

**“WHAT’S MISSING HERE?”
THE ABSCENCE OF A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE
PEDAGOGY IN A MASSACHUSETTS’ EARLY
CHILDHOOD TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM**

Honors Thesis

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By

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Introduction:

Increasingly more studies are commanding school officials to begin to consider the unjust and inequitable realities that students of color, immigrant children, and children from lower socioeconomic families have been facing within U.S. school systems, which are white supremacist in nature (Jett, 2012). These inequities are immense for Black, Indigenous, and students of color. For instance, on national assessments in the content areas of reading, writing, mathematics, and science, Black, Indigenous, and students of color's performance has been reported to be far behind White students, an achievement issue that has only gotten worse since the 1990s (Darling-Hammond, 2001). Culturally responsive teaching is a teaching approach that was designed out of direct concern over the achievement gap between students of color and their White peers. This teaching approach is specifically meant to increase engagement and motivation of students of color; however, it has been reported that most teachers are not prepared to be culturally responsive educators (Vavrus, 2008). This study is designed to assess how embedded a culturally responsive pedagogy is within Salem State University's pre-service teacher preparation program.

Literature Review:

When it comes to the education of Black, Indigenous, and students of color, these students face many unnecessary barriers. In fact, one of the most pressing issues students of color are facing is being viewed from a deficit perspective by their own teacher—who is likely to be White since most teachers in the United States are White and female. This deficit perspective caused by the teacher working within a “hegemonic, Western, epistemological framework” (Douglas Et al., 2008, p. 49), causes Black, Indigenous, and

students of color to have lower academic expectations than their peers who are White and part of the middle and/or upper-socioeconomic class. The latter of which is a significant problem since low expectations causes students to receive less challenging, interesting work that would have led them to be engage in productive struggle; a vital component of schooling that allows students to recognize the gaps in their knowledge, while also providing them with the motivation to fill in those gaps (Fisher & Frey, 2017), or, as Zaretta Hammond (2015) put it “grows [their] brainpower (p. 13).

Instead, students of color receive more repetitive work that emphasizes skills that are low on the Bloom Taxonomy. The result of these lack of opportunities to engage in intricate, school-oriented learning tasks causes students 'cognitive growth to become stunted, thus creating a growing population of dependent learners unable to work to their fullest potential and achieve the standards they are expected to in upper grades (Hammond, 2015). Not to mention, when teachers view students from a deficit perspective, this causes them to try to fit Balck, Indigenous, and students of color in a type of instruction that does not build off their academic strengths, nor their cultural characters and/or cultural preferences in learning. This latter point is particularly important considering simply addressing and valuing a student`s culture has been proven to be a critical factor in their academic success. As a result, when a teacher does not acknowledge students` primary culture (Douglas et al., 2008), teachers will fail to understand the impact of their students` culture has on their education and learning and be unable to adapt instruction and assessments to better reflect the cultural differences that are present in their class; making it unlikely students of diverse backgrounds will be able to experience academic success (Brace, 2011).

In terms of educational inequities, students of color also have been known to receive more serious disciplinary consequences for lesser behavior than their White peers by their teachers. These disciplinary actions, which includes higher suspension rates, leads to lower academic achievement, higher drop-out rates, and loss of instructional time (Bryant et al., 2017). Suspension and expulsion rates, not only harm Black, Indigenous, and students of color short-term academic performance, as well as long-term academic achievement, but also are correlated with other negative outcomes such as grade retentions, delinquency, and substance use. The reality of which is even more upsetting when considering how suspension has been shown to be ineffective in general in deterring future misbehavior in students (Wallace et al., 2008). Students of color are also likely to be on the receiving end of microaggressions (verbal and non-verbal hidden messages meant to negate and weaken Black, Indigenous, and people of colors` experiences of reality and/or to create feelings of inferiority), which affects students` learning since these threats cause their brains to go into fight, flight, or freeze mode. When this physiological event occurs, students` brains shut down due to their perception of a stressful and unsafe environment, causing them to engage in lower work productivity and display lower problem-solving abilities than their White peers (Hammond, 2015).

