar with each other, they just kind of ignored or what not. It took a while for me on the other hand, I'm like open to exploring new opportunities. So, um, I just, I would say like middle school because I've always known I want to be a teacher, but I think in middle schools, when I was like, I purposely want to teach in underserved communities like where I grew up because I, I want to connect with the kids. I want to say, hey, like, you don't have to live like this. There's a world out there, you know, you should prioritize X, Y, Z, like I just to point them in the right direction and give them some sort of guidance, some sort of, you know, motivation to just to go out and make something of yourself instead of, you know, becoming a statistic because it's easier to tell them and teachers don't care and then they don't care. And I just feel like I saw so many kids slipping through the cracks and I wanted to change that. So, which is why I want my doctorate, because I want to go on a wider scale and not just, you know, reach kids where I go to school, but I want to implement policies to create equity and opportunity for everyone.

SPEAKER1 06:49 Well, I think that's amazing. Thank you so much. You actually went into a lot of different areas that I'm going to be covering. So let me go to this question because this kind of is sticking out to me. In your opinion, how could teachers provide a more equitable education for the students? Like what's something that they could have done different in your school? What can teachers do to provide a more equitable education for them?

SPEAKER2 07:26 I mean, I guess it just starts with like the basics, like better relationship building and like add that to when we get observed that they actually include that in the evaluation.

SPEAKER1 07:35 How do you feel that can make them more culturally sensitive?

SPEAKER2 07:38 Yeah, like being culturally responsive. That's a big one. Um, I remember distinctly it was I was in 11th grade, and I didn't take AP U.S. that year. I was in a regular history class and so I was one of the first times I was separated from like the honors kids. And it was so different for me.

SPEAKER1 08:03 How was it different?

SPEAKER2 08:03 Just like fun types of things. I was the only one that was able to answer all the questions. And the kids were like, how do you know that? They were just like, not exposed to, like, the world that's out there. The average American that's exposed to more diverse

environments is more well-rounded, I should say. It's dumb. It's just like, how do you not know that? So, I guess just being culturally responsive, like being aware of your audience, being willing to work with them, understand where they're coming from, because I don't really think it was a priority of education. I just think it was ignorance on behalf of teachers. That's my opinion.

- SPEAKER1 09:03 What would you do if you could change or influence a teacher preparation program, what kind of things would you include to enhance the awareness of culturally responsive pedagogy?
- SPEAKER2 09:20 I feel like my school, because I went to Ravenwood College, which is very white, the teacher preparation program did an excellent job with providing us with like diversity courses. I forget what the name of them was specifically, but pretty much we just learned how to be like culturally responsive, how to reach all different types of students, like regardless of their ability level or, you know, where they're coming from. And then there was one research course that I did, and I had a professor, and she's not there anymore, she would emphasize diversity as much as she could have. But she, she was the superintendent of like, um, kind of like a program when that whole, what was it like? Ferguson was I don't remember who it was. Mike Brown. Mike Brown, I think? Well, when he was killed.
- SPEAKER1 10:31 Yes, that happened in Ferguson. Mike Brown in Ferguson. Yes.
- SPEAKER2 10:36 She was like the superintendent of schools over some programs. So, she was telling us how they got called into meetings on a Sunday. And she had to decide whether or not the schools should discuss the riots. And like all this stuff, she was telling us experiences of like the different kids that went there and like the behavioral issues, but like always finding a ways to reach them, always understanding like, okay, this is this person, this is their background, this is how we work with that. They're not a threat. You have to learn just how to adapt. I feel like if in general educational programs, if they put an emphasis on like relationship building and like understanding where your students are coming from, it's going to be so much easier to be put into the classroom because a lot of like, that's where I learned about like, you know, black boys being, you know, disproportionately classified for special ed or, you know, that's where I really learned about the school to prison pipeline. And I feel like at the end of the day, it just comes down to ignorance, like a lack of education. So, I think there needs to be a lot more emphasis on relationship building.
- SPEAKER1 11:55 Is there anything in particular that you think is necessary for a pre-service teacher to experience, to make them feel or make them more prepared to deal with students in diverse populations or work with diverse populations?

SPEAKER2 12:28 Yes. So, one thing that I am really fortunate with my supervisor is that they made sure to do that. They put us in the position of like really for our first year of observations to go to different types of schools. So, one was a more economically disadvantaged setting and then the other in a more suburban affluent different area. So, you got to see, you know, the two different. I guess, qualities of education. So, when I was in the schools in the disadvantaged population there was a lot more diversity. They had less resources. A lot of kids didn't speak English. And you had to go in for the same amount of time for each, you know, district that you were placed in. And you were required to do different activities and work with the kids and, you know, do some sort of research. So, you got to you have to be in the mix. You got to see the different behavioral challenges. You got to see what differences happen between schools that are 20 minutes from each other but due to different funding the quality of the teachers were different. You got to experience that. It's not like you're just sitting in the back of a classroom and watching it while you're there for a day or two and you're like, okay, like we were we were in there and they forced us to work with those kids. So, I think one thing I remember is that when you come back and talk about our experiences, to do it once a week, a lot of the kids were like in shock. It was like a huge wakeup call for them. And I think they got it because they lived it. They experienced it. They know the differences. They were exposed. So, I think that's really crucial.

