2016

Missing Voices: Journeys of Pre-Service Teacher Candidates and Graduates of Color in a Predominantly White Teacher Education Program

Robbie R. Burnett
Minnesota State University, Mankato

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Robbie R. Burnett

This Dissertation is Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for

the Educational Doctorate Degree

in Educational Leadership

Minnesota State University, Mankato

Mankato, MN

November 7, 2016

Date:

This dissertation has been examined and approved.

Examining Committee:

Dr. Candace Raskin, Advisor

Dr. Julie Carlson, Committee Member

Dr. Maureen Prenn, Committee Member

ABSTRACT

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This is a study of the journeys of pre-service teacher candidates and graduates of color who participated as minoritized persons in a predominantly White educator preparation program. In particular, this investigation explores the voices, experiences, and perceptions of minoritized individuals engaging in predominantly white teacher education program. Drawing across two focus groups and three in-depth individual interviews with eight participants, this study found that respondent's journeys were influenced by dyconscious racism and centered in pedagogy of whiteness. Findings from the study also suggest the number of minioritized individuals in the predominantly White teacher education program had an impact on respondents experiences. Participants who were the only person of color or one of few participated as what Bristol (2014) described as "loners." Black male loners and individuals facing the critique of language by white faculty members faced greater challenges in navigating in and through the predominantly white teacher education program. Implications of this investigation address structural barriers a part of teacher candidates of color journey's through a predominantly white educator preparation program and strategies toward reviewing and agitating teacher education practices, programs, policy and research.

Acknowledgements

First, I'd like to thank the Creator, Almighty God and my personal savior Jesus Christ. With out him none of this would be possible.

No project is ever complete without the help of many people. I continue to stand on the shoulders of my ancestors who sacrificed so that I could arrive at this moment. First want to acknowledge both my grandmothers Susie P. Buggs and Rev. Dr. Evelyn B. Underwood who birthed my parents Robbie R. Hall and Dr. James L. Burnett Jr. into this world. To my family and close friends who understood my season and gave me space to read and write.

Special thanks to my advisor, Dr. Candace F. Raskin, dissertation committee members, and critical friends in the academy. Thank you, Dr. Tania D. Mitchell, Dr. Queen E. Booker, Dr. Mymique Baxter, Dr. Timothy A. Berry, Dr. Melissa Krull and Ms. Paulkani Siddela. Your support through this process was priceless.

To each of the eight participants in this study, I am honored that you shared your voices, stories, and experiences, about your journey to becoming a teacher. Your presence, persistence and continued resiliency is needed more than ever before.

Psalms 27:1-2

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Chapter I

Introduction

Background of the Problem

More than half a century after the Supreme Court's ruling on Brown v. Board of Education (1954), its promise remains unfulfilled Shanker, (2015). The transition from racially segregated schools to racially integrated schools has been an ongoing process sustained by the unfortunate mantra of "separate and unequal" in our nation's public schools Kohli (2009). As a result, the re-segregation of schools by income, race, ethnicity, and ability coalesced with the limited presence of racial and ethnic diversity in the teaching force--a dominant trend. In her critical race reflections study, Kohli (2009) argued that while the landmark case of Brown v. Board (1954) changed the law, it also advanced the racist national climate. Similarly, Bell (2005), found that a commonly unintended consequence of this legislation was the firing of a myriad of teachers of color, because many white parents refused to allow their children to be educated by non-White teachers. Subsequently, teachers of color became a minority in the education of students of color. Moreover, Little and Bartlett (2010) observed that this firing of teachers of color, then perceived as a "solution" to educational inequities, compounded with the influx of white teachers, resulted in Black educators either forced out of a job or coerced into custodial or school nutrition positions.

After the Brown v. Board (1954) ruling, the teaching profession incurred a substantial shrinkage of diversity in the teaching workforce. According to National Association of the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Legal Defense and

Educational Fund (2008), “Brown v. Board of Education desegregation required the elimination of all traces of a school system’s prior segregation in every facet of school operations including faculty and staff assignments” (p. 6). Hence, Black teachers and principals lost their jobs. While the United States encountered an increase of white teachers and a decrease in teachers of color, the nation also experienced a rapid shift in demographics, which transformed the landscape into a global information-based economy Villegas, Strom, and Lucas, (2012). As a result, the racially predictable pre-kindergarten through 12th grade (P-12) achievement/opportunity gap became our nation’s most prominent educational inequity. Since 1975 students of color have continuously performed lower academically than White students, have dropped out of high school at disproportionate rates, have remained underrepresented in honors and advanced placement (AP) programs, and have continued to be overrepresented in special education (Brown, 2005; National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2012).

Many educational policy debates have continued to advance the discussion about teacher quality as the solution for narrowing the achievement gap. Clearly, our top priority should ensure that each individual student has access to highly skilled, knowledgeable, and caring teachers—regardless of race and ethnicity Shanker, (2015). Moreover, given the racial/ethnic demographic gap between teachers and many P-12 students, decisions of recruitment, hiring, placement, and/or retention cannot be discounted in the consideration of teacher quality and educational opportunity Shanker, (2015).

Teacher diversity scholars and advocates such as Villegas and Irvine (2010) contested that educational space has been not only a setting for the manufacture and transmission of academic knowledge, but for the shaping of values. Furthermore, given the influence of education on the formation of pupils' values, Villegas and Irvine (2010) argued that it has been unacceptable for a pluralistic society to expose P-12 students to an overwhelmingly white teaching force. Additionally, Little and Bartlett (2010) stated that the "complex portrayals of the everyday life of teachers have been shaped, normalized and universalized entirely from the perspectives of white teachers" (p. 292).

A growing body of evidence has suggested that teachers of color have the ability to significantly improve academic outcomes for students of color, including increased matriculation and high school graduation rates, reduced high school dropout rates, minimized assignments to special education, boosted placement and enrollment in classes for gifted and advanced math courses, and decreased rates of suspension and expulsion. Moreover, educators with similar demographics as their students have served as successful exemplars in roles of authority, have provided cultural connections, have addressed teacher turnover and shortages, have demonstrated high expectations, have reduced implicit bias, and have presented positive role models for students of all races, all of which supports the case of teacher diversity as an educational civil right for students (Agosto, 2009; Ahmad & Boser, 2014; Dilworth & Coleman, 2014; Gomez, Rodriquez, & Agosto, 2008; Goodwin, 2004; Hopfengardner & Lasley, 1984; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Little & Bartlett, 2010; Middleton, 1996; Villegas & Davis, 2007; Villegas & Irvine, 2010; Shanker, 2016; Stead, 2012).

Against the backdrop of a homogeneous teaching force, the education of the largest multidimensional diverse P-12 student populace in history, coupled with the racially predictable P-12 achievement/opportunity gap as one of our nation's most prominent educational disparities, has demonstrated compelling evidence for why the U.S. teaching force should "look like America" Shanker, (2016). Increasing teacher diversity has been one solution to address the achievement/opportunity gap in the P-12 educational system. Over the last five years, the Midwest has experienced rapid shifts in demographics, according to the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership MMEP, (2012). In addition, the state has one of the largest achievement/opportunity gaps between White and non-White students in all of our nation's K-12 school systems Weber, (2009). Such conditions have heightened the strategic imperative to intentionally seek educators that reflect the multidimensional diversity of students in P-12 classrooms. Shanker (2015) found subsequently that increasing the number of teachers of color affords all students to learn, live, work, and prosper in a diverse society.

New research is needed to identify innovative solutions to produce culturally compatible educators. P-12 schools need teachers who reflect the faces of our nation's classrooms and who display the skills and knowledge to challenge systemic policies and practices that negatively impact students of color. Villegas and Davis (2007) contended that prior to the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, teaching was one of the few careers available to women and people of color.

Several factors identified at different stages in the recruitment pipeline have been influential in the advancement of teacher workforce diversity. One prominent factor

focused on the underachievement of students of color in P-12 education, which resulted in fewer diverse students in post-secondary education Ingersoll and May (2011). In addition, given the global economic workforce, employment opportunities for people of color have expanded, causing a reduction of the share of diverse graduates in university-based educator preparation programs Ingersoll and May (2011). According to the Consortium for Policy Education report, Ingersoll and May (2011) also found that, "when diverse candidates do enter teaching, the growth of occupational entry tests, coupled with lower pass rates on these tests by minority teacher candidates, has meant that fewer minority candidates are successful" (p.3).

Another consideration influential to the diversification of teacher ranks involved the lived experiences of minoritized persons in predominantly White educator preparation programs. Harper (2012) asserted that the experiences of minoritized persons must be explored in order to understand racial realities on predominantly white campuses. The term "minoritized" has been used throughout this dissertation in place of "minority." Harper (2012) explained the term minoritized to

> Signify the social construction of underrepresentation and subordination in U.S. social institutions, including colleges and universities. Persons are not born into a minority status nor are they minoritized in every social context (e.g., their families, racially homogeneous friendship groups, or places of worship). Instead, they are rendered minorities in particular situations and institutional environments that sustains an overrepresentation of Whiteness (p.9).

Since little has been known about the journeys of teacher candidates' of color participation as minoritized persons in predominantly White educator preparation programs, new research could identify factors that either support or hinder minoritized persons' transformation into teaching Szecsi and Spillman, (2012).

Purpose Statement

This qualitative investigation sought to learn about the journeys of pre-service teacher candidates and graduates of color. A specific emphasis was placed on how they participated as minoritized persons in a predominantly White university educator preparation program. This phenomenological study used a combination of focus group discussions and in-depth individual interviews to study this population.

Research Questions

The central question of this qualitative investigation was the following: How did teacher candidates and graduates of color who participated in a predominantly white educator preparation program at a four-year state university in the upper Midwest describe their experiences and perceptions as minoritized persons? The following sub-questions were also investigated:

1. Describe your experience with faculty in the teacher education program.
2. Describe your experience with the curriculum in the teacher education program.
3. Describe your experience with other pre-service teacher candidates.
4. Describe your experience with the mentor/cooperating teacher.

5. Describe your experience with P-12 students in the field placement and/or student teaching classrooms.

Significance of the Research

Much teacher diversity literature has examined the symptoms rather than the root cause of the limited presence of teachers of color in P-12 educational environments. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in 2009, 83.5% of all public school teachers were white. Since the majority of teacher preparation programs have produced educators who teach in P-12 schools, little scholarship has been devoted to research on who can ultimately reduce the teacher diversity gap overall-- pre-service teacher candidates of color. Given that the representation of candidates and faculty in educator preparation programs located in the Midwest are overwhelmingly white, candidates of color participated as minoritized persons.

This research was needed to unearth the lived experiences of college students of color once they entered and exited teacher education programs Kornfeld (1999). The outcomes of this investigation sought to gain a better understanding of how pre-service teacher candidates and graduates of color, as minoritized persons, experienced and participated within a predominantly White educator preparation program. In addition, the study contributed information and strategies as to what colleges of education and institutions of higher education could do to better attract, recruit, support, and retain potential teachers of color. Moreover, the results and implications of the study could assist P-12 school leaders' strategies to support candidates of color during field

placement, student teaching, and as teachers of color once hired in P-12 schools

Definition of Key Terms

African American/Black. Names applied to ethnic groups with ancestry from any native populations of Africa Wikipedia, (2015). These terms have been used interchangeably.

Asian American/Asian American Pacific Islander. Names applied to ethnic groups of Asian decent with origins of the Far East, Southeast Asian or the subcontinent of India Wikipedia, (2015). These terms have been used interchangeably.

Culture. The way people agree to live and behave within a given society that encompasses values, beliefs, traditions, practices, behaviors, and rules of that society--based on contexts such as religion, language, geography, and natural resources Wikipedia (2015).

Diversity. Acknowledgment of ways in which each individual persons has characteristics that are unique and distinguishable even within same cultural, ethnic, and racial groups Wikipedia, (2015).

Dysconscious racism. Described by King (1991) as "a form of racism that quietly accepts dominant white norms and privileges. This refers to an impaired consciousness or distorted way of thinking about race as compared to critical consciousness rather than absence of consciousness" (pg.135).

Hispanic/Mexican American/Latinx. Names applied to given ethnic groups

from countries that speak the Spanish language that include the following: people of full or partial Mexican descent; and peoples, nations, and cultures with historical links to Spain. The term Latinx is used to textually shorten writing (both Latina and Latino) while promoting gender equality and gender neutrality (Wikipedia, 2015; Inside Higher Education, 2015). These terms have been used interchangeably.

Minority. Refers to a category of people differentiated from the social majority of people in positions of social power (Wikipedia, 2015).

Minoritized person. Described by Harper (2012) to "signify the social construction of underrepresentation and subordination in U.S. social institutions, including colleges and universities. Persons are not born into a minority status nor are they minoritized in every social context (e.g., their families, racially homogeneous friendship groups, or places of worship). Instead, they are rendered minorities in particular situations and institutional environments that sustain an overrepresentation of Whiteness" (pg.9).

Race. A social construct categorizing humans into groups with similar or distinct physical characteristics (Wikipedia, 2015).

Students of color. Term mostly used in the United States to describe students who are not white (Wikipedia, 2015). The term was used interchangeably with African American/Black, Asian American/Asian American Pacific Islander, and Hispanic/Mexican American/Latin@.

Whiteness. A part of white racial supremacy as a system; supported by direct processes that secure domination and the privileges associated with it rather than just

unearned advantages, or the state of being dominant. (Leonardo, 2002; Marx, 2006; Mitchell, Donahue, &Young-Law, 2012)

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

A reflection of the United States' current landscape showcased an ongoing and rapid shift in demographics that transformed our nation into a global-information based economy Villegas, Strom and Lucas, (2012). These changes have contributed to the educational and economic disparities that exist between communities of color and their White counterparts. These inequities are evidenced by the most pressing concern in education today--the racially predictable P-12 achievement/opportunity gap. The ongoing, disproportionate drop-out rates for students of color, their underrepresentation in honors and Advanced Placement (AP) programs, and their overrepresentation in special education programs has become a consistent and dominant trend Brown (2005).

Progress towards the eradication of the achievement/opportunity gap has centered on the alteration of classroom and school-wide dynamics in an effort to improve academic outcomes for students of color Villegas, Strom and Lucas (2012). Given the exponential growth of racial/ethnic/linguistic and religious diversity in the P-12 student body, an imbalanced composition between the teaching force and student population has remained prevalent Ingersoll and May (2011). According to NCES in 2009, 83.5% of all public school teachers were White. However, students of color collectively made up 50.3% of the nation's P-12 school population NCES (2014).

There are several indicators associated with the elimination of racial disparities in education. A growing body of research points to one of the solutions towards the

removal of the achievement/opportunity gap that merits public attention: the need to increase the diversity of the teaching force (Agosto, 2009; Ahmad & Boser, 2014; Brown 2005; Dilworth & Coleman, 2014; Gomez, Rodriquez, & Agosto, 2008; Goodwin, 2004; Hopfengardner & Lasley, 1984; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Little & Bartlett, 2010; Middleton, 1996; Stead, 2012; Villegas & Davis, 2007; Villegas & Irvine, 2010;). Students of color and white students alike benefit from a diversified teaching corps, as teachers of color serve as role models, improve academic outcomes for all students, and address teacher shortages in general (Ingersoll & May, 2011; Villegas & Irvine, 2010).

For students of color, the traditional path to becoming public school educators through four-year university-based programs typically has not served them well. Flores, Clark, Claeys and Villarreal (2007) reported that students of color often begin their post-secondary experiences at two-year community colleges and transfer to four-year institutions. Even with targeted support, the study found that graduation rates for this student population were typically less than their white counterparts. Moreover, when students of color did matriculate to four-year institutions, they were accompanied with the additional hurdles of receiving admission into an educator preparation programs and successfully passing required state licensure examinations Ingersoll and May (2011). Very few studies in teacher diversity literature investigate the journeys of students of color who aspire to become educators as a primary focus. A body of scholarship devoted to pre-service teacher candidates of color does exist; however, even that scholarship is distorted due to the low numbers of teachers of color Jones (2011).

This study aimed to fill the gap in teacher diversity literature. The examination of perceptions and experiences of pre-service teacher candidates of color who participate as minoritized individuals in a predominantly White educator preparation program was the primary focus of this investigation. There are several issues associated with the pipeline towards advancing teacher diversity in the workforce. A review of literature for this study identified three key areas for discussion that include: the achievement/opportunity gap, influences of P-12 underachievement and proven measures that impact the achievement gap. A closer examination of the three key areas related to the journey toward becoming educators of color during their postsecondary education in general and university-based educator preparation program specifically was explored. The showcase of these missing experiences amplified students' voices. In addition, the study has the potential to provide universities and teacher preparation programs a better understanding of the unique needs and strengths of students of color Kohli (2009). As a result, such knowledge may contribute to educator preparation reform to improve the experiences for students of color in university-based educator preparation programs, ultimately leading to the increase of diversity in the teacher workforce.

Achievement/Opportunity Gap

Student achievement research has been sobering for our children of color. White children have outperformed Black children consistently since 1975, according to the NAEP (2012). The NAEP data defined the achievement gap as "when one group of students outperforms another group and the difference in average scores for the two groups is statistically significant (that is, larger than the margin of error)" (2012).

Universally, achievement gaps have been measured by simple subtraction. For example, the performance of white students *minus* the performance of Black students *equals* the Black-White achievement gap. However, Rowan, Hall and Haycock (2010) found that to gain a genuine picture of gaps in student achievement, data must be reviewed from at least four different perspectives: "whether gaps between groups have decreased over time, whether all groups of students improved, the current size of the gaps between groups, and how each group compares with counterparts in other jurisdictions" (pg. 2). Authors of the Rowan et al. (2010) report recommended that such approaches illustrated a more sophisticated, comprehensive, and accurate portrait to the measurement of the gaps.

National P-12 under-achievement trends. Given the continued shift in our nation's demographics, people of color have accounted for the largest growth of the American population Ahmad and Boser (2014). However, student achievement results for students of color portrayed a dismal portrait for the future of our nation. According to NAEP (2012), long-term score trends on national reading and mathematics assessments showed that White students continued to surpass students of color with results that consistently illustrated achievement gaps nationally. For example, the Black-White score gap in reading was wider in 2013 than in 1992. In addition, NAEP data revealed the significant race/ethnic disparities in scores on national reading and mathematics assessments for White and Black students that have occurred since the 1970's. These outcomes affirmed the national pattern of racial predictability and inequitable achievement levels for students of color.

Midwest P-12 under-achievement trends. With respect to the evaluation of Midwest region data, Minnesota has ranked near the top in the Midwest region and nationally for superior academic achievement. However, the state also has one of the overall widest achievement gaps in the nation, coupled with the second largest achievement gap in the U.S. between white students and students of color (MMEP, 2012; Nitardy, Duke, Pettingell & Borowsky, 2015). For example, according to the *State of Student of Color* report conducted by MMEP (2012), in 2011 white students' reading proficiency scores exceeded the reading proficiency scores of students of color by as much as 27.2%.

More recent data from the 2013 Mathematics Nation's Report Card: The State of Minnesota Snapshot Report revealed Black students scored on average 41 points lower than white students. This disparity has not changed since 1990. Similarly, on average, Hispanic/Latinx students scored 28 points lower than white students NAEP (2012).