Furthermore, the culture of schools in the United States reflect both the dominant culture and social group in society, which is White, middle class values and beliefs. This means that students who are part of the dominant culture and social group have an advantage since their home culture aligns more closely to the school culture, than it does for the cultures of Black, Indigenous, and students of color (Brace, 2011). Not only that, but schools also use a hegemonic curriculum that reflects the interests of the dominant class, and ignores the contributions, interests, and sheer presence of Black, Indigenous,

and people of color (Allen et al., 2013). As schools in the United States continue to use this kind of curriculum, researchers have both coined and continually referenced the phenomenon of curriculum violence, which is when academics omits or suppresses cultural “values, messages, and historical truths...in aims to continue oppression amongst minority groups” (Allen et al., 2013, p. 120). When Black, Indigenous, and students of color endure lessons that suppresses and/or omits their culture, race, and history, they can experience damage to their intellectual and social well-being (Ighodaro & Wiggan, 2013).

These inequities coupled with statistics that show that United States is undergoing what researchers (Byrant et al., 2017) have referred to as the “browning” of American public schools, means that teachers will most likely have a classroom where the student population is made up of half, and/or consists of a greater number of Black, Indigenous, and/or brown students than White students. This is plain in recent demographic trends that reveal how 48% of U.S. citizens under 18-years-old are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, a number that is only expected to increase to 64% by 2060. Data has also shown recent changes in student enrollment, emphasizing a decrease in White students` enrollment by a total of 8% and an increase in students of color`s enrollment by 10% (Bryant et al., 2017). This expectation for diverse student populations in schools becomes even more prominent for teachers if they work in a central city or rural area, since Black, Indigenous, and students of color are often concentrated in those areas (Darling-Hammond, 2001). As a result, this reality of diverse student populations, along with the fact that the immigrant population of students has also been growing substantially over the past thirty years (Villas & Lucas, 2002); means that teachers and pre-service teachers can no longer ignore the importance of race and culture within their

classroom. These realities of students need to be addressed, valued, and understood by teachers, but it is expected that most teachers will be unsure of how to do this for their students.

Fortunately, culturally responsive teaching is a student-centered approach to teaching that, according to culturally responsive teaching expert, Geneva Gay (cited in 2010c, 2013), uses “the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them” (p. 49-50). In fact, a central idea to culturally responsive teaching is when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the students' experiences, as well as their cultural frames of reference, it makes content and skills learned in class more personally meaningful to students, helps them develop a higher interest in the content and skills they are learning, and leads students to be able to learn the content and skills more easily and thoroughly than they would have before their experiences and cultural frames were taken into account (Gay, 2002).

Furthermore, Ladson-Billings (1995a), asserted that a culturally relevant pedagogy-which is the form of teaching that culturally responsive teaching builds off (Samuels, 2018), creates higher academic achievement, cultural competence, and broader sociopolitical consciousness among all students. Teachers are also held to the expectation to take responsibility for their students' success, communicate high behavioral and academic expectations, address their implicit biases, and work on relationship building and trust with their student (Souto-Manning et al, 2018). As a result, a culturally responsive teaching can expand the traditional professional knowledge base of teachers for the specific purpose of closing the achievement gap and creating asset-based perceptions of students; while also incorporating students' culture in the instruction to

move away from a detrimental assimilationist pedagogy that is consistently seen within U.S. classrooms (Vavrus, 2008). Not to mention, teachers who are able to adopt a culturally response pedagogy can act as “change agents” in their schools, as they have developed the ability to create and encourage more equitable schooling opportunities for their Black, Indigenous, and students of color (Griner & Stewart, 2012).