SPEAKER1 14:29 I think that's amazing. I think you covered all of my questions. Thank you so much for taking time out of your busy schedule to talk with me. I truly appreciate it.

Appendix F Interview Protocol

Cultural Responsiveness Training in Teacher Preparation Programs Interview Protocol

All participants will receive a consent form before any data collection should begin. The consent form will contain all pertinent information and details relating to the purpose of the study, any possible risk associated with data collection the benefit to participating in this research, strict confidentiality of their identifying information, their right to refuse answering any questions that feel are uncomfortable and their own right to pose questions of the researcher and engage in discussion if requested.

Participants will be given pseudonyms and any identifying information for the university, or their course of study will be removed or changed to create an alternate persona. All IRB protocols will be followed and in detail explained to each participant and conducted in a way that each participant will be afforded ethical treatment and to minimize any possible harm to them. All participants will be informed of the video and audio recording for transcription and coding the data. The data will be stored securely in password protected files and no one else will have access to the files.

Appendix G NYSED and Office of the Attorney General Memo in DEI in K-12

Education



STATE OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
DR. BETTY A. ROSA
ATTORNEY GENERAL
LETITIA JAMES



New York State
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Knowledge > Skill > Opportunity

Commissioner of Education
President of the University of the State of New York

August 9, 2023

Dear Colleagues,

The New York State Office of the Attorney General (“OAG”) and the New York State Board of Regents (“Board” or “SED”) write to inform Local Education Agencies (“LEAs”) of their obligation to place dignity, inclusion, and respect at the center of their educational decisions. These principles, embedded in law, are the wellspring from which sound decisions of educational policy flow. Through this joint guidance, the OAG and SED reaffirm New York’s commitment to ensuring that all students have full educational opportunity by supporting LEAs’ development and implementation of policies and practices that advance the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion (“DEI”).

State and federal laws prohibit discrimination in covered educational institutions on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, sex, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, military status, age, or marital status.¹ Many of these laws require LEAs to take affirmative steps to identify and remedy such instances of discrimination and their harmful effects on educational opportunity for all students.² Failure to evaluate, monitor, and revise as appropriate, policies, procedures, and curricular choices may violate an LEA’s obligations under federal and state law.

¹ 42 U.S.C. § 2000d (prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs receiving federal funding); 20 U.S.C. § 1681(a) (prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs receiving federal funding); N.Y. Exec. Law § 296(4) (2022) (prohibiting discrimination on the basis of “race, color, religion, disability, national origin, citizenship or immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, military status, sex, age, marital status, or status as a victim of domestic violence . . .” in “educational institutions”); *see also* N.Y. Educ. Law § 12(1) (2022) (prohibiting bullying, harassment, and discrimination of a student on the basis of “actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex”); 42 U.S.C. § 11431 (“Each State educational agency shall ensure that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education.”); 42 U.S.C. § 12131 *et seq.* (prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability in public services, including public education); 42 U.S.C. § 12181–82 (prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability in places of public accommodation, defined to include places of education); 29 U.S.C. § 794(a) (prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability in programs receiving federal funding); *see also* *Wilson v. Phoenix House*, 978 N.Y.S.2d at 750 (Sup. Ct. 2013) (holding that gender dysphoria, a disability many transgender people have, is a disability that must be accommodated under New York law, and that a reasonable accommodation for a transgender woman is being “entitled to experience living as” a female); *Doe v. Bell*, 754 N.Y.S.2d 846, 851 (Sup. Ct. 2003); N.Y. Civ. Rights § 40-c(2) (defining disability as consistent with the New York State Human Rights Law).

Two state policies—the Dignity for All Students Act (“Dignity Act”) and the Board of Regents’ DEI policy—deserve special attention. The Dignity Act took effect on July 1, 2012 and requires that public schools “foster civility in public schools” by creating a school environment where students are free to learn without fear of discrimination, harassment, or intimidation.³ It also amended Section 801-a of New York State Education Law regarding instruction in civility, citizenship, and character education by expanding the concepts of tolerance, respect for others, and dignity. This includes an awareness and sensitivity in the relations of people, including different races, weights, national origins, ethnic groups, religions, religious practices, mental or physical abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities, and sexes. The Dignity Act was amended in 2021 to include that discrimination based on race includes discrimination based on hairstyles and traits associated with race.