Over two centuries, the American educational system, and specifically Minnesota's educational system, created structural inequalities that perpetuated racial disparities in achievement for students of color. As the largest potential growth in the American population, communities of color can and should be one of our greatest assets in the 21st century economy Ahmad and Boser (2014). Moreover, as educators prepare P-12 students for the rapidly changing demographics of a global workforce economy, the urgency to minimize academic disparities has become an economic imperative.

Influences of P-12 Underachievement

Many key academic indicators have been associated with the race-based achievement/opportunity gaps that perpetuate P-12 underachievement for students of

color (Dilworth & Robinson, 1995; Nitardy et al., 2015; Schott Foundation, 2012; Villavicencio, Bhattacharya, & Guidry 2013). Influential contributions that have explained the underperformance of students of color included drop-out factories, access to effective teaching, and limited access to available resources (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2013; Isenberg, Max, Gleason, Potamites, Santillano, Hock & Hansen, 2013; Villavicenio et al., 2013). Moreover, Dilworth and Robinson (1995) reported three fundamental causes of academic failure for students who attended schools with high concentrations of economically disadvantaged students: (1) the lack of exposure to challenging subject matter (2) poor teaching (3) common and consistently low expectations on the part of educators.

Lack of challenge. The underachievement of students of color who attended economically disadvantaged schools were generated through differential opportunities. These opportunities were associated with the students' ability to engage in subject matter that excited them Oakes (1990). The lack of exposure to subject matter that intrigued student interest referred to the following: content that challenged and stimulated student interest, the opportunity to use their knowledge creatively, and limited access or the absence of opportunity to take rigorous courses such as Advanced Placement (AP) classes Dilworth and Robinson (1995). The AP program, a concerted educational effort between secondary and post-secondary institutions, has afforded high school students the opportunity to take college-level courses in a high school setting. Unequal access for the participation of students of color in high achievement learning opportunities, such as AP classes, ultimately impacted students' educational outcomes. For example, access to

"gatekeeper" courses, such as high-level mathematics beginning with algebra, was identified as one of the many indicators that determined college admissions that led to increased educational and economic opportunities at the college level and the labor market (Ladson-Billings, 1997; Solorzano & Ornelas, 2002).

Corra, Carter & Carter (2011) investigated AP enrollment data for a single school district with five high schools located in the eastern part of North Carolina. Significant disparities were discovered in AP course enrollment between Black and White students. Black students comprised 48% of the district high school enrollment and White students made up 49% of the district high school enrollment. White students' participation in AP courses, at the highest absolute percentage, was 59%. The percentage of Black students' participation in AP courses, at best, was 12.3%. Enrollment patterns revealed that white students exhibited higher levels of participation across all AP course offerings than Black students by as much as 45%.

Solorzano & Ornelas (2002) examined access and enrollment of AP courses within the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). Findings highlighted an underrepresentation of Latinx and Black students enrolled in AP courses. Latinx students comprised 66% of the LAUSD's high school enrollment, while only 49% of the Latinx population were represented in district-wide AP enrollment. Black students constituted 14% of the overall high school enrollment and only 8% of the AP student enrollment. In contrast, Asian and White students illustrated an opposite trend. Enrollments of Asian students amounted to 9% of the district's student enrollments and 21% of AP enrollment. White students made up of 12% of student enrollment and 22% of AP enrollment.

Enrollment patterns, unequal access, and underrepresentation in AP courses exhibited the widening of racial disparities and underperformance of students of color. When students of color enroll in AP courses, research suggests isolation may occur and have a negative effect on persistence and retention. Walker and McCoy (1997) found that being one of few--or the only-- student of color in predominantly White AP settings carried a heavy burden for representation of one's race. Moreover, Goldsmith (2004) argued that students viewed such experiences as negative, having a powerful, negative effect on their achievement and aspirations. Achievement research suggested when schooling experiences improved for students of color, the opportunity to reverse their life chances of being successful increased Ladson-Billings, (1997).

Ineffective teaching. The nature of ineffective teaching addressed the basic menu of specific mundane teacher acts as the primary form of pedagogy. Ineffective teachers lacked the ability to combine knowledge of subject matter, student experiences, context, and reflection on their practice in making instructional decisions to engage students in active learning Wayne and Youngs, (2003). Haberman (1991) described such routine teaching as "giving information, asking questions, giving directions, making assignments, monitoring seatwork, reviewing assignments, giving tests, reviewing tests, assigning homework, reviewing homework, settling disputes, punishing noncompliance, making papers and giving grades" (p. 290). Haberman (1991) specified that taken individually these acts seem "normal." However, "taken together and performed to the systematic exclusion of other acts, they may have become the pedagogical coin of the realm in urban schools" (p. 291).

First, the aforementioned acts appeared to create a teacher-directed and student-compliance environment—an environment where teaching is what teachers do, and learning is what students —therefore, teachers and students are engaged in different activities at the expense of fostering learning. However, the literature suggested that effective teaching was not about delivering a "drill and kill" curriculum or the management of students with the control of mundane routines. Rather, reflective practitioners built a student-centered class community that encompassed challenges intellect, creativity, and rigor (Haberman, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1997; Raths, 1971).

Secondly, these ritualistic teaching practices failed to address the substantial diversity of lived experiences and the background knowledge with which many students arrive to school. Ideally, Dilworth and Robinson (1995) contested that pupils' variety of languages, cultures, learning styles, talents, and intelligence required teachers to be equipped with a robust and assorted toolbox of pedagogical strategies. Raising student expectations beyond an emphasis of basic skills, teaching critical thinking skills, problem solving and exploring creativity are instructional strategies that can potentially impact and improve academic achievement. Ladson-Billings (1997) touted that effective teaching pushed students' thinking while helping them understand they are knowledgeable and capable of answering questions posed by themselves and others. Behaviors of good teaching focused more on what the students were doing rather than on the observable actions of the teacher. In addition, research has demonstrated that the least experienced teachers typically taught in large urban schools. Such schools have been populated with a myriad of diverse learners, coupled with limited resources and

have failed to adequately educate this student populace. These factors, among others, highlighted the cycle of poor teaching that continued to manifest in the educational experiences of students of color.

Low expectations. Brophy (1982) described low teacher expectations as a factor that contributed to the underperformance of students in economically disadvantaged schools. Ferguson (2003) noticed that, "teachers' perceptions, expectations, and behaviors are biased by racial stereotypes" (p 462). Similarly, Smith (2005) found that "many educators allow their race and class biases to translate into low expectations, misconceptions, and false assumptions about students of color" (p. 24). Brophy's research suggested that when teachers taught students whom they expected to learn, the teachers applied more effort and utilized multiple and more effective teaching strategies. In addition, Brophy's claims supported findings from a Rubovits and Maehr (1973) study that involved the systemic observation of teacher behavior after the experimental manipulation of expectations. Findings revealed that Black students were treated less positively than White students. Moreover, teachers' expectations for Black males were found to be lower than any other student group, reinforcing the overall notion of low expectations for Black males. Therefore, based on the arguments of scholars Ferguson (2003) and Smith (2005), one view of low expectations was that since teachers were likely to believe Black males experienced less success in school, that teachers typically tend to be less optimistic about Black males' possibilities for success Ross and Jackson, (1991).

Taylor (1979) conducted an experiment that investigated how students' race and

gender affect teacher behavior. Findings of the study revealed negative teacher orientation towards Black students. Moreover, Taylor found that Black students received limited feedback after mistakes, less positive feedback after correct responses, and fewer "helpful slips of the tongue" (i.e., unauthorized coaching) than White students. Implications of the study suggested that some teachers might favor White students over Black students.

Ferguson (2003) evaluated how schools positively affected disparities between Black and White students through the examination of two potential sources for this difference: teachers and students. Results from the evaluation showed that teachers behaved differently toward Black students than they did toward White students. Ferguson found that teachers were often less supportive of Black students, which in turn perpetuated the continuance of low academic performance. Ferguson (2003) concluded "stereotypes of Black intellectual inferiority are reinforced by past and present disparities in performance and this probably caused teachers to underestimate the potential of Black children more than that of whites" (p. 312). Similarly, Douglas, Lewis, Douglas, Scott, & Garrison-Wade (2008) wrote, "Research on effective teachers of Black students emphasizes, among other things, the teachers' collective belief that Black students' potential will not be realized in classrooms where teachers view Black students from a deficit perspective" (p.48).

The research was clear: When educators allowed preconceived notions to translate into low expectations, misconceptions, and false assumptions about students of color, racial disparities were maintained. Scholars like Corra, Carter & Carter, 2011; Schott

Foundation, 2012; Singleton, 2015 ; Solorzano & Ornelas; 2002 have noted how such inequities at work in schools have been observed by the following examples:

- The underrepresentation of students of color and indigenous students in rigorous programs such as Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) and Advanced Placement (AP) courses
- The overrepresentation of Black students, more specifically Black and brown boys, in special education programs
- Suspension and expulsion data reflect that Black and brown students, more specifically Black and brown boys, spend more days out of school than any other student subgroup.
- Limited access to participate in performing arts activities, such as orchestra and ballet, for many students of color

Since school expectations and outcomes have been based upon the ideas, beliefs, and values of the dominant white culture, students of color experienced schooling differently from their White counterparts Douglas et al. (2008). Moreover, with a significant number of pupils of color taught by White teachers, students of color commonly faced pressures that students who shared similar racial and cultural backgrounds as the teacher did not Douglas et al.(2008). As a result, learning for students of color was disrupted and their opportunity to academically achieve was threatened. These experiences then became the reason schooling became offensive. Thus, students of color were forced to acquire the ability to stand being offended while still striving to achieve the goal of being successful in schools. Without goal attainment, students of color were unable to voice

the fact they had been offended. These offenses hindered their academic achievement G.E. Singleton (personal communication, April 21, 2015).

Battling negative perceptions, being perceived as inferior, and receiving differentiated treatment all hindered the achievement of Black students. Such inequities were revealed through the tracking into lower level coursework, inappropriate assessments, and culturally insensitive or unrepresentative portrayals in curriculum. As a result, low expectations presented antecedents for students of color not to reach their full potential, thus threatening their opportunity to academically achieve. The domino effect of teachers' negative assumptions translated into low expectations; students then accepted low standards that transcended into low self-esteem, an inferior perception of self that produced less confidence in the ability to be successful.

The relationship between teachers' perceptions, expectations, and behavior--along with students' beliefs, behaviors and work habits--has the power to minimize racial disparities in education. Teachers' expectations, instructional strategies, and motivations to build on students' strengths and cultural attributes in learning could influence students' academic performance Douglas et al., (2008).

Impacting the Achievement Gap

Kendall, Straw, Jones, Springate, and Grayson (2008) suggested a bold, long-term comprehensive approach with multi-faceted strategies to address the myriad of complexities the achievement/opportunity gap exhibits. A variety of practices to improve outcomes that narrow the performance gap for all students has been needed. A focus on culturally proficient school leadership, culturally relevant teaching practices, and teacher

effectiveness were amongst a variety of proven measures linked to closing the achievement/opportunity gap (Kendall et al., 2008; Theoharis, 2008; Pfaller, 2010).

Student achievement research indicated that multiple interrelated factors contributed to the achievement/opportunity gap. Inequities that resulted from differences in educational achievement between students of color and White students may very well affect the social stability of our nation. Bowman (1994) and Kendall, et al., (2008) argued that narrowing the achievement/opportunity gap called for the necessity of a comprehensive long-term approach that encompassed a myriad of multi-faceted strategies. The ability to impact the racially predictable achievement/opportunity gap can potentially provide equal access to high quality instruction for all students that will lead to a well-educated citizenry. Through research, many factors have been linked to the eradication of the P-12 achievement/opportunity gap. Influential contributions proven to aid in narrowing the gap have included (1) culturally proficient leadership, (2) culturally responsive teaching, (3) teacher quality, and (4) advancing diversity in the teaching workforce.

Culturally proficient leadership. Culturally proficient school leadership affected multiple dimensions of the school environment to improve student outcomes. Characteristics that foster such school climates involved providing direction, influencing the vision towards academic success for all students, utilizing a variety of culturally relevant practices, and implementing instructional strategies while fostering teacher collaboration. In addition, the involvement of all school personnel, parents, and community created an atmosphere that advocated for students' health and a sense of

safety. These conditions were necessary to promote effective and enjoyable learning experiences for all students (Hays, 2013; Kendall et al., 2008; Mendals, 2012). Culturally proficient instructional leaders not only provided the vision of academic excellence for all students, they also addressed the attitudes, beliefs, un-beliefs and biases that influenced what occurs in schools. Thus, such actions set the standard of academic excellence for all students (Douglas et al. 2008; Johnson & Uline, 2005; Magno & Schiff, 2010). Courage and skills must be utilized to examine and confront such attitudes, beliefs, and biases directly to determine what teachers ignore, what they pay attention to, what values and behaviors they believe are important--and for whom (Chen, Nimmo & Fraser, 2009; Johnson & Uline, 2005; Williams, 2011). These components contributed to the overall development of the direction, influence, and vision for the school that transformed into policies, procedures, and practices for the school.

Culturally responsive teaching. An increasing body of research identified culturally responsive teaching (CRT) as an instructional strategy for narrowing achievement gaps by meeting student learning needs and focusing on their strengths (Bazron, Osher & Fleishman, 2005; Brown, 2005; Burns, Keyes, Kusim, & Appalachia, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Torres-Velasquez & Lobo 2004). Ladson-Billings (1994) defined CRT as "a way of teaching used to empower students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by the use of cultural reference that can impart knowledge, skills and attitudes" (p.18). Ladson-Billings (2001) developed a CRT framework that "proposes successful teachers (1) focus on students' academic achievement, (2) develop students' cultural competence, and (3) foster students' sense of sociopolitical

consciousness" (p. 144). Research suggested when both conventional and un-conventional methods to assess academic achievement were used, socio-culturally centered teaching resulted in improved student academic performance Gay (2000). Moreover, Weiner (1999) pointed out that white teachers' traditional teaching methods typically failed to produce positive outcomes for Black students. Research suggests that culturally responsive practices are part of systemic strategies that involve team processes and curricula content that value the culture, language, heritage, and experiences of students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds while creating spaces for teacher inquiry, reflection and mutual support for cultural differences Klingner, Artiles, Kozleski, Harry, Zion, Tate, and Riley, (2005).

According to Bazron, et al. 2005 and Burns, et al. 2005, schools grounded in culturally responsive practices experienced significant improvements in student academic achievement. Such advancements were showcased through strengthened student connectedness with schools, higher attendance rates, higher test scores, more students of color enrolled in rigorous courses, and reduced discipline issues. Burns et al. (2005) also contended that culturally responsive practices increased the frequency of teacher collaboration and instructional success, resulting in increased job satisfaction for teachers and administrators alike. As a result, this type of school culture established increased levels of achievement for all students.

Teacher quality. Research viewed teacher quality as an essential component in closing the achievement gap (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002; Rice & Economic, 2003; Wayne & Youngs, 2003). Characteristics of teacher quality were associated with

degrees, test scores, certification status, coursework, content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and teaching experience. Brown (2005) defined teacher quality as a "teacher who can ensure academic success for both white and non-white students" (p.111). However, research findings indicated considerable various interpretations on the exact attributes of teacher quality, leading to mixed or inconclusive reviews.

In addition, literature suggested that other teacher characteristics, such as teacher self-efficacy, teacher competence, and teaching strategies also influenced teachers' effectiveness to produce student achievement gains Rowan, Feng-Shen Ciang and Miller (1997). Hines (2008) argued that overall teacher efficacy helped to narrow achievement disparities. According to Wayne and Youngs (2003), teacher competence emphasized the integration of subject matter knowledge, understanding students' contextual background as it related to making instructional decisions, engaging students in active learning and reflection on their teaching practice. Studies that examined effects of different types of instruction found that inquiry-based instruction yielded significantly more effective results for Black and Latinx students than traditional instruction Desimone and Long (2010).

Diversification of teacher ranks. The advancement of diversity in the teacher workforce also addressed the all too familiar achievement or "opportunity" gap in the P-12 educational system (Ahmad & Boser, 2014; Dilworth & Coleman, 2014). According to the MMEP State of Students of Color report (2012), within the Midwest region of the country, the state of Minnesota has one of the largest achievement/opportunity gaps between white and non-white students in our nation's K-12 school system Weber (2009).

Such disparities have heightened the strategic imperative to intentionally seek educators that reflect the multidimensional diversity of students in P-12 classrooms.

The necessity to diversify the teaching force was not new reform, but has been under-examined Villegas and Irvine (2010). Teachers of color have played a critical role in assisting students of color with viewing education and school success as a means to improve students' life chances. Teacher diversity literature identified three major arguments that emphasized the impact educators of color have on all students.

Authority and success. Many practitioners, policymakers, and scholars alike argued that teachers of color have the potential to serve as mentors, advocates, cultural translators, cultural brokers, and critical role models for all children, especially children of color (Brown 2005; Egalite, Kisida, & Winters 2015; Ingersoll & May 2011; Villegas & Irvine 2010). However, their contributions were more complex. Given that many students of color come from impoverished environments with limited exposure to successful professionals in their communities who reflect similar racial/ethnic backgrounds, access to teachers of color afforded students of color hope that they too could aspire to professional positions as adults, thus motivating pupils' of color to strive for excellence. The basic premise was that student's need to see themselves in the faces of their teachers.

Given the increasingly rapid changing demographics of the larger society, a growing need existed for the U.S. teaching force to "look like America" Shanker, (2015). According to Douglas et al. (2008) more than any other time in the history of our nation has there been a limited presence of educators of color. As previously mentioned 83.5%

of all public school teachers are White NCES (2009). When students of color failed to see professionals of color in leadership and authoritative roles, they were conditioned to learn that positions of authority can only be held by white people Villegas, Strom and Lucas, (2012). The presence of teachers of color also decreased the alienation experienced by students of color from both economically disadvantaged and affluent backgrounds.

Cultural synchronicity. Teachers of color were uniquely positioned to teach and to improve the academic outcomes and school experiences for students of color (Egalite et al, 2015; Villegas, Strom & Lucas, 2012). This second case centered on "cultural synchronicity," which indicated that students of color profited by learning from teachers of color. Educators of color held "insider knowledge" as they related to similar life experiences and shared the same cultural backgrounds as well as brought greater relevance to the classroom. Such synchronicity was a valuable resource in the promotion of learning as teachers of color were poised to bring teaching and understanding of students' cultural backgrounds and experiences to the classroom (Ingersoll & May, 2011; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Villegas, Strom & Lucas, 2012). Moreover, Brown (2005) emphasized that educators of color understood the particular needs, strengths and created curriculum and learning environments where pupils saw positive images of themselves reflected in their education. Research suggested that racial, ethnic, and linguistically diverse teachers had positive impacts on various educational outcomes for students from diverse backgrounds (Ahmad & Boser, 2014; Brown, 2005; Clewell & Villegas, 1998; Dilworth & Coleman, 2014; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Villegas & Davis, 2007; Villegas & Irvine, 2010).