However, despite culturally responsive teaching being a promising strategy to help ensure an equitable education for the Black, Indigenous, and students of color that are becoming more and more prominent in K-12 classrooms, past research has reported that most teachers are not prepared to be culturally responsive (Vavrus, 2008). As previously mentioned, most teachers in the United States are White, with the exact percentage of the K-12 teacher population being almost 90% of teachers identifying as white, English, middle-class, monolingual, and female, this creates a reality where most teachers share little cultural knowledge and/or intercultural experiences with their students (Taylor et al., 2016). As a result, without being able to consider other students` perspective and experiences in an unbiased manner, this leads to cultural discontinuity within most U.S. classrooms, which negatively impacts teaching practices and student learning, leading back to the harmful disparities previously discussed in this study, like the achievement gap (Vavrus, 2008). most teachers will be unsure of how to do this for their students.

For teachers to learn how to be culturally responsive, it is clear they must be professionally trained within their pre-service and in-service teacher education programs. This study aims to examine pre-service teacher preparation programs to see if, one, a culturally responsive pedagogy is embedded and, two, how prevalent a culturally responsive pedagogy is in each program. This study includes content analysis of one

Massachusetts state college`s course descriptions, specifically Salem State University, for their pre-service teacher preparation programs. This study is examining Salem State University`s teacher preparation program, since the state of Massachusetts has not been immune to the country`s recent demographic trends; the state went from a K-12 student population of 69 percent White, 14.3 percent Latinx, 8.2 percent African American/Black, 5.1 percent Asian, 2 percent multi-race/non-Latinx, and 0.4 percent Native American, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander in the 2008-2009 academic year, to 57.9 percent White, 21.6 percent Latinx, 9.2 percent African American/Black, 7.1 percent Asian, 3.9 percent multi-race/non-Latinx and 0.3 percent as Native American, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander only twelve years later (Schneider et al., 2020).

The trend in teacher demographics in Massachusetts is also a reflection of what has been seen across the nation with 91.2 percent of teachers in the state identifying as White (*2020-21 Race/Ethnicity and Gender*, 2021). Early childhood teacher preparation programs are also being specifically focused on in this study since the disparities in academic achievement in the United States begin before students enter primary and secondary education. In fact, the need for culturally responsive teachers to help students build personal and social competencies that are critical for obtaining success in reading, math, and writing, which, in turn, reduces the achievement gap, begins in early childhood (Williams, 2017). As a result, the research focus of this student-centered strategy will center on this period of learning for students to identify if teachers are being professionally trained to meet students` needs (both academic as well as social-emotional), at this point in their development (Souto-Manning & Mitchell, 2009). Not to mention, teachers who are able to adopt a culturally response pedagogy can act as “change agents” in their schools, as they have developed the ability to create and

encourage more equitable schooling opportunities for their Black, Indigenous, and students of color (Griner & Stewart, 2012).

Therefore, this study aims to assess how embedded a culturally responsive pedagogy is within a pre-service teacher preparation program. The study specifically conducted a content analysis (Johnson, Mathis, Short, 2016), of one university within the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education- Salem State University, to figure out how woven a culturally responsive pedagogy is in the university's required courses for their Early Childhood Education PreK-2 (initial licensure). The study also picked Salem State University due to the department of higher education emphasizing a goal of creating residents that can contribute to positive social progress within the state once they had earned their degrees. Salem State University was also specifically selected due to the mission of the university, as it stated it aims to supply a quality education that trains a diverse student population to "to contribute responsibly and creatively to a global society and serve as a resource to advance the region's cultural, social and economic development" ("Mission, Vision, Strategic Plan," 2021). As a result, this study wishes to examine to see if it this dedication to diversity and inclusion is reflected in the school's training of their Master of Early Childhood Education students, specifically regarding whether the students are trained to be culturally responsive teachers, and as a result, advocates of social and cultural progress within their future classrooms.