In May 2021, the Board adopted a robust DEI policy.⁴ This followed the publication of a DEI framework, in which the Board stated that it “is important for the Board . . . to establish and communicate to all New Yorkers its beliefs and expectations for all students—especially at pivotal moments in history.”⁵ In its policy, the Board adopted definitions of “diversity,” “equity,” and “inclusion” developed by the University of California, Berkley Center for Equity, Inclusion and Diversity and the University of Houston’s Center for Diversity and Inclusion.⁶ The Board also articulated its expectation “that all school districts and institutions of higher education [would] develop and implement policies and practices that advance diversity, equity, and inclusion [‘DEI’]—and that they will implement such policies and practices with fidelity and urgency.”⁷

Public schools cannot meet their legal obligations unless they place DEI at the center of their work. Three crucial examples are identified below: (1) teaching and learning; (2) student discipline; and (3) addressing bullying and harassment.

² *E.g.* Renee L. Rider & Lourdes M. Rosado, Dignity for All Students Act: Results of Statewide School District Survey and Guidance on Implementation 12-13 (2016), https://ag.ny.gov/sites/default/files/dasa_-_dear_colleague_letter_oag-sed_guidance_document.pdf (hereinafter “DASA 2016 Guidance”) (explaining that the Dignity for All Students Act requires public schools to promptly respond to witnessed or reported harassment, bullying, or discrimination with a written report, thorough investigation, and prompt action to end the harassment, bullying, and discrimination).

³ N.Y. Educ. Law § 11.

⁴ Letter to the Honorable Members of the Board of Regents from Chancellor Lester W. Young, Jr. Re: The New York State Board of Regents Policy Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in New York State Schools (May 6, 2021), <https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/521bra7.pdf> at 1.

⁵ See Letter to the Honorable Members of the Board of Regents from Chancellor Lester W. Young, Jr. Re: The NYS Board of Regents Framework on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in New York’s Schools: A Call to Action – DRAFT (Apr. 12, 2021), <https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/421brd1.pdf>, at 1, 3-4.

⁶ *Id.* at 6-7.

⁷ *Id.*

1. Ensure teaching and learning reflect principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion and provide opportunities for all students to make educational progress.

The Board of Regents is committed to students in New York receiving the best instruction possible. As explained in the Board’s policy statement, LEAs should “[a]ddress the need for inclusive and culturally responsive teaching and learning, including but not limited to curricula in all content areas; books and instructional materials; pedagogical practices and professional development; classroom grouping policies and practices; student support systems for all developmental pathways; full and equitable opportunities to learn for all students; and multiple assessment measures.”⁸ Such teaching and learning should, among other things, avoid the “danger of a single story,” and “create opportunities for all students to learn from multiple perspectives.”⁹ It should be up-to-date, accurate, and reflect the diverse groups that have contributed to the intellectual discourse. Incorporating diverse perspectives builds a safe and nurturing school community and improves academic achievement for all students—a central goal of education in New York State.

Teaching curricula that accurately portray and analyze historical information in a culturally appropriate manner is lawful and encouraged. Conversely, failure to evaluate, monitor, and update teaching and learning policies, including with respect to the appropriateness of curricular choices in the classroom¹⁰ and student grouping across classrooms and schools, may violate state and federal law.¹¹ The OAG and SED further note that LEAs cannot abdicate their legal responsibilities in this area, even if requested to do so by some community members.

Accordingly, school districts cannot respond to local electorates or stakeholders by banning curricular materials that accurately portray and critically analyze topics related to protected classes such as race, national origin, gender (including gender identity and expression), or sexual orientation.

⁸ SED Board DEI Policy, at 2 (emphasis added).

⁹ SED Framework, at 3–4.

¹⁰ *E.g.*, Letter Agreement between OAG and Superintendent, Watertown City School District (July 31, 2020) (resolving concerns in an investigation relating to an incident involving a reenactment of a slave auction conducted in a fourth-grade classroom in one of the District’s schools with respect to Title VI, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act, and the Dignity Act); Assurance of Discontinuance In the Matter of: The Investigation by Letitia James, Attorney General of the State of New York of The Chapel School (May 16, 2019) (resolving concerns in an investigation relating to whether the school’s policies, curriculum, oversight of teachers, and practices for student enrollment and staff and faculty hiring discriminated against students on the basis of race, and/or created a hostile environment for students of color at the school).

¹¹ *Cf.* Dep’t of Educ. & Dep’t of Just., Nondiscriminatory Administration of School Discipline (2014),

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201401-title-vi.html> (stating that a district-wide alternative high school program, where 90 percent of students assigned involuntarily are Black, despite Black students making up only 12 percent of the district’s total students, could be basis for Title VI violation).

Additionally, race-based disparities in enrollment in Advanced Placement and other high-level courses may violate Title VI. *Cf.* Letter from Arthur Zeidman, Dir., S.F. Off., Off. of C.R., to Steven Ladd, Superintendent, Elk Grove Unified Sch. Dist., at 1 (July 24, 2014) (determining that a school district’s policy for enrolling students in AP courses had an unlawful disparate impact).