Teacher shortage. The third major argument touted by teacher diversity literature was the workforce rationale. Teachers of color addressed teacher shortages in general and particularly for school systems serving large numbers of students of color (Ahmad & Boser, 2014; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). According to Ingersoll and May (2011) "minority teachers not only are likely to be well-suited to teach minority students; this view holds, but they are also likely to be motivated by a "humanistic commitment" to making a difference in the lives of disadvantaged students" (p.2). Moreover, numerous studies contested that educators of color were committed to teaching students of color, more drawn to teaching in hard-to-staff urban schools, and more fit to persist in those settings (Brown, 2005; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Research conducted by Scafidi, Sjoquist, and Stinebrickner (2007) on race, poverty and teacher mobility revealed that as the enrollment of Black students increased, retention was significantly higher for Black teachers than white teachers. Findings also showed that White teacher attrition was influenced more greatly by students' race than by their social economic status.

Today, the demographic make-up of the nation's teaching workforce continues to perpetuate a mismatch with the degree of racial/ethnic diversity in the population of P-12 students. Attempts to increase a diverse educator workforce sought to narrow achievement disparities, to minimize teacher shortages, and to address the economic imperative of preparing students for a global workforce. Such attempts were noteworthy but not substantive and appeared to be superficial solutions to a critical need in education that spanned over 20 years Villegas and Irvine (2010).

Several factors have been identified at different stages in the recruitment pipeline that have influenced diversifying the teaching workforce. One prominent factor was that the underachievement of minority students in P-12 education has resulted in fewer diverse students entering post-secondary education Ingersoll and May (2011). In addition, given the global economic workforce, employment opportunities for people of color have expanded, which caused a reduction of the share of diverse graduates in university- based teacher preparation programs Ingersoll and May (2011). According to Ingersoll and May (2011), "When diverse candidates do enter teaching, the growth of occupational entry tests, coupled with lower pass rates on these tests by minority teacher candidates, has meant that fewer minority candidates are successful" (p.3).

Pre-service Teachers of Color

Much teacher diversity literature discussed the barriers students of color face as they pursue teaching careers, explaining many students of color don't pursue teaching careers--thus magnifying the failures and deficits of students of color failures, rather than their achievements. Teacher diversity scholars often wrote comparatively less about how students of color manage to persist through teacher preparation programs and earned their degrees despite transition issues, racist/gender stereotypes, academic under-preparedness and other negative forces Harper (2012). In general, academic discourse has not focused on what universities and schools/colleges of education were doing to attract, recruit, support, retain, and graduate students of color from university-based teacher preparation programs; and specifically, what steps were being taken to address racial/gender barriers that contributed to the factors that have motivated, supported, retained, and graduated

such students. In fact, Harper (2012) argued that "little is known about those students who, despite all that we know about what complicates and undermines achievement for their particular racial groups, manage to successfully navigate their ways through the STEM postsecondary pipeline" (p. 64).

Giving voice to pre-service teacher candidates of color and graduates of color has the potential to provide an important response to the growing concerns over the mismatch of racial/ethnic diversity between teachers and P-12 students Szecsi and Spillman (2012). Furthermore, teacher candidates of color and graduates of color recognized their struggles as an strength. When asked about their experiences, they felt a sense of pride in sharing their experiences, and it made them feel honored that someone wanted to hear their stories. Su (1997) wrote about the perspectives of teacher candidates of color in teacher education programs. In the study, students of color reported, "The interviews they had were the first time, or the only time, during their preparation program when they had the chance to express their views" (p.333). Such statements validated Kornfeld's (1999) argument:

> Teacher educators and researchers need to continue this effort to hear and respond to the stories that students of color have to tell. It is not enough to simply wait in our offices for these students to show up at the door; we need to create frequent opportunities for them to share their ideas, experiences, and perspectives with us—and with their fellow students (p.14).

Similarly, Su (1997) also wrote the following observation:

> The views of candidates of color represent a critical perspective seldom found in teacher education, and their voices need to be heard by teacher educators and teacher candidates who do not see the responsibilities of the teacher beyond classroom or school doors
> (p. 333).

Critical Race Theory. One tool with the potential to frame how to capture the stories, voices, and perspectives of pre-service teacher candidates of color was critical race theory. Critical Race Theory (CRT) emerged from legal studies during the mid 1970s to early 1980s. Matsuda (1991) defined CRT as the following:

> The work of progressive legal scholars of color who are attempting to develop jurisprudence that accounts for the role of racism in American law and that work toward the elimination of racism as a part of a larger goal eliminating all forms of subordination (p.331).

Scholars Yosso, Smith, Ceja, and Solorazono (2009) described CRT as a movement that sought to account for the role of race and racism in American society. Tenets of Critical Race Theory have also been used to examine the intersection of racism, classism, sexism, and other "isms." Moreover, Chapman (2011) argued that "isms" "work together in disharmonious and irrational ways to form and challenge notions of homogeneity among racially marginalized groups" (p. 241).

Situated in the context of education, the application of CRT has also been used to investigate educational inequities from voices of color through counter-storytelling. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) described how features of CRT have been applied to counter-narratives from voices of color. "The concepts of "naming one's own reality" or "voice" in educational research is where form and substance of scholarship are inter-twined through counter-storytelling" (p.57). Moreover, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) adopted Delgado's (1989) explanation of reasons for "naming one's own reality":

> The naming-one's-own-reality theme of critical race theory is the psychic preservation of marginalized groups. A factor contributing to the

> demoralization of marginalized groups is self-condemnation. Member of minority groups internalize the stereotypic images that certain elements of society have constructed in order to maintain their power. Historically, storytelling has been a kind of medicine to heal the wounds of pain caused by racial oppression (p.57).

A CRT Rationale for this Study. Critical race theory had the potential to connect to the ways in which teacher candidates of color described their experiences and perceptions while in a predominantly White educator preparation program. Milner (2008) argued that critical race theory was a valuable tool to discover and critique embedded racism in teacher education policy, research, and practice. Examples of such discovery and application have included Yosso's, (2002) study on curriculum, Solorzano and Yosso's (2001) discussion of racial stereotypes and deficit discourse in teacher education, and Kohli's (2009) study that explored teacher candidates of color experience and understanding of racism in their lives. The lens of CRT presented a way to examine participants' stories, experiences, and perceptions.

Research showcased the nuanced lived experiences of college students of color once they entered teacher education programs, as they had unique needs and strengths that must also be recognized (Kohli 2009; Kornfeld 1999). In addition, the perceptions, perspectives and experiences of students of color within predominantly White educator preparation programs contributed to the structural analysis to determine what colleges of education and institutions of higher education could do to recruit, attract and retain more students of color. Moreover, P-12 schools could also learn how to support candidates of color during field placement, student teaching, and as hired teachers of color in P-12 schools.

In our current era, institutions of higher education have claimed to value diversity and have claimed a desire to provide a good education to a more diverse student body. Moreover, P-12 schools have recognized a desperate need to diversity the teaching workforce. This begs some questions: What are P-20 establishments (both P-12 districts and schools of education) doing to get them there? What do these efforts look like? How do university educators keep them engaged throughout the process?

Experiences of Pre-Service Teachers of Color. Teacher diversity research literature revealed some efforts toward the examination of experiences and perceptions of pre-service teacher candidates of color. Yopp, Yopp, and Taylor (1992) surveyed and conducted individual interviews to study the perspectives of paraprofessionals and high school students of color in a teacher diversity project. The purpose of the program was to highlight the needs of candidates recruited for a program designed to bring them closer to achieving their teaching credentials and to determine the success or failure of certain activities to retain these students. For paraprofessionals, the findings suggested that middle-aged women were promising candidates for recruitment into educator preparation programs and that financial support and opportunities to interact with peers were crucial to their success. For high school participants, the opportunity to tutor younger students proved to be a motivating factor to select teaching as a career.

Martinez and O'Donnell (1993) conducted in-depth interviews with a group of Latinx teacher candidates in an effort to understand the following: their experiences in educator preparation courses and how the program, curriculum, methodologies, and assumptions considered the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students to meet

their goals and expectations; any cultural conflicts these teacher candidates experienced while participating in educator preparation; and, the mentoring and support systems that participants used or needed.

Findings revealed three emerging themes from in-depth interviews: (1) Educator preparation programs entrance requirements affected students emotionally and financially. Failure to pass the standardized licensure exam implied that they were under-qualified, thus requiring either the exit or stop out of the program. Such impediments represented emotional and financial costs. Emotionally, students' confidence was compromised, and the cost of retesting caused an additional financial burden. (2) Administrative silence was described as the lack of attention from administrators, directors, advisors and faculty regarding programs and support for minoritzed students. Students shared that they were unaware of programs that existed to support their success. (3) Two issues for mentoring and support programs from the Latinx perspective surfaced. The first was "La familia,"given that most Hispanic student cultural backgrounds are grounded in the importance of family traditions that involve extended families and networks of friends who provide relational support: this seemed to be missing from the mentoring and support programs of their educator preparation experience. The second support issue was called the "Dile" system, referred as the ability to utilize "La familia" friends who came to college with them to assist with resolving conflict by learning to navigate the university system.

Guyton, Saxton, and Wesche (1996) endeavored to describe the educator preparation experiences of diverse students enrolled in an early childhood education

program. The study sought to capture voices of often unheard, participants in educator preparation programs. The basic premise of the study highlighted how students of color experienced educator preparation programs differently than their white counterparts.

Results from this study provided an understanding of what and how students of color experienced educator preparation. These findings suggested future research topics in teacher education such as the following: (a) How can educator preparation programs attend more to the needs of diverse students, particularly in terms of placements for field experience? (b) How can faculty deal with the sense of alienation that could occur for pre-service students who are a distinct minority in their field placement? (c) Should educator preparation programs embrace discussions of racism and diversity and be willing to take a public stand against racism? (d) What is the effect of educator preparation programs including more diverse faculty, so that minority students will "see themselves" among the faculty?

Goodwin, Genishi, Asher, and Woo (1997) conducted a two-part qualitative investigation through structured and open-ended questionnaires with follow-up interviews. The study examined and analyzed 22 Asian American teachers and teacher candidates' perspectives on the following topics: (a) primary motives for entering the teaching profession, (b) assessments for P-12 and teacher education curricula, (c) interactions with other teacher candidates, school colleagues, parents, and students, and (d) recommendations for change of educator preparation programs in a diverse society.

Results from this study revealed that 82% of respondents selected "making a difference" or "engaging in meaningful work" as the primary reason for pursing a career

in teaching. In response to the perceptions and experiences of school curricula, nine respondents reported negative encounters, particularly with parents and administrators. When asked to assess the relevance of the pre-service curriculum in connection to they're own racial experiences and needs, the over-arching theme was that the curriculum was general and did not address the Asian American experience directly. In addition, 11 of the teachers reported that the schools where they taught also did not showcase a curriculum that was relevant or responsive to Asian American children.

Recommendations for changes to educator preparation programs revealed the need to incorporate relevant Asian and Asian American curriculum and content in teacher education preparation coursework. Moreover, respondents also advocated for an increase of Asian American teaching faculty, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors.

Su (1997) conducted a case study on Asian American, African American, and Latinx teacher candidates to reveal similarities and differences on views of teaching as a profession and as a career between students of color and their White counterparts. Sixty-eight percent of White teacher candidates indicated they felt "proud" to become members of the teaching profession; 73% teacher candidates of color checked "very proud" or "extremely proud" to become and represent the teaching profession. Amongst candidates of color, the Latinx group showcased the highest sense of pride.

One-third of diverse candidates perceived their P-12 schooling experiences as negative or unique based on their racial status and/or language barriers. As a result, such encounters contributed to their viewpoints and a strong awareness of existing inequities in our educational system for students from diverse and impoverished backgrounds,

particularly in the areas of irrelevant school curriculum and the need to transform schools and society. African American candidates were among the most conscious and clearly committed to entering the profession as social change agents. On the other hand, due to their favorable P-12 schooling experiences, none of the White students shared a similar vision for educating students from diverse and impoverished backgrounds.

In an ethnographic study, Kornfeld (1999) examined the experiences of two female African American students majoring in elementary education in a predominantly white university and educator preparation program. The two respondents in the study were the only students of color enrolled in the social studies methods class part of a "block" of three classes, along with a field experience taught by the researcher. The coursework cluster was required for seniors to take prior to their final semester of student teaching. Data collection occurred via a series of ongoing interviews beginning with unstructured questions that increasingly became more structured and formal.

Interview results indicated that these participants encountered overt and "dysconscious racism" in teacher education courses that led to them being voiceless in the classroom, sensing feelings of avoidance, judgment, and isolation. Professors seemed to be unaware or uninterested in the students' point of view. When respondents attempted to share examples with their classmates about what Black students in P-12 schools have to deal with everyday, they were greeted with resistance through angry and defensive comments. Much of the experiences and perspectives during class were portrayed through the lens of whiteness.

Activities and assignments in the methods courses were geared toward preparing students to teach in white suburban schools rather than diverse urban schools. In addition, many group projects, both in-class and homework assignments, inadvertently heightened racial tensions in the education courses. For example, within the group setting, participants experienced being shut down and encountered subtle rejections by being left out when instructed to choose a partner. Pressures from these experiences impelled respondents to operate in survival mode to avoid humiliation. Students were forced to behave as "divided selves" living in two different worlds—one life among their friends and another in the classroom.

Another observation unearthed during the interviews was that educator preparation programs lacked a commitment to diversity and addressing diversity issues in the field. For example, the social studies course the students were enrolled in was inclusive in addressing multiple perspectives, issues of diversity, and multicultural education. However, respondents believed the message didn't resonate with their White counterparts—as evidenced by the example of resistance and defensive comments mentioned above. Participants questioned if the education courses were sufficiently equipping teacher candidates to deal with diversity in the schools. Respondents believed the curriculum failed to incorporate experiences, questions, and critiques of diverse people in the classroom. Students claimed that diversity was talked about, and they read about it; however, how to deal with it was not really addressed.

Overall, students expressed that the negative experiences of racism, sentiments of silence, and lack of commitment to diversity actually motivated them to regain their

voices in stimulating political consciousness and action as future teachers. Interestingly, these unfavorable experiences in their education classes assisted these students in becoming more proactive. This increased awareness and determination underscored their desire to teach about diversity and address issues of racism as future teachers.

Szecsi and Spillman (2012) sought to gain an extensive understanding of perceptions about the process of becoming teachers for three female teacher candidates of color majoring in elementary education at a predominantly White institution and educator preparation program. A special focus was dedicated to factors that supported or hindered their transformation into the teaching profession. Through comprehensive interviews and observations, the study captured contributing motivators for pursuing a teaching career, perceived strengths and weaknesses, support received, and challenges faced in educator preparation programs. Data collection occurred via a series of interviews and observations over a ten-month period.

Four major themes emerged from the data analyses addressing the following: (1) life experiences leading to the teaching profession as a secondary career choice, (2) cultural synchronicity, support and non-preferential treatment, (3) family perceptions of teaching as a profession associated with low prestige and salaries, (4) images of teachers reflecting a lack of respect based on negative experiences.

Of the studies reviewed, the findings revealed multiple categories with similar themes across all seven investigations. These themes focused on teacher education curriculum, faculty, support, followed by teacher candidate P-12 encounters and lived experiences as minoritized persons within predominantly White educator preparation

programs. Participants reported that images of students of color and diverse perspectives were invisible and/or missing from the teacher education curriculum. Activities, assignments, and experiences were portrayed through the perspective of White, middle-class women. As a result, the students believed their course work failed to adequately prepare them to deal with diversity issues. Moreover, the lack of faculty, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors of color also emerged as an issue. Participants shared the need to see themselves in the faces of the stakeholders who teach, evaluate, and support them.

Given that all students across the seven studies reported being "the only or one of few" candidates of color in their teacher education classes, support was another reoccurring theme that emerged. Support was described in the context of family, financial, social, academic, and field placement support groups. Respondents expressed they needed access to appropriate supports to help navigate the terrain of educator preparation program requirements.

Teacher candidates' experiences in P-12 schools as both P-12 students and as teacher candidates in field placement or student teaching also emerged as a topic. For example, participants who encountered negative experiences as students in P-12 schools and/or witnessed unfavorable treatment to the P-12 students they were serving reported that these personal experiences contributed to their awareness of educational inequities. This consciousness was noted as their primary reason for becoming teachers, causing them to act as agents of social change to transform schools.

The research was clear that students of color were usually the only or one of few students of color in predominantly White educator preparation programs. These lived experiences as minoritized persons unearthed overt and dysconscious racism. Negative encounters experienced in their teacher education classes left students with feelings of alienation, isolation, avoidance, and judgment. However, these unfavorable experiences increased their awareness and underscored the need to teach about diversity and address issues of race/racism as future teachers.

The research literature on pre-service teacher candidates of color and their experiences in university-based educator preparation programs was limited in scope. Many studies do not explore the perceptions of pre-service candidates of color regarding the practices and support systems in university based educator preparation programs Szecsi and Spillman, (2012). However, a body of scholarship devoted to pre-service teacher candidates of color existed, but even that scholarship was distorted due to such low numbers of pre-service teachers of color Jones, (2011). Moreover, Su (1997) observed the following:

> These pioneer studies on teacher candidates of color have provided a snapshot on the characteristics and experiences of candidates of color and suggested particularly important implications for the recruitment, preparation, and retention of minority teachers (p.326).

Given that the majority of this scholarship is dated from the early 1990's, with one recent study in 2012, new research is necessary to fill the gap in teacher diversity literature. According to Szecsi and Spillman (2012), "the examination of factors that may either

hinder or support the transformation into teaching for students of color is clearly warranted" (p. 24)

Chapter III

Method

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological sought to examine the journey of minoritized persons participation within a predominantly White university-based educator preparation program. Emphasis on the lived experiences of teacher candidates and graduates of color was the focus of the investigation that provided an understanding of the common experiences of the participants. Husserl (1970) established the foundation of phenomenology explained as the descriptive study of consciousness in an attempt to identify the essence of an experience. Furthermore, Creswell's (2013) phenomenological research described the universal meaning for several individuals who encountered similar lived experiences of a phenomenon.

For this study, the phenomenon was participating in a predominantly White university-based educator preparation program as a minoritized person. In the spirit of exploration, the phenomenon was viewed through the lenses of the participants. This approach was most appropriate for the study in that it highlighted participants' common or shared experiences, the perceptions of what phenomena they experienced and how they experienced the phenomena Moustakas (1994). Literature suggests phenomenological research can help to clearly understand human factors and perceptions involved in an experience and what causes people to react in specific ways to such experiences.

Phenomenological interviews allowed participants to describe their experiences, explore their perceptions, and attach meaning to those experiences Rubin and Rubin

(1995). According to Creswell (2013) in phenomenological investigations participants should be asked broad, general questions about how they experienced the phenomenon. This should be followed by, gaining an understanding about what contexts have regularly influenced or affected experiences of the phenomenon. The guiding question that framed the research was: How did teacher candidates and graduates of color from a predominantly White university-based educator preparation program at a upper Mid-west 4-year state university describe their experiences and perceptions of being a minoritized person? The following sub-questions were also investigated:

1. How did candidates/graduates describe their lived experiences with faculty in the teacher education program?
2. How did candidates/graduates describe their lived experience with the curriculum in the teacher education program?
3. How did candidates/graduates describe their lived experience with other teacher candidates in the teacher education program?
3. How did candidates/graduates describe their lived experience with cooperating teacher's in the teacher education program?
4. How did candidates/graduates describe their lived experience with the students in the field placement and/or student teaching classrooms?