Methodology:

The content analysis used publicly available course descriptions of key words that can encompass a culturally responsive teaching framework, which includes using the cultural knowledge of students; consideration of the prior experiences of students; the practice of using frames of reference; the performance styles of ethnically diverse

students; the ability to build trust among culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse students; and establishing high expectations among culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse students. The full list of words can be found in TABLE A. The words selected have been found in the works of Genva Gay (2002), Ladson-Billings (1995b, 2014), Marx and Pennington (2003), and Segalla and Garret (2013), and specifically allude to a program incorporating explicit culturally responsive teaching training in its courses and/or, at least, training in one of the key components of a culturally responsive teaching framework: culturally responsive teaching, asset-based perceptions, narrative frames (referring to teachers), cultural frames of reference (referring to students), establishing high expectations, and cultural competence. The reason terms such as asset-based perception and narrative frames are being used to identify a culturally responsive teaching program is because; one, a component of culturally responsive teaching is recognizing that students' diverse experiences and backgrounds are an asset to both the individual student, as well as the general learning environment rather than a deficit (Samuels et al., 2017); and two, that teachers think about their own social and/or cultural background and position in the world and how that particularly influences their perceptions and biases of others (Pennington, 2003).

Furthermore, although one coursework in diversity will not be sufficient to create culturally responsive educators, as studies have shown that one course can only accomplish isolating important ideas and making teacher candidates struggle to understand how these strategies can be used in their regular teaching practices (Samuels et al., 2017); keywords such as racial/ethnic/linguistic diversity and similar words relating to students` diverse background, learning needs, and experiences were examined secondary in the analysis. These words were selected to see if a spiral curriculum was

being used, that is if dialogues about race and diversity are, at least in part, present in all classroom spaces and, therefore, expose in-coming teachers to discussions about race and cultural differences among themselves and their future students. This specific exposure can create, not a culturally responsive mindset and/or ability to use the student-centered approach to teaching but can deepen racial and culture sensitivity and/or awareness among pre-service teachers that would have otherwise been absent (Taylor et al., 2016).

This study also noted any words or phrases that showed a component of a culturally responsive pedagogy but did not include any mentions to whether the component-which could be a reference to how people learn, the learning environment being either welcoming or inclusive, type of classroom management, the type of instruction being used, reflective practices of the teacher, and family engagement and/or collaboration with families, would be looked at through a cultural and racial lens. Therefore, these words and/or phrases were labeled as implicit indicators of a culturally responsive teaching pedagogy, as it is unclear by the course description whether students would be using a culturally responsive lens to examine these critical aspects of a culturally responsive pedagogy.

Results:TABLE A:

<p>Primarily Analysis: Explicit Reference to Culturally Responsive Teaching</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culturally responsive teaching • Culturally relevant pedagogy and/or culturally relevant teaching • Asset-based perceptions • Narrative frames • Cultural frames of reference • Establishing high expectations • Building student-teacher relationships • Cultural competence • Culturally responsive learning communities.
<p>Secondary Analysis: Indications of a spiral curriculum about racial and cultural sensitivity</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racial/ethnic/linguistic diversity • Social justice and/or social justice education • Multicultural/multiculturism • Cultural background • Diverse background • Diverse learning needs • Prior experiences
<p>Tertiary Analysis: Implicit Reference to Culturally Responsive Teaching</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection/autobiographical writing • Family engagement • Classroom Environment • Classroom Management • Behavior Supports • Creating an understanding of others and/or world • Differentiated Instruction

TABLE B:

Introductory Courses		
<p>EDU 720 - Child Growth and Development 3 Credit(s) Course focuses on the impact of childhood experiences on lifelong behaviors and attitudes, and on understanding the physical, psychosocial and cognitive aspects of development. Participants will explore both traditional and current theories; draw upon their own personal histories and autobiographical writings; and apply theories to classroom observation, management and instruction.</p>	<p>Explicit: Absent Implicit: Present</p> <p>“Draw upon their own histories and autobiographical writings.”</p>	<p>Key Words: Absent</p>
<p>EDU 725 - Introduction to Literacy Development 3 Credit(s) This introductory course focuses on language and literacy development for diverse learners from preschool to elementary school, including English learners. The processes involved in teaching and assessing reading and writing development, using literature in support of literacy development, and approaches to teaching reading and writing will be explored. Three lecture hours per week.</p>	<p>Explicit: Absent Implicit: Absent</p>	<p>Key Words: Present</p> <p>“Diverse learners”</p>
<p>EDC 710 - Fundamentals of Lesson Planning 1.5 Credit(s) This course provides students with a foundation in the skill of writing lesson plans. Anchored in the Backwards Design approach to lesson planning, this course will guide students towards an in-depth understanding of the</p>	<p>Explicit: Absent Implicit: Absent</p>	<p>Key Words: Absent</p>

<p>various components of lesson plans. Students will also gain familiarity and facility with the state and national standards that are relevant to their intended discipline or grade range and will utilize standards to guide the development of lessons. 1.5 lecture hours per week.</p>		
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<p>EDU 737 - Applying Human Development to Teaching and Assessment 3 Credit(s) This course introduces students to selected theories and topics in human development from early childhood to adolescence, with a special emphasis on how people learn. Students in this course will apply these theories and research on learning to standards-based instruction, and to their thinking about learning environment design and family engagement. Participants will build an understanding of teaching that is developmentally informed and responsive to all students in their present or future classrooms. Three lecture hours per week.</p>	<p>Explicit: Absent Implicit: Present</p> <p>“Emphasis on how people learn.”</p> <p>“Learning environment design.”</p> <p>“Family engagement”</p>	<p>Key Words: Absent</p>
<p>EDC 810 - Technology Methods in the Early Primary and Elementary Grades 1.5 Credit(s) This course is designed to provide early childhood and elementary students with an introduction to common educational technology while they are in their full practicum. Through hands-on experience with computer hardware, software, and web-based tools, participants will gain experience-based knowledge and confidence in using technology to facilitate learning appropriate for the needs of diverse learners and across varied subject areas in early primary and elementary grades. This course covers topics including best practices in classroom technology and</p>	<p>Explicit: Absent Implicit: Absent</p>	<p>Key Words: Present</p> <p>“Diverse Learners”</p>

<p>instructional design, age-appropriate lesson planning with technology, and ethical concerns. One and a half lecture hours per week. Field-based assignments are required.</p>		
<p>EDG 705 - Culturally Responsive Teaching 3 Credit(s) Students will explore and reflect upon the opportunities and challenges they will encounter teaching students from diverse backgrounds. This course provides an introduction to the goals of multicultural education, strategies of culturally responsive teaching, and the habits of mind needed to become effective educators. Students will gain an understanding of the ways in which culture impacts and informs teaching, learning, and classroom climate. Issues to be addressed include ethnicity, race, socio-economic status, gender, gender orientation, gender identity, sexual orientation, language and other facets of identity. Includes current theory and research, as well as effective strategies to promote learning, intercultural relations, and self-esteem among all learners. Three lecture hours a week. Field-based assignments will be required.</p>	<p>Explicit: Present</p> <p>“Strategies of culturally responsive teaching”</p> <p>“Habits of mind needed to become effective educators.”</p> <p>Ways in which culture impacts and informs teaching, learning, and classroom climate.”</p> <p>“Strategies to promotes learning, intercultural relations, and self-esteem among all learners.”</p> <p>Implicit: Absent</p>	<p>Key Words: Present</p> <p>“Multicultural education”</p> <p>“Diverse Learners”</p> <p>“Ethnicity, race, socio-economic status, gender, gender orientation, gender identity, sexual orientation, language and other facets of identity.”</p>
<p>EDS 860 - Sheltering Content for English Language Learners 3 Credit(s) This course will</p>	<p>Explicit: Absent Implicit: Present</p> <p>“Differentiated instruction.”</p>	<p>Key Words: Present</p> <p>“Linguistic awareness”</p>