SED also reminds colleagues of the Boards' Culturally Responsive-Sustaining (CR-S) education framework, which "help[s] education stakeholders create student-centered learning environments that affirm cultural identities; foster positive academic outcomes; develop students' abilities to connect across lines of difference; elevate historically marginalized voices; empower students as agents of social change; and contribute to individual student engagement, learning, growth, and achievement through the cultivation of critical thinking."¹² The framework provides guidelines for education stakeholders, including students, teachers, school leaders, district leaders, and family and community members related to equity and inclusion. For example, the framework provides that district leaders should "[a]dopt curriculum that highlights contributions and includes texts reflective of the diverse identities of students and reframes the monocultural framework that privileges the historically advantaged at the expense of other groups."¹³ SED and OAG encourage districts to revisit the framework, and ensure that staff and educators are using it to continuously evaluate, monitor, revise, and improve their policies, procedures, and curricular choices to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion.

(1) Address punitive student disciplinary policies and practices that result in disproportionality.

The U.S. Department of Education has stated, "[s]tudent discipline disproportionately involves students of color, particularly Black students, and students with disabilities." It "begin[s] as early as preschool," and is "widespread and persistent."¹⁴ Such disproportionality violates state and federal laws, which require that discipline policies and practices be designed and implemented in a non-discriminatory way to ensure that all students have equal educational opportunity.¹⁵

New York State remains committed to minimizing punitive suspension practices and instead using restorative practices to keep students in the classroom, because the damage suspensions cause to student achievement is lasting.¹⁶ Previous guidance from OAG and SED "urge[d] all districts to fully evaluate whether they over-rely on exclusion as a form of discipline." This guidance cautioned that "[o]ver-reliance on exclusionary discipline and disparities in its use leave school districts in New York vulnerable to liability under a host of federal and state laws ...[.]"¹⁷

¹² New York State Educ. Dep't, Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Framework (2018), <http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/crs/culturally-responsive-sustaining-education-framework.pdf>.

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ U.S. Dep't of Educ., "School Climate and Student Discipline Resources: Know the Data," <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/data.html> (last accessed Jul. 23, 2022).

¹⁵ See 42 U.S.C. § 2000d (2021) (prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs receiving federal funding); U.S. Dep't of Educ., Off. of Civ. Rts., Letter to Christina School District re: Case No. 03-10-5001 (Dec. 14, 2012); see also N.Y. Exec. Law § 296(4) (2022).

¹⁶ New York State Office of Student Support Services, *Safe Schools Task Force Report: Recommendations for Reducing Disparities in and Reforming School Discipline in New York State*, Dec. 2022, 1-71, <https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/P-12%20-%20Recommendations%20for%20ATT%20-%20Recommendations%20for%20Reducing%20Disparities%20in%20and%20Reforming%20School%20Discipline%20in%20New%20York%20State.pdf> (noting that suspensions led to an increase likelihood of dropping out, reduced likelihood of post-secondary enrollment, increase likelihood of involvement in the juvenile justice system, and increase likelihood of future behavioral incidents (page 10-11)). Further, the same report indicated many valuable peer-reviewed research on school discipline practices and policies for educators on pages 48-52.

¹⁷ New York Office of the Attorney Gen. and New York Educ. Dep't, Joint Guidance (Aug. 29, 2019), <https://www.p12.nysed.gov/ssss/documents/oag-sed-joint-guidance-school-discipline.pdf> (last accessed Aug. 4, 2022).

Additionally, New York State’s approved plan under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (“ESSA”) articulates goals for school districts that include “reduc[ing] the overuse of punitive and exclusionary responses to student misbehavior.” And both the Board (by resolution) and Commissioner of Education (by decisions under section 310 of the Education Law) have committed to “reducing dependence on exclusionary school discipline.”¹⁸

The research-based findings the Board cites in its 2019 resolution remain relevant and pressing:

- Racial disparities in student discipline rates persist in New York State and the nation;
- Students with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (including gender expansive or nonbinary), and questioning (LGBTQ+) students are also at higher risk for suspension and expulsion;
- Suspension can be the first step in a series of events leading to lower student academic achievement, higher truancy rates, higher dropout rates, and higher rates of contact with the juvenile and adult justice systems;
- The use of exclusionary discipline (i.e., removing students from their learning environment) adversely impacts school climate overall, fails to make students feel safer, and can have a negative effect on other students’ academic performance and achievement;
- The quality of the school climate is one of the most critical predictive factors in any school’s capacity to promote student achievement; and
- Exclusionary school discipline does not effectively manage student behavior and the American Psychological Association has concluded that “zero-tolerance policies” fail to make schools safer.

SED’s Office of Student Support Services affirmed these findings and recognized that punitive approaches to addressing student behavior are not just ineffective but harmful, especially for the youngest students. Moreover, the report made it clear that there must be further investments in training and preparation for restorative practices, changes to practice, code of conduct revisions, and better data collection and analysis to address persistent disproportionality in school suspensions and discipline.¹⁹

Schools are encouraged to expand efforts to train personnel to move away from systems that rely on punishment and exclusion and towards proactive and developmentally appropriate alternatives that support youth, promote a positive school climate, and facilitate access to educational opportunities. Training should be evaluated on a regular an ongoing basis.²⁰

¹⁸ New York State Board of Regents, Resolution (Jan. 14, 2019), https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/Resolution_0.pdf (last accessed Mar. 7, 2021); *Appeal of K.P.*, 61 Ed Dept Rep, Decision No. 18,055; *Appeal of N.V.D.*, 60 *id.*, Decision No. 17,985).