Participants

Focus groups. Participation (eight individuals of color who were enrolled in or graduated from a predominantly White university-based educator preparation program) were selected to participate in the study due to their shared phenomenon as minoritized

individuals in their educator preparation program. Four individuals who were currently enrolled and four individuals who had recently graduated from the same predominantly White educator preparation program were part of the study. One individual participated in graduate level initial licensure program while the remaining were part of undergraduate level initial licensure programs. Individuals majored in licensure areas of Elementary Education (EEC), Special Education (SPED), K-12 & Secondary Education (KSP) and Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). Racial categories of Black, Chinese, and Latinx were represented. Four of the respondents were female and four were male with 25 being the average age range of participants. All respondents chose pseudonyms during the study. The following table showcases the demographics of each participant's race, gender and age (see Table 1).

Table 1
Demographics of Participants

Participant	Race	Gender	Age
Barry	Black	M	23
Daniel	Black	M	24
Ivy	Asian	F	27
James	Black	M	27
Lucy	Black	F	23
Phillip	Black	M	27
Savannah	Black	F	25
Roxy	Latinx	F	23

In-depth interviews. Of the eight focus group participants, fifty percent identified themselves as Black males. Of those four, three were in classrooms teaching in the capacity of student teacher, substitute teacher, or teacher of record during this study. Given that Black males make up less than two percent of our nation's teaching force warranted further exploration of this almost invisible population. Such an investigation was conducted using vignettes.

Data Collection

Focus group discussions. During phase 1 of this study, participants engaged in one of two 2-hour focus group sessions held December 2015. The first focus group involved four individuals of color who graduated from the predominantly White educator preparation program in this study. The second focus group consisted of four teacher candidates of color currently enrolled in a predominantly White educator preparation program. During both focus group sessions, participants responded to open-ended questions within a semi-structured framework in regards to perceptions about their lived experiences in predominantly White educator preparation programs.

This approach created the opportunity to more thoroughly understand the context and effects of the participants' as discussed in the focus group. This approach also afforded the participants the chance to follow up on the focus group questions and to speak more freely about their personal experiences. The following prompts for the focus group discussion about what participants lived experiences was like in a predominantly White educator preparation program were shared:

1. Describe your experiences as minoritized persons who participated in a

predominantly white university-based educator preparation program at a four-year state university located in the upper Midwest?

The following sub-questions were also asked:

1. Describe your lived experiences with faculty in the teacher education program?
2. Describe your lived experiences with the curriculum in the teacher education program?
3. Describe your lived experiences with other pre-service teacher candidates?
4. Describe your lived experiences with the cooperating teacher?
5. Describe your lived experiences with the students in the field placement and/or student teaching classrooms?

The two primary resources of data were focus groups and observational field notes. In addition reflective memos were written to myself that highlighted the experiences and observations of non-verbal behaviors displayed. An audio-recorder was used for each focus group. Following each focus group session, the recordings were sent to a transcription company who transcribed each focus group verbatim. All transcribed text was downloaded and analyzed via Nvivo 10 (QSR International), a qualitative research analysis program.

In-depth individual interviews. During phase 2 of this study, individual follow-up interviews were held with four participants for one hour. This created the opportunity to more fully understand the context and effects of the lived experiences by the participants as discussed in the focus group. Similarly, it also afforded respondents the

chance to extend the focus group questions and speak more freely about their personal experiences. To gain a holistic understanding through analysis of individual stories, vignettes were used to describe and illustrate each participants lived experience.

Vignettes are composites that disclose what the researcher finds through interviews and fieldwork. Ely, Vinz, Downing and Anzul, (1997) described portrait vignettes as a way to represent the character and experience of participants. For the purpose of this study, portrait vignettes were selected because of the emphasis on spoken words that enable participants to assume an active voice in the research. Vignettes allowed the voices of Black males to be amplified more loudly than the focus group discussions through their personal stories and words. To give participants a voice in the research, the researcher wrote portraits in first person accounts Spalding and Phillips (2007).

Each vignette depicted an understanding of participants' lived experiences as K-12 students, patterns that influenced their decision to enter teaching and challenges encountered on their pathway into the profession. Respondents also shared potential solutions to increase the number of Black males in the teaching profession. All individual in-depth interviews for the vignettes were audio-recorded. The recordings were sent to a transcription company who transcribed each interview verbatim. All transcribed text was downloaded and analyzed via Nvivo 10 (QSR International), a qualitative research analysis program.

These vignettes blend unstructured interviews and observation field notes. Each of the vignettes offered a description of the participants experience as a student in K-12

schools from kindergarten to 12th grade. An examination of each respondent's interest in becoming a teacher, their struggles, and their perspective on how to get more Black males in the teaching profession was discussed. The following questions guided the unstructured interviews:

1. As a student, what was your experience like in schools from kindergarten-12th grade (K-12)?
2. How did you become interested in pursuing a teaching career?
3. What was your biggest challenge being enrolled in a predominantly white educator preparation program?
4. From your perspective, what are some solutions for getting more Black males to become teachers?

Ensuring Trustworthiness

In a qualitative study the researcher is the primary instrument for collecting and analyzing the data. Since researchers are human beings and the essential instrument in qualitative research, observations and analyses are examined through the human being's worldview, values and perspectives Merriam (1998). Thus investigations of qualitative nature must require the researcher to be sensitive to the inherent biases in this type of research Merriam (1998). Moreover Creswell (2014) advanced this requirement by encouraging the researcher to include comments about how the interpretation of the findings can be shaped by their backgrounds, such as gender, culture, and socioeconomic status. Steps taken to ensure trustworthiness, involved stating bias through the role of the researcher and authenticity of the data through triangulation.

Role of the researcher. The researcher's role in this phenomenological study was to gather, organize, and analyze perceptions from people who have experienced a phenomenon Creswell (2013). In this study the experiences of pre-service teacher candidates and graduates of color in a predominantly White educator preparation program was examined. Given that the researcher was known to, both focus groups and individual interviews participants placed an additional layer of complexity to the methods. According to Chapman (2005) critical race methodological frameworks assess the researcher "as a complex subject that wields substantial power regarding all aspects if the research project" (p.34).

As a Black woman and the primary researcher in this study, I operated in dual roles. In the study, I was both a data collector and a data point. I had the distinction of being the principal investigator in the study, along with, having an insider position as described by Merriam (1998). With this in mind, I had to be careful of a number of positional forces at work. As an African American female, I was attentive to the possibility of racial and gendered biases that could creep their way into the interpretation of the research. In an effort to be objective without being detached, I engaged in reflexive journaling as a means to name and manage my positionalities during the research. Additionally, I dialogued with critical friends, colleagues and advisors during the research to consider the data from new and multiple perspectives.

Employing what Banks (1998) called the indigenous-insider allowed me to position myself within the study and seek to gain a complete understanding of the

investigation. Concerning the indigenous-insider, Banks (1998) wrote the following:

> The individual endorses the unique values, perspectives, behaviors, beliefs, and knowledge of his or her indigenous community and culture and is perceived within the community as a legitimate community member who can speak with authority about it (p.8)

It is difficult and problematic to conduct research on communities of color without researchers of color. Research is not "about us without us" thus through the lens of critical race theory, my researcher position was framed using the recognition of experiential knowledge of people of color and their communities Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, and Crenshaw, (1993). Moreover, noted by Johnson-Bailey (1999), racial understanding underscored the attachment of researchers of color who interviewed other individuals of color. Johnson-Bailey (1999) stated, "Race and the knowledge of living in a race-conscious society was a factor that the participants and I shared" (p.660). Moreover, Johnson-Bailey (1999) argued, "The interviewing phase of qualitative research is dynamic and ever changing. No two situations or circumstances are ever alike" (p.668). As the researcher, I attempted to understand this dual phenomenon of being known yet kept at a distance.

Triangulation. Qualitative research scholars Creswell (2014) and Merriam (1998) both agree that triangulation is a process for establishing validity of the data. Multiple and different data sources were used to verify the data and confirm the emergent findings in this study. The comparison of transcriptions from both focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were beginning steps of triangulation. Such comparison allowed for verification of patterns and themes that emerged. Observation

field notes were taken during both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the study. In addition the researcher captured reflective thoughts via journaling. Finally, through peer examination the researcher conversed and shared manifesting themes with critical colleagues and asking them to comment on the themes as they emerged Merriam (1998).

Data Analysis

Focus group thematic analysis for overlapping and unique themes. In an effort to minimize data overload and focus analysis around answering the research questions, analysis of the focus group transcripts was coded first. To assist with coding, the data was organized and prepared for analysis, including the correction of misspelled words or phrases after transcription. Nvivo10 (QSR International) was used to code the text using Bryman's four stages of qualitative text analysis (2008). The text was read entirely first, followed by listening to the audio recording while reading the text to develop a sense of its overall meaning. The researcher used elements of grounded theory to identify significant statements to perform open coding and then connect thematic components through axial coding to establish broad themes. The researcher, then re-read the text and marked specific themes. The strength of the themes was determined through indexing, coding, and frequency. Finally, the relationships and connectedness of themes and subthemes were confirmed. Emergent common (overlapping) themes and sub-themes across both focus groups and those that were unique to each focus group were compared to the body of literature presented in Chapter two.

Interview interpretation for portrait vignettes. The vignettes were analyzed for commonality of male perspective of maleness rather than ethnicity, nationality or

comparison of themes and/or patterns. Such intersectional analysis requires more attention focused on identity and the experience.

Chapter IV

Findings

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to examine the journeys of minoritized persons within a predominantly White university-based educator preparation program. An emphasis on the lived experiences of teacher candidates and graduates of color was the focus of the investigation. A qualitative method, specifically phenomenology Creswell, (2013) was used to understand the experiences of individuals of color who participated in a predominantly white teacher preparation program. Given the absence of research that explores students of color experiences within predominantly White educator preparation programs, a phenomenological study was most appropriate to address the research question. The results of this study will provided an understanding of the common experiences of the participants.

An interpretive analysis from phase 1 of the study that encompassed two two-hour focus group sessions will be shared. First, findings from the first focus group discussion that involved four individuals of color who graduated from the predominantly White educator preparation program a part of this study was presented. Next, findings from the second focus group discussion that engaged four teacher candidates of color currently enrolled in the predominantly White educator preparation program a part of this study was shared. Data from phase 1 of the study were followed with interview findings from phase 2 of the study using vignettes. Findings were presented through interpretive descriptions interwoven with narratives of direct quotes from participants.

Recent Graduates - Focus Group

An analysis of text revealed three overarching themes relating to the lived experiences of minoritized individuals who had recently graduated from predominantly white educator preparation program. The three major themes and ten sub-themes emerged with graduates from a predominantly white teacher preparation program are listed in their order of appearance during the first focus group discussion:

1) Program Centered in Whiteness
    a. Absence of racially conscious pedagogy
    b. Lack of history of people of color
    c. Students of color as spokesperson for their race
    d. White privilege
2) Loners
    a. Absence of male presence
    b. Experiences with mentor teachers and university supervisors
    c. Cautiousness of Black males
    d. Presence of Black males
3) Survival Conditions and Strategies
    a. Survival Conditions
        i. Racial barriers
        ii. Micro-aggressions
        iii. Absence of relationships
        iv. Need to prove

b. Survival Strategies

These specific themes developed due to the frequency of the references coded under the same category and because every participant described an experience of this same genre. Each theme was indexed in the order that respondents shared their experience and as their stories unfolded.

Program Centered in Whiteness

All four respondents participated as the only person of color in their respective programs. These participants described the power and authority of white professors, in their teacher education programs. For example, James, a Black male graduate stated, "The faculty is dominated by a whole bunch of traditional white women that come from, I would say, probably not too humble beginnings….everything they know is what they think is right, period." He went on further to add the following:

> For us to do well in school, our work has to be judged, corrected…our behaviors, everything, has to be determined how we can move on by these white women. They understand everything the way it works, but they have the safety and the security to do all those things. They never really had to interact with students of color.

Participants also described the need to change the image of a teacher. All participants recognized white as the standard and that success was viewed through white normative frames. Post Brown vs. Board (1954) the image of a teacher has historically been primarily dominated by that of a white woman. Daniel shared his thoughts on how the imagery of a teacher has been maintained by female whiteness as he explained:

> Because the teacher role is viewed in our society as mainly white female the conversations are not happening in our schools to tell the student of color that you can be the next teacher or you can be the next principal or you can be the next

> superintendent. But the Caucasian person, the grandmother was; their mother was…etc. So that's what's shared with them.

When white women in P-12 classrooms are teaching students of color, everything the students learn is from the lens of white women. The message that transcends is that only white women are teachers and in turn, pupils of color begin to internalize this messaging. James argued,

> Kids of color in their minds might be thinking only the smart people are the ones teaching us because we're learning from them, so they can only be smart, and if they say we're not smart, then we're not. If they say we need to be special education, we do. If they say we need to take a pill to behave better, we've got to take it. Because everything they say is right all the time, and my Mama is whooping (spanking) me based off what this teacher says.

As teacher candidates of color in predominantly white educator preparation program, participants additionally experienced white as standard throughout their programs as well. Savannah shared a "white as standard" experience while in a group project with her white counterparts. She explains

> I would have an idea, and I would say the idea, and they're like, "Oh okay, we'll think about it." Then a white girl in the group would say the same idea and everyone's like, "Oh, let's do it"….I'm sitting in my chair like, I just said that!

Absence of racially conscious pedagogy. Given the overrepresentation of white female faculty members, all respondents recognized that female whiteness was the driver of the content taught in the educator preparation programs. Participants shared how they could not personally connect with the curriculum. Savannah stated, "I think it was definitely targeted towards a white culture." James corroborated with Savannah as he clarified, "I agree with that because the curriculum is geared toward a lot of white women

because that's what we always see in the education system." Phillip added, "The curriculum we learned here will not fit, in like, hard tough schools. It's built towards the white kids and nice schools and in the nice suburban schools and stuff like that."

Participants also observed that the absence of racially conscious pedagogy within the university classrooms was a result of the lack of the lack of professors' regarding culturally responsive practices. One respondent described how the term Culturally Responsive Teaching was continuously used in their program yet, faculty themselves were not culturally responsive. Savannah shared, " I recall the first day of class my professor telling me that she was very culturally responsive because she taught on the West Coast where half of her students were African American and Hispanic." The idea that the professor needed to explain why they were culturally responsive just reaffirms that they were not. Savannah continued to say " That was a red flag for me already, because any time a white person has to tell me that they're culturally responsive, it just means they don't want me to call them a racist."

Lack of history of people of color. Three out of four respondents who participated in this focus group of recent graduates were current practicing classroom teachers. They reflected on how the curriculum in the educator preparation programs as well as in their current schools, failed to address the history of people of color. Each curriculum fell short in teaching about the narrative of American and world history that displayed the contributions and history of people of color. Respondents reported how the lack of accurate representation and portrayals of people of color in the curriculum transcends into how they, as people of color, are expected to act by White people.

Moreover, they also understood how the dismissal of this history in both teacher education curriculum and P-12 school curriculum impacts the identity development and behavior of P-12 students of color in schools. Daniel reflected on his interactions with white teachers sharing,

> When I come across a white person, and we don't have many things in common, they automatically make a joke or say something funny, and I'm like why does it have to be that way? I think our kids are stuck in that too right now in the schools…they either have to be funny or dress a certain way to show the world they can be liked or somebody can approach them.

James explained,

> The kids, the students, they got to have some kind of role where they get attention because they're already getting told as being special ed, half of their work isn't handed in. They feel silly, so why not act silly to get some kind of attention?

Savannah corroborates with Daniel and James sharing:

> It's definitely, I think, an identity crisis. Especially with students of color and growing up in America, it's an identity crisis. If they knew their backgrounds and histories and where they came from, they would be so proud of themselves. They would walk like the kings and queens that they are if they knew who they were.

Phillip continued the discussion by asking, "But is the book teaching them that, though?" Savannah answered, "Exactly!" James responded, "It's like the exact opposite and somehow we need to figure out how education even came about and an explanation of why are these (White) people in charge of what is right and what is wrong?"

Participants described the absence of racially meaningful content and racially conscious pedagogy in their educator preparation programs and in current P-12 schools' curricula.

Students of color as spokespersons for their race. When topics of diversity or culture were discussed in the education courses, two out of four respondents reported that faculty members often treated them as the residential expert for their entire race. Savannah shared, "I think my frustration lies, because I was the only African-American woman in my program. They classified me as the spokesperson for all of the African-Americans." Phillip endorsed such an experience: "I had an incident when the professor was like, 'So, what do you think about this situation?' and everybody looked at me." James corroborated with Phillip and Savannah as he stated, "Yeah it happens in kindergarten, all the way through college."

Faculty treating students of color as the spokespersons for their own race speaks to how alienation can occur in the university classroom. This type of unfavorable experience in education classes underscored the need for faculty to build relationships with candidates of color. Establishing personal connections were established between faculty and candidates of color, it would allow for faculty to ask candidates of color about their perspectives without students feeling indifferent or isolated.

White privilege. All four participants shared feelings of frustration and isolation due to their experience with other teacher candidates' white privilege. Given that teacher candidates of color did not share the same experiences as those of white undergraduate college students, candidates of color felt annoyed and frustrated because of the additional economic challenges of navigating through a predominantly white university-based educator preparation program.

Savannah shared, “I don’t know if they were really aware of the white privilege that they had.” She further explained, “I would hear complaints from white students like, ‘Oh, my God, my dad didn’t give me my allowance this week,’ and I’m thinking to myself, okay how am I going to pay for these books?” Phillip validated Savannah’s experience as he stated, “I knew some candidates who, I kid you not, every two weeks had money coming in the bank account…and I’m trying to bust my butt to be able to pay for my tuition.” James chimed into the conversation as he stated, “One of the biggest challenges I say are financial, economic. They’re sending us out there to get all these different textbooks and all of these different things, and we’re coming from situations where we don’t really have it all.” Additionally, Phillip reflected on his first field experience as he stated, “Man, everyone already had cars!” I remember a faculty member told me, “I don’t know how you’re going to manage without a car.”

The absence of racially conscious pedagogy and the lack of history of people of color in the teacher education curriculum perpetuated a pedagogy of whiteness. This type of pedagogy granted white teacher education faculty ownership to teach, or in this case, *not* teach, how social and cultural realities of others are represented. Treating students as a spokespersons for their entire race while simultaneously ignoring the examination of unearned power and privilege also supported the overwhelming presence of whiteness. As a result, these components act as conditions for the creation of educator preparation programs centered in whiteness.

Loners

In consideration of the overwhelming presence of whiteness, all four respondents participated as the only person of color in their teacher preparation programs. Moreover, three out of four respondents participated as the only Black male in their programs. In his dissertation research on Black Men of the Classroom, Bristol (2014) described "loners" as "teachers who are the only Black Male teacher on faculty and "groupers" as those teachers in schools with many more Black male teachers" (p. 73). For the purpose of this study, the researcher adopted Bristol's (2014) definitions to describe both participants who were the only person of color and the only Black male in their teacher preparation program as "loners." As a result, participants operated as the least powerful demographic in their teacher education program Bristol (2014).

Absence of male presence. All male respondents reported the need to be surrounded by males in roles of mentor teachers, university supervisors and/or colleagues. Having commonality in gender can created a sense of relief and a feeling of being apart of a network. Daniel explained, "When I was searching for a job, I wanted middle or high school. The reason being, maybe I'll have more male teachers in the building that will just make me feel more connected." Now as a first year teacher, he shared his experience:

> But in my building now, when one of the male teachers—there's three of us now—said to me, " Please feel free to come to me with any questions…or if anything comes up, come to me," that put me at ease.