<p>prepare students with knowledge and skills to more effectively implement sheltered content instruction to English Language Learners. Students will develop strategies and approaches that help ELLs at varying stages of proficiency to acquire English language skills while meeting content-area standards. This course is designed to meet the requirements of the Sheltered English Immersion endorsement course as described by the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Topics include: second language acquisition, linguistic awareness, sheltered English immersion, the WIDA English language standards and assessment, differentiated instruction, and socio-cultural factors affecting language acquisition. Field-based assignments are required.</p>		<p>“Socio-cultural factors affecting language acquisition.”</p>
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<p>EDU 990E - Teaching Students with Exceptional Learning Needs 3 Credit(s) All teachers teach all students; therefore, all teachers must prepare to work with students with exceptional learning needs (ELN) This course will develop candidates' understanding of the collaborative roles of professionals who work with families to support students with ELN. The focus of the class will be on how to develop an inclusive, welcoming classroom environment where all learners thrive through the use of differentiated instruction, universal design for learning, and the appropriate application of assistive and adaptive technologies. Topics include: IEPs, 504 plans, Response-to-Intervention, and gifted education emphasizing teaching methodologies and tools appropriate to inclusive, welcoming environments: universal design for learning, differentiation, and the use of adaptive and assistive technologies. Three lecture hours per week. Field-based assignments required.</p>	<p>Explicit: Absent Implicit: Present</p> <p>“Inclusive, welcoming classroom environment”</p> <p>“Differentiated instruction.”</p>	<p>Key Words: Absent</p>
<p>EDC 795A - Universal Design for Learning Foundations 1 Credit(s) All teachers teach all students; therefore, all teachers must prepare to work with students with exceptional learning needs (ELN). This course will develop candidates'</p>	<p>Explicit: Absent Implicit: Present</p> <p>“Collaborative role of professionals who work with families.”</p>	<p>Key Words: Absent</p>

<p>understanding of the collaborative roles of professionals who work with families to support students with ELN. It is designed to provide an overview of Response to Intervention (RTI) and eligibility for special education, and a general education teacher's responsibility in these processes.</p>		
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<p>EDC 795B - Universal Design for Learning Methods 1 Credit(s) This UDL Methods course will develop candidates' understanding and creation of an inclusive, welcoming classroom environment where all learners thrive through the use of differentiated instruction, and universal designs for learning. Topics include: meeting diverse learning needs, utilizing Universal Designs for Learning to set goals, design lessons and assessments, and differentiation. This is the second of a three-part series of courses.</p>	<p>Explicit: Absent Implicit: Present</p> <p>“Inclusive, welcoming classroom environment”</p> <p>“Differentiated instruction.”</p>	<p>Key Words: Present</p> <p>Diverse learning needs</p>
<p>EDC 795C - Universal Design for Learning Practice 1 Credit(s) This UDL Practice course is designed to provide opportunities for students to put UDL principles and strategies into practice as part of their field work semester. This course will address how to create and enact lesson plans that reflect the standards and goals of lessons using UDL supports and strategies. Students will learn how to include assistive technology into their plans to support a wide range of learners. This is the third of a three-part series of courses. Field work required.</p>	<p>Explicit: Absent Implicit: Absent</p>	<p>Key Words: Absent</p>
<p>Practice Courses</p>		
<p>EDC 736 - Early Childhood Pre-Practicum 1.5 Credit(s) This 75-hour field placement component is taken within the first of the</p>	<p>Explicit: Absent Implicit: Absent</p>	<p>Key Words: Absent</p>