¹⁹ *Supra Safe Schools Task Force Report: Recommendations for Reducing Disparities in and Reforming School Discipline in New York State*, at 29.

Failure to address persistent disproportionalities in school discipline or evaluate the effect of school policies and procedures on students may run afoul of the law.²¹

For more information about these laws and information on restorative practices and alternatives to suspensions to keep students in school, see the joint SED and OAG guidance issued on school discipline dated August 29, 2019.²²

(1) Ensure effective policies and procedures to prevent and address bullying and harassment in schools.

State, federal, and local laws protect students from bullying and harassment in schools and impose affirmative duties on LEAs to ensure that their schools are free from bullying and harassment. The Dignity Act provides that LEAs must “create policies, procedures and guidelines” that (1) “create a school environment that is free from harassment, bullying and discrimination;” (2) are “to be used in school training programs to discourage the development of harassment, bullying and discrimination;” (3) relate “to the development of nondiscriminatory instructional and counseling methods;” and (4) relate “to the development of measured, balanced and age-appropriate responses to instances of harassment, bullying or discrimination by students, with remedies and procedures following a progressive model.”²³

Harassment is defined as the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by threats, intimidation, or abuse that has or would have the effect of (1) reasonably and substantially interfering with a student’s educational performance, opportunities, or benefits or; (2) would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his or her safety.²⁴ Under the Dignity Act, discrimination is any act by a student or school employee against a student based on a person’s actual or perceived race (including based on hair texture and protective hairstyles, such as but not limited to locs, twists, Bantu knots, or Afros), color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity and/or expression), or sex.²⁵

²⁰ *Id.* at 6.

²¹ *E.g.* Dep’t of Educ. & Dep’t of Just., Nondiscriminatory Administration of School Discipline (2014), <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201401-title-vi.html> (stating that a school district’s discipline code providing for one-day suspension of all students who commit the offense of “acting in a threatening matter,” with no clear definition of the prohibited conduct and disproportionate use of the provision to punish Black students over white students for comparable behavior, could violate Title VI); *id.* (stating that punishment by school officials exceeding district policy for “use of electronic device offenses,” where investigation reveals Black students are engaging in the use of electronic devices at a higher rate than other students, could be the basis for a Title VI violation regardless of intent to discriminate); *id.* (stating that a middle school’s “zero tolerance” policy for tardiness that disproportionately impacted Asian American students, who were more likely to live farther from the school and use public transit in the hypothetical scenario, could violate Title VI if evidence suggested a less adverse policy could be used to achieve the school’s valid goals for the policy).

²² New York State Office of the Attorney General, New York State Education Department, and the University of the State of New York, Guidance on School Discipline Policies (Aug. 29, 2019), <https://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/documents/oag-sed-joint-guidance-school-discipline.pdf>

²³ N.Y. Educ. Law § 13 (Consol. 2022); see also Dignity Act 2016 Guidance (“DASA requires every school district ‘to create policies, procedures and guidelines’ that create a school environment free from harassment, bullying, and discrimination.”).

²⁴ See N.Y. Educ. Law § 15; Regulations of the New York State Commissioner of Education (“Commissioner’s Regulations”) Part 100, 8 NYCRR § 100.2(jj)(viii).

²⁵ Commissioner’s Regulations Part 100, 8 NYCRR § 100.2(jj)(vii).

Gender is defined as “a person’s actual or perceived sex and includes a person’s gender identity or expression.”²⁶ This definition and related information on how this definition is enforced is supplemented by Creating a Safe, Supportive, and Affirming School Environment for Transgender and Gender Expansive Students, 2023 Legal Update and Best Practice.²⁷ This guidance and its updates specifically address gender-segregated facilities, like bathrooms, locker rooms, and changing areas, and how to create a welcoming environment for transgender students. The guidance also addresses other topics that frequently arise in assuring a safe and supportive environment for transgender and nonbinary students, including (i) the use of names and pronouns to address transgender students, (ii) privacy, confidentiality, and student records, and (iii) other gender-based school policies and practices. We strongly encourage school districts to review SED’s guidance and modify any outdated policies accordingly.

Under the New York State Human Rights Law, Exec. Law 296(4), it is an unlawful discriminatory practice for an educational institution, including a public school, to deny the use of its facilities to any person because of race, color, national origin, sex, or gender identity and expression,, among other protected bases.²⁸ Educational institutions should be careful to not create a hostile environment for students based on their race and gender.²⁹ The guidance issued by SED may be helpful to create a more welcoming environment.