Experiences with mentor teachers and university supervisors. When asked to describe their experiences with mentor teachers, 100% of male participants interpreted their experiences with their mentor teacher as less than optimal. All respondents reported being placed with all white teachers, one being a male teacher. Isolation, alienation, lack of trust, and the sense of "otherness" were negative feelings described by male participants. Reflecting on his student teaching experience, Phillip shared " I was the only Black male and adult of color in the whole school." On a daily basis male respondents were aware and reminded of their racial and gender differences. James described his experience with his mentor teacher during student teaching:

> Actions speak louder than words, and I feel like the nonverbal cues kind of suppressed me in a way. I feel like I wasn't given a chance to get my hands dirty and just really enjoy my student teaching experience because we still come in these buildings with our own previous experiences with race and all those other things.

In addition to mentor teachers, stakeholders serving in roles of university supervisors are tied to field experience and student teaching. Two out of three male participants reported encounters with their university supervisors that were unfavorable and made them feel uncomfortable. Participant Phillip shared this experience:

> I feel like every time she came in there I was more tense… your grade, basically you passing student teaching--all field experience--depends on this person. I strongly believe that if I had a male supervisor of color or something like that, I would be more at ease.

James added, "I feel like there was a little bit of emotional abuse going on with my university supervisor, and I think that's where it goes back to having a male."

He further expressed:

> For some reason I feel like these white women, when it comes to helping black guys, they want to save them. And if they don't feel like they're saving them, then that's where they start to get offended. I came into this situation not needing to be saved—I already had my own internal mission. So once she found out she wasn't saving me, she was trying to figure out how to make it look like she was saving me.

Cautiousness of Black males. Two out of three male respondents expressed the need to be cautious when working in P-12 schools. Reflecting on his student teaching experience, James shared, " Yeah, just being a Black male in the education system and working with a lot of white females, I just had to be careful. He elaborated further:

> Because you never know, when what you're trying to do can be put in jeopardy. So I feel like just for the well-being and mental health of Black males, the goal should be to try to get matched up with other male teachers just to eliminate all of the so-called hidden questions.

Phillip corroborated with James:

> I remember when I was student teaching—I'm just being real—I always made sure my door was open. Whenever a student came in for help, I just always made sure my door was open, and I was sitting in front of the door helping the student. Because you just never know what you might be accused of.

Presence of Black males. All four participants recognized the importance of having, in general, a male presence and more specifically a male of color presence in the classroom. Savannah shared, " In the teaching field, male teachers make such a difference in this generation…coming to school and having a male teacher changes the game."

Immediately Daniel explained

> I had entrance conferences at the beginning of the school year with the parent of my only students of color. His mom was sitting there, and she looked back and she saw me walking in, and the other teacher said, "This is Mr. Daniel, he will be your child's teacher." She looked at me and the first word that came out of her

> mouth was, “A brother [laughter]!?”…And it has been a great connection ever since.

Alike, Phillip added to the conversation:

> I remember when I was teaching, and every time, especially the students of color parents come to parent teacher conference and they see me sitting at the table. I would have long lines just because they wanted to talk to me…they talked to me like I was part of the family. They’re like, “ I want you to school them, you know?” They’re like. “ If he doesn’t participate, you have the right! You can call me—here’s my cell phone number.” And they would just get so excited—you know what I mean?

James echoed a similar perception:

> I was substitute teaching at a high school, I went to the bathroom and a Black kid walked in, and he had a flower in his head—just a small flower over his ear. I said, “ Now why you got that flower in your head?” Mind you I never seen this kid before, but he’s like, “A girl put it in my head.” I’m like “You got that in there because a girl put in your head. In other words, “Take that flower out your head, man. Get serious…get back to class and do your thing.” In the bathroom, it was in there. But as he left, I saw him tucking it away in his pocket, looking around like, “Dang man, you just checked me real quick about that.”

Further, he explained, “Interactions with strong males let them know they’ve got somebody like me to be like, you ain’t gotta do that, man. Go ahead and handle your business, all of that other stuff is secondary.” This was also a belief for Daniel as he explained, “I work a lot with what I call “fragile families”—families who need extra support and even students from those two parent households that need a male figure.” During his student teaching experience, James recalled, “I felt like they (students) were happy to have a different kind of vibe in the classroom. They were excited and I connected with them well…they were the ones that kept me going.” Similarly, while student teaching, Phillip added, “I was the only Black male…actually like the only

person of color in the whole school. The students were the reason…what actually kept me going."

All four participants operated as loners in their teacher preparation programs. Due to their gender, being a loner was most challenging for Black male participants. Moreover, the absence of male presence in educational settings led participants to be overly cautious in an effort not to jeopardize their reputation and/or aspirations. However, the presence of males of color was desperately needed and welcomed as evidenced by interactions with P-12 students and their parents.

Survival Conditions and Strategies

Survival conditions. Participating as "loners" in a predominantly white teacher preparation program provoked respondents to operate in survival mode. The previous themes of overbearing whiteness and gender inequities created racial barriers and gender barriers for participants. These barriers, however, emerged in various forms. Respondents described barriers through the following sub-categories: a) racial, b) micro-aggressions, c) absence of relationships, and d) the necessity to prove their quality.

Racial barriers. Race emerged, universally for three out of four participants as overt and expected during their time in the teacher education program and as teachers in P-12 classrooms. Savannah shared, "As an African American woman I knew there was going to be hurdles that I had to jump over anyway." She continued

> When I came to this University, I realized, okay I am a person of color and I had to know that first before I went into any class because I know there is never going to be an equal playing field with me and my white counterparts.

This realization and confirmation of racial barriers also created emotional stress for participants. James explained

> A lot of the teachers, they talk about burnout. The white girls are burning out because they never got no experience. We're burning out because of our experience…and even after, you're still going to have to deal with being a teacher of color in a white dominated education system.

Participants even experienced direct racism from P-12 students, as Daniel shared

> I had a student who had a real tough time with having a teacher of color being her teacher. And I knew it was because of my color, and eventually it would come out, and it did. The 15th week of school she said, "If it was 1886, you'd be my slave. If I had a whip, I'd whip you. You're a nigger, don't touch me, if you touch me; I'll have to go take a shower right now.

***Micro*-aggressions.** Sue et al. (2007) defines micro-aggressions as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, nonverbal or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color" (p. 271). Similarly, Solorzano, Ceja,and Yosso (2000) also note the work of Davis (1989) who defines micro-aggressions as, "stunning, automatic acts of disregard that stem from unconscious attitudes of white superiority and constitute a verification of black inferiority" (p. 1576). Latinx scholar Solorzano (1998) documented micro-aggressions as "acts of disregard" that involve nonverbal gestures, stereotypical assumptions, lowered expectations, and racially assaultive remarks, such as, "You're not like the rest of them, you're different" and/or "You speak such good English." Respondents found they encountered various types of subtle micro-aggressions that manifested into barriers. All participants described how such interferences translated into feeling unwelcomed in their program thus positioning them to anticipate barriers.

James explained it as a challenge:

> What faculties represent on the surface and then what they represent underneath is different…it's very challenging because there's always stuff going on behind the music and behind the scenes that we'll never know, so we have to be careful about that.

In addition Daniel shared

> My mentor teacher that I was paired up with, she finally spoke her truth. She waited 16 weeks to truly ask me a question that she was so hesitant to ask me. She goes, "your really cool, and I'm excited to really ask you some of the cultural questions that I've always had in my mind.

Savannah added:

> My first experience, my supervisor, she was not very helpful. I didn't do well, and I guess her expectations for me was that, well you're not going to pass, so I think you went into the wrong field. I think you're going to fail this block one experience, so maybe teaching isn't for you.

Phillip recalled, "When I got into the teaching program, I just knew that I needed to survive…so I just said, 'Hey, this is what you have, and this is what you need to get done.'

Participant James shared

> When we're more aware than they would expect, their guard gets up. You don't know what they're talking about behind the scenes, what they're trying to prevent from happening, to let this type of person get into the education field.

Absence of relationships. All respondents shared that their respective programs failed to address how to build relationships with P-12 students and primarily focused on the reading, writing and mathematics you need to teach. Participants characterized unique or negative experiences with constituents in the teacher education program based on their racial status and/or language barriers. Such encounters were

illustrated as the absence of personal connections with faculty and university supervisors, the dismissal of their racial experiences, and low expectations.

As current practicing teachers, three out of four participants shared that knowing the story of the person who is in front of you daily or the person taking your class is important to understand before you can teach or expect students to learn. For example, Daniel explained how relationships are at the center of what he does everyday. He shared, "That's the most important piece in order to advance education or to even educate the student, the relationship we have with the student, understanding their story and their experiences."

University supervisors. James recalled a conversation with his University Supervisor during student teaching:

> I almost got in trouble just bringing up the fact that I was building relationships with students, because I wasn't talking enough about objectives, methods, and instruction and what doctors said this. But all of that, I feel like it's secondary to the initial connection you make with the kids.

Faculty. Describing the absence of relationships with faculty, Daniel shared, "I was searching for that faculty member to make a connection with." He further explained his beliefs:

> As a nation we continue to talk about teacher preparation. We continue to talk about how we can support teachers of color, but that was not brought up at all in my two years of attending this university. As the only male of color in my program for two years, not one faculty member asked me the reason I decided to become a teacher or even asked, "What's your story, and how can we support you in this program?"

James continued the conversation as he added, “They never expected to run into teacher candidates of color or even understood how to really work with us.” Phillip shared “I didn’t really make that much personal connection—I think it was just the fact that they were kind of surprised that I was in the program.” Phillip expressed the term “surprise” as in disbelief. James also shared

> I had made all of these different accomplishments, goals, and reached all of these different requirements to move on to student teaching. And I still felt there was some hesitation when it came to certain faculty members with moving me on to the next level because initially, the expectation for many of us was low.

Relationships with P-12 students. Although participants felt the absence of relationships with stakeholders in the teacher education program, they were able to make personal connections to build authentic relationships with students in P-12 school environments. All respondents reported that the P-12 students were key to their resilience during challenging times in their program. Savannah shared that once she had her own classroom, all of her students were initially surprised to see a teacher of color. She recalled,

> They didn’t know how to react. The first thing they said was Wow! You’re a teacher? I never thought about becoming a teacher. They got to know me, we made a personal connection and it’s been a smooth ride. Especially once you get to know the kids individually, despite their racial backgrounds, and build a relationship with them, it really goes well…it’s been very positive.

Daniel explained that how when parents hear from their own children about the relationship they’ve built with him as their teacher it changed their perceptions of him. He explained,

> Their views on me changed from a hesitancy of not knowing what to expect from a person of color, to now their son or my daughter really talking a lot about me, to

> and the things that we have done and the relationship I have been able to develop.

James added, "I recall a time when I was substitute teaching, when the kids walked in, they were like, "We got a black teacher!" The excitement was like somebody to understand me and what I'm talking about." Further, he explained,

> I allow them to be themselves. If they want to crack a joke or start *b-boxing, I'm like, "What's that beat? I understand what it's like, because I came from that type of community—as opposed to just saying that I don't know what to do with them.

Need to prove. All participants described the need to prove their quality and readiness. Throughout their programs and as classroom teachers, they talked about how White was the standard, and in order to be portrayed as successful they needed to measure up to that standard. Phillip shared,

> Because I was the only one in my program, it was just more of something: Like it was a challenge to myself that okay, I'm going to make it out--to kind of actually show them that we, too can do it as well.

Respondents also expressed the constant, emotional stress of performance pressures, as James stated

> We're not only trying to live up to the so-called live up to the standard, but to the experience of still internally having that inferior feel, but at the same time, trying to overwork yourself and doing all of these extra things to cover your tracks.

Similarly, Daniel added,

> You wouldn't believe how many times I was asked by parents if I was actually the teacher for their student, if I was really a teacher in that building. And then to go through that process saying, "Yes, I'm the new XXXX teacher, and this is whom I am taking over for. This is what I'm doing…"

Experiences of racism and micro-aggressions emerged as barriers for participants. These barriers stifled participants' trust with constituents in the teacher education. Such lack of trust manifested into the absence of relationships that caused participants to operate in survival mode. As a result, survival conditions unfolded for participants, such as needing to prove their quality and readiness.

Survival Strategies

Compelled to operate in survival mode, participants adopted strategies to help them maneuver through their teacher preparation program. Three out of four respondents shared that they understood the unwritten, invisible and different rules for them as teacher candidates of color in a predominantly white teacher preparation program. James directly expressed this sentiment:

> Teachers of color just need a different kind of code and understanding…then they'll be able to get through the system. They need to understand the rules—the race rules they need to understand them.

Savannah added, " Yeah, it's a whole different bar for teachers of color." Advancing the discussion, Phillip responded, " They're waiting. They're waiting for you to mess up." Such trepidation poised participants to arm them selves to defensively work through the system. Isolation was one strategy used to defensively maneuver through, as James shared, "I kept it all in the classroom…I stayed to myself."

Three out of four participants shared how a limited number of faculty members were helpful with assisting respondents with understanding the rules. They described helpful faculty as initiating interest in making personal connections with them by listening to

their stories, and as providing encouragement and guidance on how to navigate the program.

Of those three respondents, two participants named the same supportive faculty member as Phillip expressed, "I feel like she was the only one that really cared for my success." He proceeded to explain why he believed she cared by going on to say, "I think she was more intrigued, like WOW, I haven't seen a person of color in the program in a while, so maybe I should kind of get to know this person more." Echoing about the same faculty member as Phillip, James further explained, "I had the support of certain faculty members who may understand more about the challenges students of color have to face in a university setting…period. He elaborated

> There were some faculty members that were aware of what we were trying to do and supported it. Because I feel like in every situation where there is white and Black, and we're all trying to move on, there are some white folks out there that really don't want to see that change happen. Then there are those that are morally aware, or I will say more aware, more connected, and understand what we go through because they know what we don't know behind the scenes and what "they" talk about when it comes to us.

Referring to a different faculty member, Daniel added, "We finally connected because, he asked me the question, 'So what's your future goals?' And that's when the door opened up."

Participants further described survival strategies as first understanding the unwritten and invisible rules. Once these were understood, respondents were able to operate in a mode of survival. Operating in solitude and making personal connections with faculty were strategies reported by participants. Since teacher education professors

are aware of what occurs throughout and behind the scenes of the teacher education program, they were able to provide participants assistance with the navigation of the unwritten and invisible rules.

Phase 1 of this study involved a focus group discussion with four individuals of color who recently graduated from the predominantly White educator preparation program. Three major themes and ten sub-themes emerged from the focus group discussion. The next component of phase 1 consisted of a focus group discussion with four teacher candidates of color currently enrolled in a predominantly white teacher preparation program.

Current Teacher Candidates - Focus Group

The second component of Phase 1 of this study was another focus group that engaged four teacher candidates currently enrolled in the same predominantly White educator program. Similar to the first focus group, individuals participated in one two-hour focus group session held in December 2015. During the focus group session participants responded to open-ended questions within a semi-structured framework in relation to the perceptions about their lived experiences in a predominantly White educator preparation program. The way in which the focus group questions and coding analysis was conducted remained the same as the first focus group. An analysis of text revealed three overarching themes related to the lived experiences of minoritized individuals who were currently in a predominantly White educator preparation program. The three major themes and five sub-themes that emerged with teacher candidates of

color from a predominantly White educator preparation program are listed in their order of appearance during the second focus group discussion:

1) Experience of Micro-aggressions
    a.) Faculty
    b.) Mentor teachers
    c.) Absence of trust
        i. Hypocritical behavior
        ii. Hidden agendas
    d.) Support to combat micro-aggressions
2) Critique of Language
3) Taught to Teach White Students
    a.) Curriculum
    b.) Unprepared to teach diverse learners

These specific themes developed due to the frequency of the references coded under the same category, and because every respondent described a similar experience. Each topic was indexed in the order that participants shared their experience and as their stories unfolded.

Experiences of Micro-aggressions

One respondent participated as the only person of color in their program, while three of the respondents participated in the same cohort within the predominantly white teacher education program in this study. As previously mentioned in theme two of the focus group discussion with graduates, the researcher adopted Bristol's (2014) definition.

In his dissertation research on Black Men of the Classroom, Bristol (2014) described "loners" as "teachers who are the only Black Male teacher on faculty, and "groupers" as those teachers in schools with many more Black male teachers" (p. 73). For the purpose of this study, the researcher adopted Bristol's (2014) definitions to describe the one respondent as a "loner," because they participated as the only person of color in the program. The three participants are described as "groupers," because there was more than one person of color who participated in their program. Although this focus group represented both "loners" and "groupers," participants still reported experiences with micro-aggression.

The first theme that emerged with this focus group was micro-aggressions. According to Sue et, al (2007) micro-aggressions can be described as small scale, brief, but daily verbal, non-verbal, physical, or environmental indignities and insults toward those of a different race, gender, or culture. Similarly, Solorzano, Ceja,and Yosso (2000), also noted the work of Davis (1989) who defined micro-aggressions as, "stunning, automatic acts of disregard that stem from unconscious attitudes of white superiority and constitute a verification of black inferiority" (p. 1576). Latinx scholar Solorzano (1998) documented micro-aggressions as "acts of disregard" that involve nonverbal gestures, stereotypical assumptions, lowered expectations, and racially assaultive remarks, such as, "You're not like the rest of them you're different" and/or "You speak such good English." Three out of four participants reported the micro-aggressions they experienced mostly occurred during field experience with faculty, university supervisors and mentor teachers. Contributions of such micro-aggressions

were described as the absence of trust, hypocritical behavior, and hidden agendas. Aware of these micro-aggressions participants shared strategies they used in an attempt to combat them.

Faculty. Barry described a conversation he had with a faculty member over the phone about professionalism during field experience. He stated

> I had a phone call with a professor about showing up on time. During the phone call she communicated to me that if it was up to her, she would have kicked me out of the program. I felt there was no way what I did (showing up late) justified me being kicked out of the program…At that moment it didn't feel professional, it felt personal.

In addition, he explained, "And that's a part of the affair that I had as a Black male candidate in a predominantly white program…that it would be a character assassination of me."

Throughout her field experience in an elementary school, Lucy shared how a faculty member also served as her University Supervisor. She recalled "she gave me a lot of good feedback, except but for one of my lessons when I taught about volcanoes." She continued:

> Then she stopped me in the middle of the lesson, saying that I can't do it because they(students) didn't have goggles on…The students understood, but having her stop in the middle of the lesson, you can't do that, and then just walking out the classroom. I don't feel like that's professional.

Further, she added, "That's just something that I don't think is okay to do in front of a classroom full of students that know you're a teacher… just coming to disrespect you in front of them.

Mentor teachers. In the midst of her second field experience, Ivy reflected on encounters between herself, her field experience partner, and their mentor teacher. She shared

> My partner is a white girl, and my mentor teacher really, like, talked with her and also like shared things with her. But when she talked with me, she didn't make eye contact with me... she wouldn't look at me, only looked at my partner. I just felt she did not really like me.

Continuing the conversation, Barry shared an experience with his mentor teacher. He stated, "I think she just gave me the cold shoulder…she mostly kept to herself. I tried to make conversation…she wasn't very responsive. I had to pursue my mentor teacher to try and get things I needed done." He recalled an instance when he was trying to communicate with his mentor teacher about an upcoming lesson he was supposed to teach:

> She just gave off icy vibes…we were dropping the students off at lunch and I was walking five to ten yards or so behind her. I wanted to tell her something related to the lesson I was going to teach. When I communicated that to her, she didn't even turn around and look at me. She just gave me a thumbs up and then walked into the bathroom.

He concluded, "So that felt really, really, really cold, to not even give me any type of eye contact or say anything…that was a negative experience.

Absence of trust. Three out of four participants stated their lack of trust with all teacher preparation stakeholders. Roxy shared

> When professors asked us as teacher candidates to be professional, I feel like instead of being a leader and showing us with their actions, they would counteract that model. So I didn't trust our faculty…I just didn't trust them a lot.

During his first field experience, Barry reflected on his encounters with his mentor teacher:

> She would not tell me anything I was doing wrong. She would go straight to my supervisor and tell her all the things I was doing wrong… not sharing them with me… or giving me the chance to fix my mistakes. So…for my mentor teacher, there is not trust there…I cannot trust her basically.

Moreover when asked about experiences with other teacher candidates in the program Roxy recalled "There were some friendly people in there, but my level of trust with them was not there at all." She further explained

> I didn't share much of my personal things. I didn't share anything about my parents…not anything close to heart. Because they listen, but they don't hear it…they don't apply it, they don't take that information given to them to help them be successful.

hypocritical behavior. Given the absence of trust, participants conveyed how faculty, mentor teachers and supervisors exhibited hypocritical behavior. Respondents felt some faculty members were cruel and hypocritical, as Lucy stated:

> There were faculty members that were vindictive…they were not professional, and I expected them to be—I expected them to teach us and be there for us. We are not teachers…we don't know the rules. We don't know everything, and when you treat us like we do, expecting us to come into the program knowing what we need to do, you're not doing your job.

Continuing the discussion, Barry added, "I describe my experiences with faculty as hypocritical… I say that because one thing was communicated to me, but the actions that were shown were different than what was communicated to me." He went on to say,

> That's also the term I would use to describe my experience with my mentor teacher--hypocritical. Because like I was saying before, she would not directly

> address any concerns that she had with me. Rather they were made known to multiple people rather than to me, myself.

hidden agendas. Respondents also described hidden agendas about the curriculum and shared concerns about the lack of clarity as Lucy expressed, "There is always a hidden agenda with the teachers when they teach the curriculum. They give us expectations on the syllabus but they never follow them." She elaborated,

> And when you ask questions, they just say, 'Oh read the chapter,' and then we come to class, and we talk about things that weren't even in the chapter—aren't a part of the class—and expecting us to know it and expecting us to teach student this information, it doesn't work. It doesn't help me to learn and understand things…so that's how I felt about the curriculum—frustrated and unclear.

Similarly, Barry voiced,

> I'd say the curriculum is kind of ambiguous. They just threw stuff out there—mostly everything that had to do with the edTPA…like they expected us to know what to do. But we're not teachers and we haven't had prior experience with that.

Roxy responded, "I agree with what they're saying."

Support to combat micro-aggressions. Although students reported experiences of micro-aggressions in their program, they also shared how support was crucial to their survival. Lucy shared, "There's different support systems here at this campus that you might not find at another campus location. Finding it beforehand has helped me, so I'm not screwed up in the end." Barry chimed in

> I also agree that's very important, because I try to lone-wolf things and don't seek out help. But as a black male in a predominantly white program, trying to lone wolf and go through the program is near impossible, if not impossible.

He went on further to say, “It’s extremely crucial to have people that you can converse with about your experience and that you can relate to. So for candidates thinking about coming into a predominantly white program, it’s not an option, it’s really necessary.” Roxy added, “I can agree to that because I think the reason why I wanted to leave the program was because of the way that faculty were treating me.” She continued, “I just don’t think it’s worth it to put my reputation out there to have someone destroy it because of their ignorance--and race and all that comes with it.” Similarly, Ivy stated, “You can fight it…you can prove yourself in front of the people trying to destroy you by making sure to have someone who has your back and is able to listen to you as well.”

Participants described their experiences of micro-aggressions as the absence of trust and hypocritical behavior by faculty and mentor teachers along with hidden agendas within the curriculum. Due to such lack of transparency, respondents reported the need for a support system to assist with combating micro-aggressions.

Critique of Language

Against the backdrop of micro-aggressions, all participants described the critique of their language by White people. Although participants owned the need to improve their English language, all respondents described critiques of language as an overarching micro-aggression. Taking ownership of her abilities Lucy reported, “I have trouble with my writing…but when professors were like, “Your writing isn’t up to standard,” but they never told me what I could do and how I could fix it.” Barry conveyed an encounter with a faculty member:

This was the first time in my life of hearing such a thing--she mentioned that I

> have a dialect in a conversation with me, and I told her I'd never heard anyone say that I had a dialect before. She was like, Oh, okay. Well, it's there. You may not notice it, but it's something you should work on"… I didn't know how to respond.

Ivy echoed the above feelings, "The first block faculty said they understand how difficult it is for students to adjust to academic language and writing." She went on further to talk about when she was told she could no longer participate in field experience:

> A couple of weeks into Block II field experience professors called me back into the office to communicate that I was not doing great, and I was not going to continue in Block II field anymore… I needed to repeat Block I field experience next semester, because my English was not professional enough.

In addition, Roxy shared, "I sometimes feel very insecure of my abilities…. and learning English as a second language, and just not being as fluent as my other classmates in English."

Three out of four participants reported receiving writing support from a faculty member and university supervisor. Of those three, two participants named the same supportive faculty member, as Barry shared, "She sat down and went over some academic language that I could find in the edTPA and highlighted it for us." About the same faculty member, Lucy expressed,

> Unlike other professors she sat down with me every day before we started class and went over my assignments and told me what I did wrong with my grammar and what I can fix, and she did this the whole semester everyday before we started class.

Similarly, Ivy added,

He really used his time to help me with my own grammar, because he knew English wasn't my first language. and I needed help with my grammar and my writing, He found time to help me correct each word, each sentence…sitting down with me.

Participants described the critique of their language as an overarching micro-aggression because English proficiency was the standard for success. Respondents reported that faculty approached issues with their language as a deficit. However, participants did receive writing support from a small number of faculty members.

Taught to Teach White Students

Curriculum. All respondents shared that the curriculum only prepared them to teach white students. Roxy stated, "The material was just not given to us as to how we can teach students from different cultures." Ivy expressed, "I think that our curriculum…it will not really be a good fit for me in my future teaching." Continuing the conversation Lucy responded, "The only experience I feel like that spoke to me personally was the ELL class. All the other classes, all they talked about was the white majority student." As a male loner, Barry expressed, "There are things I had to learn also and adjust culturally to do well in the curriculum." He went on further to say, "I didn't think there was a lot I could relate to in the curriculum as a Black male."

Unprepared to teach diverse learners. Given that participants felt their program only equipped them to teach one type of student, they sensed a level of unpreparedness in their ability to teach students from different backgrounds. Three out of four participants reported that what they learned in the program wasn't applicable for teaching diverse learners. Recalling her recent field experience, Roxy expressed, "I felt very insecure in my teaching ability, because I was not taught to teach students of color: I was taught to teach white students." She went on further to say, "I was not taught how to communicate with students of color, or teach them about their culture or anything else. I

was taught to speak professional English and do crafts." Lucy continued the discussion as she responded, "My field experience right now is in a classroom where there's only two white students--the majority are Hispanic and Somali students…and what I learned in this program doesn't apply to how I can teach them. She added, " But I *can* teach them, because I lived through it. I know from my personal experience how to deal with that type of demographic, but not from what I learned in this program."

Respondents reported their lack of connection to the curriculum in the teacher preparation program. Images of students of color and diverse perspectives were invisible and/or missing from the teacher education curriculum. On the basis of what they learned in their coursework students believed the program inadequately prepared them to teach diverse learners. However, because of *lived* experiences as persons of color who were once P-12 students of color, participants were able to felt confident in their abilities to teach diverse learners.

The second component of Phase 1 in the study consisted of a focus group discussion with four teacher candidates of color currently enrolled in a predominantly white teacher preparation program. Three themes and five sub-themes emerged from the focus group discussion with current teacher candidates enrolled in a predominantly white teacher preparation program.

Summary of Emerging Themes Across Both Focus Groups

A thorough analysis of the themes associated with the lived experiences of the participants in this study has led to a deeper understanding of the *meaning* of these experiences along with the ability to tie them together for greater cohesion. Phase 1 of

the study was comprised of two separate focus groups. The first focus group was with individuals of color who recently graduated, and the second focus group was with individuals of color who were currently enrolled in the same predominantly White university based educator preparation program as part of this study. Both focus groups incorporated and developed narratives that highlighted participants' experiences and amplified their voices. Between both focus groups, overlapping and unique themes emerged. Representation of overlapping themes from both focus groups included the following:

1. Program centered in whiteness
2. Micro-aggressions
3. Survival conditions and strategies

Representation of unique themes from both focus groups were:

1. Loners (recent graduates)
2. Critique of language (current candidates)

Black Male Educator - Vignettes

During Phase 2 of this study, individual follow-up interviews were held with four participants for one hour. This created the opportunity to more fully understand the context and effects of the lived experiences by the participants as discussed in the focus group. Similarly, it also afforded respondents the chance to extend the focus group questions and speak more freely about their personal experiences. To gain a holistic understanding through analysis of individual stories, vignettes were used to describe and illustrate each participants lived experience.

These vignettes are blends of unstructured interviews and observation field notes. Each of the following vignettes offers a description of the participants experience as a student in K-12 schools from kindergarten to 12th grade. An examination of respondent's interest in becoming a teacher, their struggles and perspective on how to get more black males in the teaching profession was discussed. The vignettes of Barry, Daniel and James (self-chosen pseudo-names) are provided below. The following questions guided the unstructured interviews:

1. As a student, what was your experience like in schools from kindergarten-12th grade (K-12)?
2. How did you become interested in pursuing a teaching career?
3. What was your biggest challenge being enrolled in a predominantly white teacher program?
4. From your perspective, what are some solutions for getting more Black males to become teachers?

Barry

My academic journey began in the Southeast region of the United States until I was nine years old. Then my family moved to the Midwest region of the country where I continued my schooling. There, I attended school in the same district from fourth grade until I graduated from high school. All of my teacher's kindergarten through twelfth (K-12) grade were white, with one being a male. My elementary school years were a blur to me although I vividly remember negative experiences during my middle and high school years. For the most part, I was an average student in middle school but I distinctly recall

being reprimanded for things that didn't make sense to me. Things like non-disruptive behavior and….

Most of my memories from high school were about my mission of not getting a reputation as a bad student. Most of the kids at my high school were majority white, so the memories are disturbing because of the racial confrontations between Black and White students. If you were a Black student and you didn't speak "ghetto" per se, then rumors would spread that you were like an Oreo: Black on the outside and white on the inside. So because all of that was going on, I stayed away from it. Besides, although having a bad reputation at school carried its burdens, I was more worried about the consequences at home for getting in trouble from my parents.

My decision to pursue a career in teaching stemmed from my family recognizing my strengths. I've always been told that I'm a giving person. My mom always told me, "You're a very generous person," and my belief is that one of the greatest gifts one can impart upon another is knowledge. A parable my father shared that is still with me is the "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, teach a man to fish and you feed him for life." Thinking back on my life, if I didn't have adults guiding me in the right direction I don't know where I'd be. So I want to be give back and help those that have certain circumstances that impact their success in life. Those are things that motivated me to go into education.

Being a part of a predominantly white teacher preparation program, the biggest thing I struggled with was my identity. As a Black male, you have to conform in order to find success. However, although I did a lot of identity shedding, that conforming didn't

change the color of my skin. I'm a laid-back type of guy and do things like listen to music, but walking in to class with headphones on listening to music, using slang or even the way I dress can negatively influence how I'm seen by professors and other students. As a result, those perceptions can turn into misunderstandings that can impact the support you receive in order to be successful.

From my perspective, teaching isn't designed for Black males so solutions for getting them into the profession begins with making a teaching career more appealing by increasing the pay. Black males want careers where they can advance and do their thing as a Black man. Along with more pay, changing the perception of the profession is a big piece. Because for me, I feel like Black history is overlooked in schools. If our history isn't preserved, then how will we know where we came from, because Black people were among the first to build and have our own schools. Pride is a big thing in the Black community, and if you want to make it more appealing to Black males, restoring a sense of prestige in the teaching profession is another solution.

Daniel

I attended school in the same district from elementary through my high school graduation. English Language (EL) was the label given to me as a student, because I had limited English proficiency. There were not many other EL students at my school until after about my eighth grade year. Throughout my K-12 years I had strong support from my parents, who encouraged me to learn and do my absolute best. We had a lot of deep conversations about the future--how we want our future to look like and life for me after high school…after college. For the most part I had a positive experience as a student

during my K-12 years. However, when I looked at my teachers, none of them shared experiences like mine as far as someone who had a different skin color, who spoke a different language, came from a different culture or religion. All those things made me feel like an outsider because of being viewed as somebody who's different…who has a different language and dressed differently.

My journey towards becoming a teacher began when I started college. Originally, I wanted to become a therapist but my experience of working with students and families from my community led me to a position in education. That role helped me understand the importance of education and really developed my passion. Wanting to know more about how to proceed, I sought out advice from individuals from the College of Education. They provided a set of ears to just listen. They allowed me to share my experiences with them. They told me that I could do it…believed in me… and provided me with guidance. Those individuals built a personal connection with me; they got to know me, and to this day they are still my mentors.

One of my core beliefs is the power of shared experiences, relationships, and mentoring. Being in front of students' everyday, I need to understand what's going on in their lives, before I can teach them. Knowing their stories allows me to connect with them on a certain level. So for me, as the only male student of color in the program, my biggest struggle was the absence of personal connections and relationships. Not one time did a faculty member ask me, "What's your story?" Everyone was just going along…students were coming into the program, learning and moving on, but never really paused to really understand what motivates me and what helps me move ahead?

I reflect so much on how to get more Black males into the education field, because I feel like I'm in a position to do something about it right now. Although it starts with having a teacher of color in front of Black males in the classroom, more importantly it begins with school leaders. White leaders and leaders of color a like need to advocate for and support the hiring of more teachers of color. A recent experience at my district professional development day made me think about messages we are sending to students about who can be teachers. This PD just happened a few weeks ago, in a district wide setting, and I looked around, and I was the only male of color surrounded my majority white females… I felt so out of place! Are we sending the message to our students that teaching is only for one group of people?

Another way is for teachers to talk about the profession to students. Not enough conversations are happening with students of color about their potential to possibly become a teacher. Right now I feel is my time to slowly do my part of planting the seeds. Because if I had a conversation with someone of color…they didn't even have to be of color… just someone I looked up to--to share the importance of education or how I could have become a teacher, I think it would have helped me to make my decision sooner.

James

Reflecting on my K-12 educational journey, I'd have to say it was a unique experience. I began pre-k in a Pan-African, Afrocentric-type school. I was exposed to a lot of self-knowledge very early. Instead of singing the national anthem every morning, we sang the black national anthem. We had uniforms, and we learned about who Christopher Columbus was not. As I progressed through my education in a more public

school setting, first grade through high school depending on which school I went to, I started to experience a lot more of being the only Black kid (or what the researcher refers to as “loner”).

Since I grew up in a single parent home, we moved a lot. I went to a different school almost every year, and I had a reputation of talking too much and acting silly. There were pros and cons to going to new schools all the time. The pros were I got exposed to the differences in how kids learn and how they were treated in the suburbs versus the inner city. The biggest difference was the funding in suburban schools--they had swimming pools and a lot of rich kids driving cars to school. Not so much in the urban schools--a lot of those kids were poorer than I was and had worse stuff going on at home. The con was that I never got to really grow in one school and build relationships with the teachers.

Looking back on my experience, as a Black boy in K-12 schools, there was no happy medium. Whether I was in all White school or an all Black school, I still felt out of place. I wasn’t being educated by anyone who looked like me, understood me, or had high expectations for me. Because if I was too smart, then I was acting white; and I didn’t play sports. so I wasn’t getting that type of attention. I feel like I was programmed to clown, act silly, and not take education seriously, because I’d be less of a threat. Yet, at the same time, I did take mine seriously because I had my mom on my behind and my dad to support me.

My first year in college I didn’t know what I wanted to do, then that summer I worked in a program as a summer assistant teacher with inner city youth. I had a class of

15-20 students from second to fourth grade: we did academic activities, and I chaperoned daily field trips. My goal was to be a positive Black male role model, as opposed to what they may normally be exposed to seeing. In return, I began to become inspired by these kids. They were smart, mature, innocent kids who wanted to be people too. They wanted to feel loved too…they had dreams and aspirations too, but no one really to tell them that it's okay to be all of those things. So I got to do that, and I enjoyed the feeling of being a role model in the community and helping out the little kids. So then I thought to myself how can I make money giving back? I know! I'm going to do it…I'm going to be a teacher. I didn't know what I was getting myself into…I wasn't aware of what I would have to go through with the program and everything. For about three or four summers straight, I worked with those kids and that's what helped me decide my path to become a teacher.

The biggest challenge was being a Black male--along with all the stereotypes of being dumb, an athlete, or having low expectations that come with being in education. All my life I've seen teachers grading my work, teaching me perfectly, so I viewed teachers as perfect. So first, visualizing myself as a teacher and seeing myself get through the program was a struggle. Because the closer I got to finishing, that's when more hurdles got in the way of me being successful. These challenges that no one else would understand…except a Black man. The only Black male in all these courses while trying to stay true to myself was also challenging. I came to class laid back. I kept quiet, followed the rules, and earned my way through--off my straight knowledge…I wasn't looking for handouts.

Sometimes I feel like Black males can't see themselves becoming teachers because they don't even feel like they've ever been taught anything. From the start, education needs to empower Black males to feel confident enough to choose any profession, not only teaching. Having really strong male role models to help them build their confidence and show them things and tell them it's okay to be yourself is what Black boys need. To be told, there's nothing wrong with being Black and smart and wanting to learn and read, and be at the top of your game…and not be angry or silly. They need someone that's real calm and can understand them to tell them not to accept the stereotypes. Someone to tell them that it's okay, it's just schoolwork it, it's fun you can learn, all with high expectations. To tell them it's ok, it's okay…I'm right here, I'm right here helping you along the way. They also need to see Black males in respectable roles of authority communicating with Black male adolescents--Black male teachers dressed nice who are well spoken, driving nice cars. Showing them that they too can be smart and cool at the same time.

Another solution for getting more Black males into the teaching profession is having programs that support them towards getting through their program. Because of the Teachers of Tomorrow program, I was able to finish my program, get out there and be an example of a Black teacher that students can look up to and want to be like. I was able to make it out of the cycle of poverty…switch it up and now I have a responsibility to give back. I do it in a type-of-teaching them-how-to-fish-way as opposed to just donating.