Additionally, a school district that adopts a curriculum that excludes people and their histories or notable figures because of race, color, national origin, gender (including gender identity), and sexual orientation may violate the NYSHRL’s and the Dignity Act’s anti- discrimination provisions if the decision to adopt the exclusive curriculum was made on an impermissible basis, such as race or gender identity, or if the curriculum causes or contributes to race- or gender-based harassment.³⁰ Federal law also requires LEAs to have policies and procedures to prevent and address bullying and harassment on the basis of race, sex, and disability status.³¹ LEAs that do not adhere to these requirements may face liability.

²⁶ N.Y. Educ. Law § 11(6) (defining gender to mean actual or perceived sex and shall include a person’s gender identity or expression).). Additionally, New York State Education Law § 3201-a prohibits discrimination based on sex with respect to admission into or inclusion in courses of instruction and athletic teams in public schools except pursuant to regulations promulgated by the state commissioner of education; *see also* N.Y. Educ. Law § 10-18, 801- a, 2801.

²⁷ New York State Educ. Dep’t Creating a Safe, Supportive, and Affirming School Environment for Transgender and Gender Expansive Students: 2023 Legal Update and Best Practices (June 2023), <https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/programs/student-support-services/creating-a-safe-supportive-and-affirming-school-environment-for-transgender-and-gender-expansive-students.pdf>; *see also* New York State Educ. Dep’t, Guidance to School Districts for Creating a Safe and Supportive School Environment For Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students (July 2015), https://www.p12.nysed.gov/dignityact/documents/Transg_GNCGuidanceFINAL.pdf; New York State Education Department and New York State Attorney General, Letter to Schools from State Education Commissioner Elia and Attorney General Schneiderman Reminding Schools that New York State Protects Transgender Students (Feb. 2018), <http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/nysed-oag-joint-guidance-letter-2-28-18.pdf>. https://www.p12.nysed.gov/dignityact/documents/Transg_GNCGuidanceFINAL.pdf.

²⁸ Although claims under the NYSHRL previously were analyzed under the same standards applicable to Title VI, the NYSHRL provisions are now “construed liberally” to accomplish the remedial purposes of prohibition discrimination, and a 2019 amendment to the law clarified that it shall be construed, “liberally for the accomplishment of the remedial purposes thereof, regardless of whether federal civil rights laws including those laws with provisions worded comparably to the provisions of [the NYSHRL] have been so construed.” New York State Human Rights Law, Exec. Law § 300. *See also, Bailey v. New York State Div. of Hum. Rts.*, 38 Misc. 3d 756, 959 N.Y.S.2d 833 (Sup. Ct. 2012); *see also, U.S. Dep’t of Educ., Letter from Suzanne B. Goldberg*, (Apr. 6, 2021), <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/correspondence/stakeholders/20210406-titleix-ee-14021.pdf>.

By way of example, LEAs may run afoul of the NYSHRL and the Dignity Act by:

- Banning books that highlight the diverse histories and perspectives of Black people;
- Using a pretext of inappropriateness or lewdness to systemically remove diverse perspectives from the classroom;
- Prohibiting discussions related to the concepts of slavery or ethnic supremacy, including literary or artistic works discussing such content;
- Prohibiting discussions related to disability and reasonable accommodations;
- Prohibiting discussions related to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, nonbinary and gender expansive people, or diverse family structures and identities using a pretext of inappropriateness or obscenity;
- Prohibiting an LGBTQ+ support group or racial affinity support group from meeting or accessing school resources when other groups are permitted;
- Prohibiting a person from participating in a particular extracurricular program or using a particular facility because they do not conform to gender stereotypes;
- Preventing students with disabilities from interacting with their peers or other educational supports because they are “too much of a problem;”
- Prohibiting a transgender, gender expansive, or nonbinary person from using the single-gender extracurricular program or facility most closely aligned with their gender identity;
- Requiring a gender expansive or non-binary person to provide identification or proof of their gender in order to access the appropriate single-gender extracurricular program or facility;
- Barring a gender expansive student from a single-gender extracurricular program out of concern that they will make other students uncomfortable;
- Implementing a policy that prohibits twists, locs, braids, cornrows, Afros, Bantu knots, or fades or related policy indicating the hair style is a distraction; or
- Prohibiting a Black student athlete with locs from participating in a competition because the student’s hair is below the student’s shoulders but allowing white student-athletes with long hair to tie their hair up.

²⁹ See New York State Division on Human Rights, Guidance on Protections from Gender Identity Discrimination Under the New York State Human Rights Law (Jan. 29, 2020), <https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/programs/student-support-services/creating-a-safe-supportive-and-affirming-school-environment-for-transgender-and-gender-expansive-students.pdf>.

³⁰ See *Zeno v. Pine Plains Cent. School Dist.*, 702 F.3d 655, 667 (2d Cir. 2014) (the absence of a “supportive, scholastic environment free of racism and harassment” may violate Title VI); *Hayut v. State University of New York*, 352 F.3d 733, 750 (2d Cir. 2003) (a student’s “disparately hostile educational environment relative to” their peers could be construed as depriving that student of the benefits and educational opportunities available to them.).