Conclusion of Vignettes

These portrait vignettes served as a mechanism to showcase each participant's story. Each vignette provided a snapshot from the male perspective about his experience as a student in K-12 schools from kindergarten to 12th grade. An examination of respondent's journey into the teaching profession, their struggles, and their perspectives on how to get more Black males in the teaching profession was discussed. Through portrait vignettes, the voices, words and stories of three Black male teachers were amplified. Key ideas expressed in the vignettes included;

- Less than optimal K-12 experiences
- Pursuing a teaching career as a way to give back
- Black male identity and authenticity struggles
- Absence of relationships

The portraits of the three research participants were uniquely they're own and very dissimilar. Their stories suggest that male teacher candidate's of color experiences in a predominantly White educator preparation program is one in the same for all should be reconsidered Jones (2011). The vignettes were analyzed for commonality of male perspective of maleness rather than ethnicity, nationality or comparison of themes and/or patterns. Such intersectional analysis requires more attention focused on identity and the experience.

The themes and sub-themes from the focus groups will be further interpreted in Chapter five. Specifically, the themes will be discussed in relation to the body of literature presented in Chapter two.

Chapter V

Discussion

The backdrop of a homogeneous teaching force responsible for the education of the most multi-dimensional, diverse P-12 student populace in history, in combination with significant educational disparities has demonstrated why the U.S teaching force should more closely "look like America" Shaker, (2016). Unfortunately, since Brown V. Board (1954) teachers of color have become the minority in the education of students of color. A growing body of research suggests that teachers of color have the ability to significantly improve the academic outcomes in general, for all students and specifically, for students of color (Agosto, 2009; Ahmad & Boser, 2014; Dilworth & Coleman, 2014; Gomez, Rodriquez, & Agosto, 2008; Goodwin, 2004; Hopfengardner & Lasley, 1984; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Little & Bartlett, 2010; Middleton, 1996; Villegas & Davis, 2007; Villegas & Irvine, 2010; Shanker, 2016; Stead, 2012).

However, research literature focused on the examination of factors that either hindered or supported the transformation of students of color from teacher candidates into the teaching profession has been limited in scope (Kornfeld 1999; Szecsi & Spillman, 2012). Scholarship that does exist has been devoted to the experiences and perceptions of pre-service teacher candidates of color once they entered teacher education programs and was distorted due to such low numbers. Moreover, the current scholarship on experiences of teacher candidates and graduates of color who participated in predominantly White educator preparation programs has been almost non-existent (Kornfeld, 1999; Jones, 2011).

Rather than highlight achievements, literature about teacher candidates of color has been written through deficit frameworks that magnify barriers and failures. Comparatively less scholarship has demonstrated how students of color manage to persist through their educator preparation programs despite issues of academic under-preparedness, racist/gender stereotypes and other negative forces Harper, (2012). Anti-deficit research literature about the experiences of teacher candidates of color in predominantly White educator preparation programs does exist, but to date, most are from the early 1990's, with one recent study in 2012. New research is needed to showcase the nuances of understanding the lived experiences of college students of color lived experiences once they enter teacher education programs (Kornfeld, 1999; Kohli, 2009).

Scholars argue that the voices students of color in educator preparation are valued but often unheard and ignored (Guyton, Saxton, & Wesche 1996; Su, 1997). Critical Race Theory (CRT) framework has been used as both a theoretical foundation and tool in an effort to shed light on counter narratives of individuals from communities of color. Moreover, CRT provides insights, perspectives, methods, and pedagogies that guide efforts toward the identification, analysis and transformation of structural and cultural aspects of education that maintain the status quo (Solorazano & Yosso, 2002). Tenants of CRT have also been used in educator preparation research to unearth educational inequities. In this study, the tenants of CRT were used as a catalyst to amplify participants' words, voices and stories. Voices of color, intersectionality, and interest convergence were elements of CRT revealed in the findings of this study.

This qualitative phenomenological study attempted to capture the voices, experiences and perceptions of students of color participating as minoritzed individuals in a predominantly white teacher education program. Focus groups followed by in-depth interviews were used to capture participant's voices and stories. Husserl (1970) established the foundation of phenomenology, explained as the descriptive study of consciousness in an attempt to identify the essence of an experience. Furthermore, Creswell (2013) described phenomenological research as the universal meaning for several individuals who encounter a similar lived experience of a phenomenon. The phenomenon of this study was the participation of minoritized individuals enrolled in a predominantly White educator preparation program.

A thorough analysis of the themes associated with the lived experiences of the participants in this study has led to a deeper understanding of the *meaning* of these experiences along with the ability to tie them together for greater cohesion. Multiple themes and sub-themes were presented in Chapter IV. This chapter begins with revisiting those themes that were common (overlapping) across both focus groups, and those that were unique to each focus group. These themes are further analyzed in relation to the conceptual and research literature discussed throughout Chapter II. That discussion is followed by implications for practice, strengths and limitations, and recommendations for further research.

Overlapping Themes Across Focus Groups

There were two overlapping themes from both focus groups that are discussed in depth in the following paragraphs. These themes are: a) Program centered in whiteness and b) Survival conditions and strategies.

Program centered in whiteness. The first overlapping theme was the foundation, design, and implementation of the predominantly white educator preparation program as being centered in Whiteness. Marx (2006) defined whiteness as "much more than racial discourse that serves to reproduce white privilege and racism, rather understood as the amalgamation of qualities including the cultures, histories, experiences, discourse, and privileges shared by whites" (p. 6). Adopted from Leonardo (2002), Mitchell, Donahue, and Young-Law (2012) add that therefore "a critical analysis of white racial supremacy revolves less around the issues of unearned advantages, or the state of being dominant, and more around direct processes that secure domination and the privileges associated with it" (p.2). In the setting of this study, the overwhelming presence of whiteness secured domination over individuals of color who participated as minoritized persons as part of a predominantly White educator preparation program. Less than 5% of the teacher education faculty members were from racial or gender- diverse backgrounds. Comprised of majority White female faculty members, the program was centered in Whiteness. Deeply entrenched in Whiteness, the program curriculum, pedagogy, and standards were all portrayed and delivered through the dominant lens, frame of reference, and teaching. In his ethnographic study that examined the experiences of two female African American students in a predominantly White educator preparation program

Kornfeld (1999) found that much of the experiences and perspectives of the program courses were portrayed through the lens of Whiteness.

The overwhelming presence of Whiteness subjected teacher candidates of color to social isolation. Such retreat distanced candidates of color from the core mission of the educator preparation program. The net effect of the distance between the most powerful stakeholders who taught, supervised and mentored in the program and the least powerful group--teacher candidates of color--typically yield less than optimal outcomes Bristol (2014). As an organization, the educator preparation programs perpetuated structural Whiteness as power through the presence of White dominance. Moreover the presence of Whiteness silenced candidates of color in a predominantly white educator preparation program Sleeter (2001).

Such silence contributed to candidates of color being voiceless in the classroom and sensing feelings of avoidance, judgment, and isolation that led to overt and dysconscious racist environment Kornfeld (1999). According to King (1991), dysconscious racism is "a form of racism that tacitly accepts dominant white norms and privileges. It is not the absence of consciousness (that is, not unconsciousness) but impaired consciousness or distorted way of thinking about race as compared to, for example, critical consciousness" (pg. 135). Such impaired consciousness promoted invisible and unintended program outcomes like the exclusion of racially conscious pedagogy, the dismissal of the history of people of color in the curriculum, along with treating students of color as the residential experts for their own race. These actions took shape to support overt and dyconscious racism.

Absence of racially conscious pedagogy. The overwhelming presence of Whiteness operated as the cornerstone of impaired consciousness contributing to the absence of racially conscious pedagogy and/or the pedagogy of Whiteness. When educator preparation programs are grounded in Whiteness, typically faculty are typically unaware of the need or uninterested in seeking out to learn about multi-dimensional diverse perspectives Kornfeld (1999). Professors' limited knowledge and experience with different perspectives about race and culture also influenced how the absence of racially conscious pedagogy, through impaired consciousness, took shape. In many instances, professors responsible for preparing teacher candidates to teach diverse learners have not, themselves developed the critical consciousness, racial awareness, and cultural competence to understand the complex intricacies of race and culture in the context of learning and teaching Milner and Howard, (2013). Such ignorance positioned faculty to design their courses from a single dominant perspective or a set of needs that was assumed to be universal Mitchell et al. (2012).

Moreover, as mentioned in the graduate focus group discussion, Phillip expressed how the curriculum of this program was " built for white kids…nice schools…in the nice suburban schools and stuff like that, rather than hard tough schools." What Phillip pointed out was the notion of being taught to teach white. In Kornfeld's (1999) Sharing Stories study, the findings unearthed the development of activities and assignments in the methods courses as geared towards preparing students to teach in White suburban schools rather than diverse and urban schools. According to Cross, (2005) "the absence of placing racism, power and whiteness on the table as a central tenant to the preparation of

teachers influenced their unpreparedness to teach in racially diverse classrooms" (p.264). In addition, Marx (2006) argued that, teacher candidates in predominantly White educator preparation programs learn about children of color and English-Language learners in various forms that oppress them, their families, and communities in a way that positions the teacher as savior, thus teaching passive racism. As a result, the absence of racially conscious pedagogy and the dismissal of people of color histories of people of color in the curriculum, combined with the teacher educators' knowledge gap of critical consciousness, racial awareness, and cultural competence created dysconscious racism.

Lack of history of people of color. State law requires all education instructional materials to be aligned with state standards. Typically, board of teaching state standards that are married to teacher preparation programs are written from dominant, monolithic, Eurocentric bias Loewen, (1996). Such laws and standards supported a pedagogy of Whiteness that allowed for the histories of people of color and diverse perspectives to be invisible or portrayed in marginal and superficial ways (Gay, 2000; Kohli, 2009; Marx, 2006; Milner, 2008). Textbooks that neglect to mention the complex histories and racial realities of people of color while promoting white dominant, cultural values advance subtle yet powerful forms of passive racism (Kohli, 2009; Marx, 2006). When students of color do not see themselves reflected in their textbooks or classroom discussions, it sends a powerful message that the White dominant culture is "normal" and thus superior. Learning about the world through such a hierarchical lens can have a significant impact on student identity—students see themselves and the world around them Kohli, (2009).

***Students of color as spokespersons for their race*.** Faculty treating students of color as the spokesperson or residential expert for their own race explained how alienation can occur in the university classroom Guyton, Saxton and Wesche (1995). Furthermore, Cross (2005) explained that "utilizing minority spokespersons as prototypes of an entire group while leaving invisible the White group and leaving the White cultural lenses invisible while making others transparent" (p. 271) operates as an agent of new racism that works best when invisible. In an effort as to not teach about others from their own perspectives, professors solicit students of color as the residential expert, thus perpetuating the impaired consciousness of dyconscious racism. This type of unfavorable experience towards students of color in education classes underscored the need for faculty to become more critically conscious, racially aware, and culturally competent Milner and Howard (2013)

White privilege. Overbearing Whiteness, the absence of racially conscious pedagogy combined with cultural invisibility in the curriculum combined with students of color serving as residential experts for their entire race revealed the presence of White privilege. Participants described the observation of White privilege specifically with White teacher candidates in their teacher preparation program. All participants shared feelings of frustration and isolation due to their experience with other teacher candidate's White privilege. However White candidates were unaware of such advantages that benefited them (Solomona, Portelli, Daniel & Campbell 2005; Mitchell et al., 2012). The observation of White privilege was also unearthed through the controlled delivery of pedagogy and curriculum that ignored the history and realities of people of color.

Subsequently, participants learned about education through a program grounded in traditional, oppressive assumptions, and White ideologies that under-examined White bias and privileges Cross (2005).

Contributing factors that influenced the educator preparation program centered in Whiteness were the absence of racially conscious pedagogy and the dismissal of people of color in the curriculum. Such invisibility sent powerful messages to participants about the importance and validity of their race and culture, thus affirming the normality and superiority of White culture. These two areas played a significant role in how participants experienced their preparation of becoming a teacher. Students of color treated as the spokespersons for their race while ignoring the examination of unearned power and privilege were also components that supported the overwhelming presence of Whiteness in the educator preparation program.

Survival conditions and strategies. The previous theme of overbearing Whiteness along with supporting sub-themes influenced how participants experienced their program. The absence of diverse perspectives and racial identities represented in the curriculum, combined with being taught white history, affected the program's culture and values. Such evidence caused participants to anticipate and to defensively navigate through their educator preparation program. Participants operating in survival mode due to the presence of micro-aggressions and the absence of relationships, causing them to prove their quality throughout the program. Respondents reported experiencing subtle types of micro-aggressions that manifested into barriers. Such barriers justified the

conditions for their survival and the need to adopt survival strategies to combat micro-aggressions.

Micro-aggressions. Experiences with micro-aggressions were an overarching theme of the overwhelming presence of Whiteness that caused students to operate in survival mode. Participants perceived micro-aggressions from teacher educators, university supervisor, and mentor teachers as hypocritical behavior, hidden agendas, the absence of trust and relationships, and the need to prove their quality. In his dissertation research on the journey's of African American male pre-service educators, Jones (2011) found that moments of mistrust and misinformation experienced by participants were solidified associations of micro-aggressions. Such encounters manifested as unclear messages and hidden expectations that shaped interactions between participants and constituents in the teacher preparation program responsible for the acts of micro-aggressions. In a study that showcased how African American students experienced micro-aggressions, Solorazano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000) found that although educational conditions on the surface level appeared to be equal, inequality and discrimination were still evident in more subtle and hidden forms.

Absence of trust and relationships. Encounters with micro-aggressions stifled participants' ability to build relationships with stakeholders in the teacher preparation program. As loners, participants were ignored, invisible in the curriculum and felt isolated in the classroom setting (Chung, 2012; Cross, 2010; Kohli, 2009; Kornfeld, 1999). This caused participants to be hesitant towards initiating personal connections with faculty and other constituents in the program. Couched in the overwhelming

presence of Whiteness, the dismissal of their racial experiences and overall limited awareness and consciousness around race made it challenging for participants to make personal connections to build relationships with constituents in the teacher education program.

Drawing from the study conducted by Chung (2012), students reported feelings of isolation and discomfort with faculty in the classroom and mentor teachers during field experiences due to their lack of awareness of race and racism. Moreover, when faculty encounter "loners," or when there are fewer students of color in the classroom setting, faculty are less likely to address the concerns of those minoritized individuals Solorazano, Ceja, and Yosso, (2000). Additionally, in his Sharing Stories study Kornfeld (1999) found that teacher candidates of color were voiceless in the classroom and sensed feelings of avoidance, judgment, and isolation from their professors and White counterparts.

Need to prove. According to Solorazano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000) ongoing negative interactions with micro-aggressions conveyed a sense of self-doubt for students. When experiences of micro-aggressions are united with the absence of relationships, participants sensed the need to prove their quality and readiness. Situated in an environment where White was the standard of success, participants were constantly trying to measure up to that standard. As a consequence, the need to prove them selves caused emotional turmoil that impacted their confidence that led to feelings of inferiority. Heightened awareness and stress associated with the need to prove can leave students with thoughts and feelings that their intelligence has been called into question Yosso,

Smith, Ceja and Solorazono (2009). Moreover, casting doubt on students academic intelligence can lead to a nagging sense of self-doubt. Yosso, Smith, Ceja and Solorazono (2009) found that doubt of students' academic merits and capabilities by faculty demonstrates a subtle form of low expectations.

Experiences with micro-aggressions, united with mistrust and the absence of relationships, informed the need for participants to prove their readiness and quality. These subtle forms of micro-aggressions had an impacted participants' level of confidence. Constantly challenging them selves, questioning their ability to measure up to White as the standard in light of perceived low expectations by teacher educators caused stress, emotional turmoil, and feelings of inferiority. Furthermore, these experiences had and impact on the psyche, psychological and mental health of teacher candidates of color. All of these components set the survival conditions to survive for minoritized persons that participated in a predominantly White educator preparation program.

The survival conditions described above increased participant knowledge and awareness of on how to understand the hidden expectations and unclear messages. In the same vein, participants reported that a small number of faculty members helped them critically navigate through a predominantly White educator preparation program. Such consciousness, along with professors' knowledge, served as survival strategies. Faculty interest in candidates of color through the recognition of their presence honored their lived racial experiences and gave them the opportunity to share their stories (Kornfeld, 1999).

Participants reported how a small number of professors understood the limited presence of candidates of color in teacher education, noticed their presence and created an opportunity to engage and make a connection with them. In the graduate focus group discussion, James pointed out, “Some faculty members were aware of what were trying to accomplish and supported it.” Phillip echoed a similar perception about the same faculty member as he expressed, “I feel like she was the only one that really cared for my success.” He proceeded to explain why he believed she cared by going on to say, “I think she was more intrigued, like WOW, I haven’t seen a person of color in the program in a while, so maybe I should kind of get to know this person more.” Moreover, in the current teacher candidate focus group discussion, Barry and Lucy reported positive experiences with the same faculty member. This professor offered assistance in the form of writing support for both participants. These exemplars demonstrated how certain faculty members had the ability to understand the nuances of what candidates of color experience in predominantly White educator preparation programs (Kohli, 2009; Kornfeld, 1999). These individuals served in roles and capacities that assisted candidates of color with navigating the terrain and rules of a predominantly White educator preparation program.

The program centered in Whiteness established a climate that required participants to arm them selves to defensively navigate and overcome barriers to work through the predominantly White educator preparation program. The presence of micro-aggressions alongside the absence of relationships with educator preparation program constituents created the conditions that compelled participants to persist and endure through barriers. Such barriers fostered the need for participants to constantly prove their quality and

readiness. Respondents adopted survival strategies from a small number of faculty members who understood the landscape of the program, made personal connections with them, and offered assistance on how to critically navigate through the program.

Unique Themes Across Focus Groups

Loners. Across both focus groups, the first unique theme that emerged was loners. Loners are defined as the only individuals of color within in the educator preparation program as part of this study. Fifty percent of participants across both focus groups participated as male loners. Engaged as Black males in a predominantly white environment, participants operated as the least powerful demographic in their teacher education program Bristol, (2014). According to a report on teacher diversity released by the Shaker Institute (2015), Black males account for less than 2% of our nation's teacher workforce. Moreover, the absence of a male presence in general and males of color specifically in K-12 public school systems may explain the disturbing patterns of inequities for male youth of color Carroll (2011).

Such absenteeism influenced the way participants engaged in P-12 educational settings during their field experience and student teaching. The absence of a male presence in roles of faculty (who may also serve as university supervisors), university supervisors and/or mentor teachers were yet another barrier for these participants. The intersectionality of gender and race, combined with identity politics, caused Black males to be overly cautious in the presence of university supervisors and mentor teachers. This prudence was an effort not to jeopardize their reputations and aspirations as future classroom teachers. As mentioned in the Black male educator vignettes, Barry stated the

need to conform in order to find success. Although the abandonment of identity was required to be successful, it didn't change the color of his skin.

Reported in the graduate focus group discussion, in general, the presence of male educators and specifically male educators of color in P-12 settings carried tremendous impact. Male educators of color embody high levels of cultural *synchronicity* that impact the lives of youth of color and their families that include serving in roles as mentors, advocates, cultural translators, cultural brokers and critical role models for all children, especially children of color (Brown, 2005; Egalite, Kisida, & Winters, 2015; Ingersoll & May 2011; Villegas & Irvine, 2010; Villegas, Strom & Lucas, 2012).

Since educators help shape the identities of students, male teachers of color have the potential to influence, in general all students in general and specifically how male students of color see them selves. Black men of the classroom have multi-facet dimensions they bring to the profession, specifically the ways they teach their Black male students Bristol (2014). According to Lewis and Toldson (2013), there is compelling evidence supportive of Black male teachers improving academic outcomes and school engagement for all students.