³¹ See 42 U.S.C. § 2000d (prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs receiving federal funding); 20 U.S.C. § 1681 (prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs receiving federal funding); 42 U.S.C. § 12131 *et seq.* (prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability in public services, including public education); 42 U.S.C. § 12181-82 (prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability in places of public accommodation, defined to include places of education); 29 U.S.C. § 794(a) (prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability in programs receiving federal funding).

Failure to adequately address instances and patterns of harassment against students based on protected classes or a school environment that becomes hostile towards a protected class may violate state, federal, or local law.³² Further, denying equal access to student groups that affirm student identities or address prejudice related to these identities may also violate federal law.³³ Teachers and other school staff who interact with students and affirm students' identities, including racial and ethnic identities, gender and gender expressions, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual identities play an important role in fostering school belonging and helping students feel welcome.³⁴ If teachers or other school staff know of discrimination in their school or school district based on a protected class, they may report such discrimination to their supervisor or to agencies charged with remedying that discrimination.

Reporters may receive protection from retaliation based on applicable law.³⁵

³² *E.g.*, Assurance of Discontinuance at ¶¶ 17, 19, *In re Middle County Central School District*, Assurance No. 21-036 (N.Y. June 16, 2021) (finding that the Middle County Central School District was not in compliance with the N.Y. Dignity for All Students Act and Title IX where “the District failed to adequately investigate serious allegations of sexual harassment or abuse” and “declined to pursue further action” to address a student’s continued bullying following a mediation agreement); U.S. Dep’t of Educ., Off. of Civ. Rts., Harassment and Bullying, 4-5 (2010), <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201010.pdf> (stating that a pattern of harassment toward Black students, resulting in students feeling unsafe and no response by school officials other than individual discipline would violate Title VI); *id.* at 5-6 (stating that a pattern of harassment toward Jewish students, resulting in students avoiding use of certain school facilities and no response by school officials other than individual discipline would violate Title VI); *id.* at 6-7 (stating that harassment of a female student by using sexually charged names, spreading rumors about her sexual behavior, and sending threatening messages, with insufficient action by school administrators would violate Title IX); *id.* at 7-8 (stating that harassment of a student using anti-gay slurs and sexual comments, resulting in the student dropping out of extracurricular activities and no response by school officials other than individual discipline would violate Title IX); *id.* at 9-10 (stating that physical and verbal harassment of a student with a learning disability, who consequently refused to attend school to avoid harassment, with no remedial action taken by school administrators would violate the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act); *id.* (stating that taunting of a student with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (“ADHD”) and a speech disability, resulting in the student becoming withdrawn and missing speech therapy would violate the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act); see also N.Y.C. Admin. Code § 8-107(4) (educational institutions are covered entity, classified as a public accommodation) and N.Y.C. Admin. Code § 8-104(2), defining an educational institution as: kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, academies, colleges, universities, professional schools, extension courses, and all other educational facilities.

³³ 20 U.S.C. § 4071(a) (it is unlawful for any public secondary school which received federal financial assistance, and which has a limited open forum to deny equal access or a fair opportunity to, or discriminate against, any student who wish to conduct a meeting within that limited open forum on the basis of the religious, political, philosophical, or other content of the speech at such meeting and related provisions).

³⁴ See New York State Dep’t of Educ., Understanding the CROWN Act, <http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/student-support-services/understanding-crown-act.pdf> (citing research of Craggs, H., & Kelly, C., *Adolescents’ experiences of school belonging: a qualitative meta-synthesis*, 21(10) *Journal of Youth Studies* 1411-1425 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2018.1477125> and Poteat, V. P., Sinclair, K. O., et al, *Gay-Straight Alliances Are Associated with Student Health: A Multischool Comparison of LGBTQ and Heterosexual Youth*, 23(2) *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 319-330 (2012), <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1532-7795.2012.00832.x>).

³⁵ A number of agencies exist that may address such discrimination, such as the New York State Department of Education, the Office of Civil Rights for the U.S. Department of Education, the New York State Attorney General, the New York State Division on Human Rights, or in New York City, the Commission on Human Rights. For employment related matters, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is also an agency resource as well as the Division on Human Rights and in New York City, the Commission on Human Rights.

³⁶ See Dignity Act 2016 Guidance, *supra* n. 23.

For more information about the Dignity Act and recommendations regarding its compliance and implementation, see the joint memorandum from SED and the OAG dated August 31, 2016.³⁶ To ensure that children receive the equal access to education to which they are entitled, we encourage LEAs to reference the documents identified below under “Appendix A: Resources” for assistance, strategies, and best practices.

Sincerely,



Letitia James
Attorney General



Betty A. Rosá
Commissioner of Education

Appendix H Resources

- NYS Education Department, [Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework](#)
- NYS Education Department, [Dignity for All Students Act webpage, resources and guidance](#)
- NYS Center for School Safety, [DASA Resources, Laws & Guidance](#)
- [Summary of Racial and Ethnic Identity Frameworks or Models – Summarization of Key Concepts](#)
- [Anti-Defamation League](#) – Resources for schools and communities
- [GLSEN Safe Space Kit](#)
- [GLSEN Educator Resources](#)
- [Human Rights Campaign Creating Safe and Welcoming Schools](#)
- [The Trevor’s Project 2022 National Survey of LGBTQ Youth Mental Health](#)
- [GLSEN Gender Triangle Education Guidance](#)

REFERENCES

- Brown, M. R. (2007). Educating all students: Creating culturally responsive teachers, classrooms, and schools. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 43*(1), 57-62.
- DeCastro-Ambrosetti, D., & Cho, G. (2011). A look at" lookism. A critical analysis of teachers' expectations based on students' appearance. *Multicultural Education, 18*(2), 51-54.
- Fiarman, S. E. (2016). Unconscious bias: When good intentions aren't enough. *Educational Leadership, 74*(3), 10-15.
- Gay, G. (2002). Preparing for culturally responsive teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education, 53*(2), 106-116.
- Gay, G. (2018). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice*.
- Gorski, P. (2008). The myth of the culture of poverty. *Educational Leadership, 65*(7), 32.
- Hammond, Z. (2014). *Culturally responsive teaching and the brain: Promoting authentic engagement and rigor among culturally and linguistically diverse students*.
- Ingersoll, R., & May, H. (2011). *Recruitment, retention, and the minority teacher shortage*.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory Into Practice, 34*(3), 159-165.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal, 32*(3), 465-491.
- Lee, D. M. (2012). *Creating an anti-racist classroom*. Edutopia: What Works in Education.

- Lenski, S. D., Crawford, K., Crumpler, T., & Stallworth, C. (2005). Preparing preservice Teachers in a diverse world. *Action in Teacher Education*, 27(3), 3-12.
- Mangino, W., & Levy, L. (2019). *Teacher diversity in Long Island's public schools*. <https://www.hofstra.edu/pdf/academics/css/teacher-diversity-li-public-schools.pdf>.
- McFarland, J., Hussar, B., Zhang, J., Wang, X., Wang, K., Hein, S., Diliberti, M., Forrest Cataldi, E., Bullock Mann, F., & Barmer, A. (2019). *The condition of education 2019* (NCES 2019-144). National Center for Education Statistics.
- Morgan, R. (2005). Eliminating racism in the *classroom*.
- Muñiz, J. (2019). *Culturally responsive teaching: A 50-state survey of teaching standards*. New America.
- Muñiz, J. (2020). *Culturally responsive teaching: a reflection guide*. New America.
- New York State Education Department. (2018). *Culturally responsive-sustaining education framework*.
- Paris, D. (2012). Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A needed change in stance, terminology, and practice. *Educational Researcher*, 41(3), 93-97.
- Sanders, M. S., Haselden, K., & Moss, R. M. (2014). Teaching diversity to preservice teachers: Encouraging self-reflection and awareness to develop successful teaching practices. *Multicultural Learning and Teaching*, 9(2), 171-185.
- Shevalier, R., & McKenzie, B. A. (2012). Culturally responsive teaching as an ethics and care-based approach to urban education. *Urban Education*, 47(6), 1086-1105.

- Sleeter, C. E. (2001). Preparing teachers for culturally diverse schools: Research and the overwhelming presence of Whiteness. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 52(2), 94-106.
- Sleeter, C. E. (2012). Confronting the marginalization of culturally responsive pedagogy. *Urban Education*, 47(3), 562-584.
- Smolen, L. A., Colville-Hall, S., Liang, X., & Donald, S. M. (2006). An empirical study of college of education faculty's perceptions, beliefs, and commitment to the teaching of diversity in teacher education programs at four urban universities. *The Urban Review*, 38(1), 45-61.
- Terrill, M. M., & Mark, D. L. (2000). Preservice teachers' expectations for schools with children of color and second-language learners. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 51(2), 149-155.
- Villegas, A. M., & Lucas, T. (2002). Preparing culturally responsive teachers: Rethinking the curriculum. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53(1), 20-32.
- Weinstein, C. S., Tomlinson-Clarke, S., & Curran, M. (2004). Toward a conception of culturally responsive classroom management. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 55(1), 25-38.

Vita

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Name | <i>Loraine Keriece Richardson McCray</i> |
| Baccalaureate Degree | <i>Bachelor of Arts, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, Major: English</i> |
| Date Graduated | <i>December, 1994</i> |
| Degrees and Certificates | <i>Master of Arts, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, Major: Liberal Studies, Concentration: TESOL (1998)</i> |
| Date Graduated | <i>May, 1998</i> |
| | <i>Advanced Graduate Certificate, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, Concentration: Educational Computing (1998)</i> |
| | <i>Master of Science, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, Major: Technological Systems Management (1999)</i> |
| Date Graduated | <i>May, 1999</i> |
| | <i>Advanced Graduate Certificate, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, Concentration: Dual Program: School District Administration & School Building Administration</i> |
| Date Graduated | <i>December, 2005</i> |