Given the over-representation of white females in educator preparation and in the teacher workforce, male participants faced racial barriers and gender barriers as well. Male respondents described the compounding effects of the limited presence of males in education that caused them to be overly cautious, thus not feeling a sense of belonging or safety. As a result, participants exhibited a lack of trust in teacher education stakeholders--in the system designed to support and advance them into P-12 classrooms.

However, their presence in P-12 schools proved to be beneficial for P-12 students and for the participants themselves. The ability to serve in educational environments in roles of authority and success contributed to these participants internal mission, confidence and resiliency.

Critique of Language. The second unique theme represented across both focus groups was critique of language. Critique of language can be described as the judgment of voices and languages other than English that need to be corrected and seen as deficient. Participants described how the critique of their language was yet another form of overarching micro-aggressions and a marker of racism. Marx (2006) wrote that deficit thinking around language is often perpetuated in schools of education where teacher candidates learn about students of color who are English Language Learners (ELL), according to what they do not have. Such a deficit perspective was applied to participants as pre-service teacher candidates enrolled in a predominantly White educator preparation program.

In the teacher candidate focus group discussion, Barry mentioned being told by a non-world languages faculty member that he had a dialect; this one-way deficit perspective about language took shape through the diagnosis of proper English. The fact that this was the first time in his life that he heard such a thing was an indicator of being different, wrong and deficient. Delpit (1995) wrote that "the recognition of linguistic forms other than English intimately connected with students families, communities and identities as wrong suggest that something is wrong with the students and their families" (p.53). Moreover, according to Cross (2005), when Whites examine, document, and

objectify minoritized groups and furthermore are granted ownership of how their social, cultural, and linguistic realities are represented, a new racism exists in educator preparation.

When participants' language was not perceived as English proficient, it impacted their confidence and writing abilities. Respondents understood the need to hone and polish their writing skills. However, they described how faculty were quick to point out how their writing was subpar, but neglected to offer specific assistance and guidance for improvement. According to Delpit (1995) the opportunity to improve language should afford students to "get the feel" of speaking and writing Standard English without the threat of correction. In addition, Delpit (1995) argued that the notion of "different language forms as appropriate in different context" (p. 53) should also be considered.

Loners and critique of language represented unique themes across both focus groups.

Such particular themes emerged as additional barriers for participants. Appeared that they were seen for their race, gender, and language rather than their potential, thus reinforcing sentiments of inferiority. Given the uniqueness of such themes in the study of minoritized persons' participation in a predominantly White educator preparation program warrants further exploration.

Black Male Educator Vignettes

The portraits of the three research participants were uniquely they're own and very dissimilar. Their stories suggest that viewing male teacher candidate's of color experiences in a predominantly White educator preparation program is one in the same

for all should be reconsidered Jones (2011). The vignettes were analyzed for commonality of male perspective of maleness rather than ethnicity, nationality or comparison of themes and/or patterns. Such intersectional analysis requires more attention focused on identity and the experience expressed by each individual rather than through any type of thematic analysis.

Implications

Given the considerable amount of focus towards the advancement of diversifying the teacher workforce, not enough attention has been paid to the preparation of pre-service teacher candidates of color. This investigation served as a step to address that gap. Research findings are situated in the phenomenon of students of color participating as minoritized individuals in a predominantly White educator preparation program and therefore can be contextually transferable. Results from this study acknowledge existing structural concerns of teacher education. Because university educators have inherited a educator preparation system grounded in Whiteness, the need to continuously and critically examine how structures privilege and sustain Whiteness is warranted. Since educator preparation programs are structured, maintained, and perpetuated by Whites, the development and creation of program expectations are set up so that such expectations designed by whites are maintained M. Prenn (personal communication, October 12, 2016). Moreover, findings generated from this study have implications for practices, programs, policies, and further research that are foundational to the structural design of teacher education programs.

Recommendations for Teacher Education Practices

Several implications for educator preparation practices were unearthed as part of this study. Based on the research findings, curricular and pedagogical practices that support the dismissal of perspectives from communities of color while simultaneously upholding Whiteness need to be examined. Rooted in Whiteness from content of instruction, how instruction is taught, to who delivers instruction requires the examination of the ways in which power, privilege, and missing or deficit perspectives are sustained in the teacher education classroom. Moreover, as the main drivers who have the power to make decisions on how and what is taught in the classroom, faculty need to consider the curricular and instructional needs of teacher candidates of color (Milner, 2008; Mitchell et al., 2012).

Similarly, faculty must be cognizant in recognizing how they can be responsive to the needs, perspectives, and backgrounds of teacher candidates of color. To carry this out, an awareness and examination of their biases and assumptions, in addition to their behavior towards candidates of color, should be considered. As reflected in the results, participants continuously mentioned the absence of trust and many relationships combined with experiences of micro-aggressions with educator preparation faculty. These types of unfavorable experiences underscored the need for faculty to become more racially responsive through critical identity work and self-directed study. Such acts require individuals to begin their personal journey through internal reflection with the goal toward understanding their own role in perpetuating Whiteness and dysconscious racism. As recommended by scholars of educator preparation and as evidenced by this

study, faculty members need to check their assumptions and take a reflective stance Mitchell et al., (2012). Ways to begin this work includes professional development that affords faculty members the opportunity to examine their understandings of how identities and race impact their instruction and in what ways their interpretations of those understandings may be problematic (Cochran-Smith, 2000; Milner, 2008). There is an expectation that all teacher candidates will be prepared to enter and teach in multi-dimensional diverse classrooms. However, it is preposterous to believe this can be achieved without requiring educator preparation faculty to examine their own biases and to learn about the historical context of race, racism, and whiteness in an effort to advance their own knowledge and skills.

Furthermore, in an effort to increase the amount of faculty of color and faculty who might serve as critical White allies, an examination of hiring practices is necessary. The traditional hiring and the tenure/promotion process should be reconsidered to include new practices. These practices might include requiring finalists for faculty positions and non-tenure faculty to successfully demonstrate knowledge about

- Race, racism, and whiteness
- Culturally responsive teaching practices
- Critical race pedagogies
- Cultural competency

These essential, education qualities could be evidenced by professional development, research agendas, graduate level coursework and/or courses taught.

Recommendations for Teacher Education Programs

Moving beyond the examination of Whiteness as part of the curriculum,

pedagogy, and teaching practices, educator preparation programs should aim to de-center Whiteness across the entire program. This requires collective and ongoing endeavors from *all* faculty, staff, and departments, rather than just a few designated members of the college. In addition to curriculum and pedagogy, entry and exit program components--such as the admissions process and field/ clinical experience--must also work toward de-centering Whiteness. Moreover, simultaneously considering the experiences and needs of teacher candidates of color should also be a part of this movement.

When college students of color decide to pursue a major in teaching, the first step involves program admission. As part of program admittance, teacher education programs typically rely solely on hard criterion such as grade point average (GPA), coursework taken and earned credit hours. These technical standards fail to address mediating factors and other contributions students of color bring to educator preparation programs.

As evidenced in the research findings, just being students of color participating as minoritized individuals in a predominantly White educator preparation program carried its own burdens. This was even more devastating for Black male teacher candidates: being "loners," along with encounters of micro-aggressions, manifested into barriers for participants. Along with traditional admission requirements, new admission requirements should account for the lived experiences of students of color, along with contributions they bring to the program that their White counterparts do not. The resiliency and persistence of students of color in the face of racial micro-aggressions and gender dynamics should be considered as a factor in the admissions process Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso, (2000). Creating the conditions for the successful exit of teacher

candidates of color from educator preparation programs must involve intentional placements during field/clinical experience and student teaching. Field experiences offices may want to consider the following activities:

- Create protocols and criterion for the selection of field experience sites and mentor/cooperating teachers. Such standards might involve the identification of schools and classroom teachers that have successfully hosted teacher candidates of color. In addition, placing teacher candidates of color with mentor/cooperating teachers who have participated in racial equity and or cultural competency professional development may prove to best support candidates of color during their time in P-12 classrooms.
- Launch intentional recruitment campaigns that in general target male educators and more specifically, male educators of color to serve as mentor/cooperating teachers. Based on the research findings of this study, placing Black males with male mentor/cooperating teachers can mitigate the psychological and emotional turmoil that may impact their mental health and well-being tied to their success.
- Identify retired administrators of color to serve as university supervisors for teacher candidates of color during field/clinical experience and student teaching. One approach might involve contacting education organizations such as teachers' unions that hold databases of contact information for this particular demographic.

The above-mentioned efforts are in the midst of being piloted at the institution that was part of this study.

In addition to entry and exit components, attention must also be focused on the

experiences and needs of teacher candidates of color during their time in the program. The overwhelming presence of Whiteness co-mingled with micro-aggressions and dysconscious racism created the conditions that informed participants to arm themselves defensively to navigate barriers to work through the system. Jones (2011) found that "micro-aggressions, along with overt and institutional racism, all seem to wreak havoc on the success of pre-service teacher candidates of color" (p. 116).

Findings from this investigation demonstrate the need to develop programs designed to help teacher candidates of color critically navigate through predominantly White educator preparation programs. Teacher diversity scholar Rodgers-Ard as cited in Villegas and Rogers-Ard (2012) found that targeted, rigorous, routine, and purposeful support of teacher candidates of color yielded higher retention rates. Moreover, Cheruvu (2014) argued for the need to develop and sustain safe spaces for pre-service teacher candidates of color to critically reflect on their racialized experiences. Navigation programs are needed for teacher candidates of color to learn how to respond to and combat micro-aggressions in an effort to maneuver through predominantly White educator preparation programs successfully.

Recommendations for Teacher Education Policy

In an effort to ultimately reduce the teacher diversity gap in P-12 schools, this investigation addresses the importance of going beyond the discourses of recruitment and retention of teacher candidates of color. As findings revealed, participants shared experiences of micro-aggressions, the absence of trusting relationships, and the need to survive. These occurrences took shape as the effects of racist attitudes and behaviors.

Such encounters sent messages of "otherness" to participants' as they didn't *match* the welcomed image of who a teacher should be. Since the participants were not white females from middle class backgrounds, they didn't *fit* into the designed program structure, nor were their needs met. Therefore, as policies are shaped to recruit students of color into teacher education, structures and processes must be critiqued. Focused attention on structures and processes must go beyond just interrogation. New policies must be created that are not constructed through the gaze of Whiteness and that work to successfully assist candidates with navigating the program.

A part of improving policy influential to the educator preparaion process and structures includes the need to review faculty contractual requirements. One approach might involve engaging in conversations with faculty union leaders. These discussions should focus on the implementation of professional development in the following areas, as part of teacher education faculty contractual requirements:

- Race, racism, and whiteness
- Culturally responsive teaching practices
- Critical race pedagogies
- Cultural competency

As evidenced in the findings of this study, it is recognized that faculty who are unaware of how they perpetuate Whiteness shape dysconscious racism. Adopted from Chennault (1998), Marx (2006) wrote, "Because whiteness is perceived by whites as the status quo and the "normal' experience, it manifests itself as "raceless" (p.45). Therefore, as a structure, educator preparation programs centered in Whiteness must be disrupted through altering the status of whites.

Recommendations for Teacher Education Research

Educational research tied to the experiences of minoritized individuals participation in predominantly White educator preparation programs is very limited at this point. After conducting this investigation, several implications are raised for future research. Based on the findings, first of all, I argue that while there is a need for further research on the experiences of teacher candidates of color enrolled in predominantly White educator preparation programs, it is particularly important to examine the experiences of male teacher candidates of color who are enrolled in predominantly White educator preparation programs. Secondly, I suggest there is also a need to further develop an understanding of the experiences of bilingual teacher candidates of color. According to Cheruvu (2014), such research is significant to deepening our understanding of the multi-layered complex identities of teacher candidates. Generally speaking, I also do not want to neglect American Indian, Asian Americans, Asian Pacific Islander, bi-and multi-racial teacher candidates as these demographics have been under-studied.

Strengths and Limitations

This research was needed to unearth the lived experiences of college students of color once they entered and exited a predominantly White educator preparation program. Research findings provided a better understanding of participants' experiences, thus contributing information and strategies that colleges of education and institutions of higher education can implement to attract, recruit, support, and retain potential teachers of color. Moreover, the implications also afforded P-12 school leaders with strategies to

support candidates of color during field experiences, throughout student teaching, and as teachers of color once hired in P-12 schools.

Being a woman of color with insider knowledge and shared experiences about communities of color afforded me the ability to conduct this research in an effort to amplify the words, voices, and stories of the participants. Although as a researcher I was known by the participants, my data collection involved multiple data points. Conducting two focus groups followed by individual in-depth interviews, along with triangulation through comparison of the focus groups and interview transcripts, supported the rigor of data collection as part of this study.

Though this study has merit with these strengths, one cannot escape the reality that with any research investigation, there are limitations. Limitations of the study were influenced by factors that include population, sample size, and setting. The first limitation of this study was that there were no participants identified as American Indian, Asian Pacific Islander, bi-and/or multi-racial. Moreover, there was no representation of male participants from the aforementioned demographic groups, and male participants from Latinx and Asian American populations were missing. The second limitation of the study was related to sample size. Given that the critical need to diversify the teacher workforce has spanned over 20 years, combined with the limited representation of teachers candidates of color in the pipeline, resulted in a narrow sample size of participants. Lastly, the location of this study was in a rural area in the upper Midwest within one predominantly White educator preparation program, and the results could be limited by region. These three factors limit the extent of generalizability to some degree.

Concluding Reflections

I began this study with a question about experiences of students of color who participated as minoritized individuals in a predominantly White educator preparation program. This question stemmed from the belief that as a profession, we must move beyond diversity recruitment and retention efforts that are reduced to a numbers game. Shifting away from the numbers game and towards an analysis of redesigning teacher education should be the goal. This will allow for the understanding of the nuanced experiences of teacher candidates of color in an effort to meet their needs.

A growing body of evidence suggests that teacher education programs' willingness to change turns out to be around the edges rather than the core of ideologies and structures (Childs et al., 2011; Ladson-Billings, 1999). Such a transformation may yield outcomes for candidates of color that will allow them to feel safe, heard, and welcomed, thus increasing diversity in the profession. Because predominantly White educator preparation programs are entrenched in the overwhelming presence of Whiteness, Sleeter (2001) explains that attempts to advance the diversity of the teacher workforce is no small feat. Since this work is messy with much uncharted territory, there is no specific entry point. Rather the task is just to begin the process with critiques, interrogation, and agitation at a systemic level.

Part of addressing systemic change calls for the examination of educator preparation faculty behaviors and practices. Participants' experiences with teacher education faculty unearthed that the needs, experiences, and perspectives of teacher candidates of color have been ignored. As evidenced in the research findings, such

disregard took shape in the form of micro-aggressions and an absence of relationships and trust. Operating under these conditions can yield psychological and emotional effects that impact confidence while affirming inferiority. Grounded in Whiteness has allowed university educators in teacher education to be responsive to White teacher candidates while being unresponsive to needs of teacher candidates of color Churuvu, (2014). One approach to address this issue involves being intentional about increasing the number of faculty of color in teacher education programs. This necessitates the reconsideration of hiring practices, tenure, and promotion processes. Moreover, the burden cannot rest alone on faculty of color. White faculty members must also begin to engage in critical identity work to unlearn and uproot the dysconscious, racist practices and behaviors.

The foundational design of educator preparation created the systems, structures, and policies that have privileged Whiteness and re-disguised racism, despite the teaching profession's commitment to increasing diversity. Although there is much uncharted territory ahead, efforts to interrupt and dismantle existing organizational structures that have historically maintained the status quo will require courageous individuals and leaders to engage in this critical work.

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Appendix A
Consent Form

You are humbly invited to take part in dissertation research being conducted by Dr. Candace Raskin the Principal Investigator (PI), Ms. Robbie Burnett Student Investigator (student-PI) and Ms. Paulkani Suddela, secondary investigator. This study is designed to hear voices from individuals of color currently in or having recently graduated from a predominantly White teacher preparation program.

Purpose of the study: The purpose of this qualitative study is to identify the experiences and perspectives of teacher candidates and graduates of color regarding their journeys in a predominantly White university-based teacher preparation program. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to engage in one 90-minute audio-recorded focus group session. The focus groups will be conducted at Minnesota State University, Mankato (MNSU) home campus and the Twin Cities metro site located at Minnesota State Mankato at Edina.

The student-PI will facilitate the dialogue of the focus group sessions while the secondary investigator will act as an observer taking field notes focused on non-verbal behavior. During the focus group(s) five to six participants will be asked the guiding question; how do they describe their experiences of being a minoritized person participating in a predominantly White university-based teacher preparation program? Subset questions about participants' experiences with faculty, curriculum, other teacher candidates and field experiences will also be asked (please see questionnaire attached). You will be given a choice to verbally answer the questions or if you feel uncomfortable addressing the questions aloud in the focus group, you will be able to answer the question by writing it down on a piece of paper that will be collected by the student-PI at the end of the focus group session.

Recordings from the focus group sessions will be transcribed via NVivo qualitative software. The student-PI will then read transcriptions while listening to the audio recording of the transcriptions to ensure trustworthiness. The data which includes; consent forms, audio recordings and transcriptions will be securely stored on the student-PI's password protected computer and inside the student-PI's locked office at Minnesota State at Edina, 7700 France location for three years. Data will be destroyed by shredding all the paper documents and erasing the information collected via audio recording by the student-PI in approximately three years.

The risk that focus group participants may repeat what was said and who said it outside of the focus group presents minimal risks involved in the study. All the data we obtain from the study will be kept confidential. All data obtained will be kept under lock and key by the student-PI, Robbie Burnett for 3years after the study has ended. No personal or individual

information will be made public, only the researchers will have access to the documents.
The participants are requested to keep the group sharing details confidential.
Participation in the research study is completely voluntary and you have the right to stop at any time before the data collection is complete without penalty or loss of benefits. There are no consequences of any kind if you choose not to participate. You may choose not to answer any question you are not comfortable with or simply not contribute to the discussions on a particular topic or a question. Discontinuing the study will not affect your relationship to MNSU.
If you have any questions or concerns about the research please forward them to Candace Raskin
Any questions about participants' rights and research-related injuries should be forwarded to the Graduate Dean, Barry Ries
If you have any questions or concerns or wish to obtain a copy of the consent form please forward your request to Robbie Burnett

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information and have received answers to any questions. I understand that I will be given $25 gift card one time compensation for my time. I consent to take part in the research study.
Name (please print)_____

_____ _____

Appendix B
Focus Group Questionnaire

1. How do participants' describe their lived experiences with faculty in the teacher preparation program?
2. How do participants' describe their lived experiences with the curriculum in the teacher preparation program?
3. How do participants' describe their lived experiences with other candidates in the teacher preparation program?
4. How do participants' describe their lived experiences with cooperating teachers in the field experience and/or student teaching classrooms?
5. How do participants' describe their lived experiences with P-12 students in the field experiences and/or student teaching classrooms?

Appendix C
In-depth Interview Questions

5. s a student, what was your experience like in schools from kindergarten-12th grade (K-12)?
6. How did you become interested in pursuing a teaching career?
7. What was your biggest challenge being enrolled in a predominantly white educator preparation program?
8. From your perspective, what are some solutions for getting more Black males to become teachers?