<p>three early childhood methods courses in the M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education. This course provides experience and guidance in the field as students learn developmentally appropriate practice across the early childhood curriculum. Students will be in the field for five hours per week across the semester, or the equivalent.</p>		
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<p>EDU 822 - Language Arts and Social Studies for Young Children 3 Credit(s) Learning possibilities in the language arts-social studies curriculum for the young child are studied in this course for the purpose of promoting children’s literacy skills while fostering their knowledge and understanding of themselves, others, and the world.</p>	<p>Explicit: Absent Implicit: Present</p> <p>“While fostering their knowledge and understanding of themselves, others, and the world.”</p>	<p>Key Words: Absent</p>
<p>EDU 739 - Literacy Instruction and Assessment in the Early Childhood and Elementary Classroom with field experience 3 Credit(s) This course emphasizes responsive and developmentally appropriate instruction for teaching literacy in culturally and linguistically diverse early childhood and elementary settings. Candidates design and implement instruction for small and large groups by applying assessment data and evidence-based strategies in support of reading and writing development and include state standards. The role of assessment in differentiating instruction is emphasized. Candidates evaluate digital, print instructional materials, and integrate literacy into other disciplines in their practice. Fieldwork and field-based assignments required: hours dependent on program. Three lecture hours per week.</p>	<p>Explicit: Present</p> <p>“Emphasizes responsive and developmentally appropriate instruction for teaching literacy in culturally and linguistically diverse early childhood and elementary settings.”</p> <p>Implicit: Present</p> <p>“Differentiating instruction.”</p>	<p>Key Words: Absent</p>
<p>EDU 823 - Science and</p>	<p>Explicit: Present</p>	<p>Key Words: Absent</p>

<p>Mathematics in Early Childhood Education 3 Credit(s) This course will explore ways of enhancing children's natural tendencies to observe, explore and discover the world around them. Students will design engaging integrated mathematics and science experiences that support and nurture these tendencies as they establish a sound foundation for the wonder of and enthusiasm for math and science. Students will practice a variety of assessment techniques that will inform their instruction as they take children's diversity of prior experiences, cultures, background and abilities. Three lecture hours per week. Requires 25 hours of field-based pre-practicum experience.</p>	<p>"Practice a variety of assessment techniques that will inform their instruction as they take children's diversity of prior experiences, cultures, background and abilities." Implicit: Absent</p>	
<p>Demonstration Courses</p>		
<p>EDC 796 - Classroom Management Seminar for Elementary School and Early Childhood Settings 1.5 Credit(s) This seminar prepares candidates to plan and enact classroom management strategies that support effective teaching and learning in the elementary classroom. Candidates will explore the many factors to consider in the domain of classroom management, with a special emphasis on positive behavior supports. An overview of learning and developmental theories will establish a basis for understanding the goals of</p>	<p>Explicit: Absent Implicit: Present "Positive behavior supports."</p>	<p>Key Words: Absent</p>

<p>behavior modification. This seminar will provide an avenue for students to actively process their management experiences in the field and to provide feedback in order to revise their practice. 1.5 lecture hours per week.</p>		
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<p>EDU 801 - Classroom Management and Positive Behavior Supports 3 Credit(s) This course strengthens candidates' understanding of the relationships between classroom environment, behavior, curriculum, and learning. Candidates will gain an understanding of disciplinary and management models and practice applying these in classrooms. Focus will be on pro-active, interactive, and reflective decision making to shape classroom management at the individual student and whole-class level. Field experience required.</p>	<p>Explicit: Absent Implicit: Present</p> <p>“Pro-active, interactive, and reflective decision making to shape classroom management.”</p>	<p>Key Words: Absent</p>
<p>EDC 829 - Prekindergarten/Kindergarten Practicum 1.5 Credit(s) This is a half-semester supervised practicum experience in a pre-kindergarten or kindergarten classroom. In this course, teacher candidates provide high quality and coherent instruction, design and administer authentic and meaningful student assessments, analyze student performance and growth data, use this data to improve instruction, provide their students with constructive feedback on an on-going basis, and continuously refine learning objectives. Candidates support the learning and growth of all students through instructional practices that establish high expectations, create a safe</p>	<p>Explicit: Present</p> <p>“High Expectations”</p> <p>“Cultural proficiency”</p> <p>Implicit: Absent</p>	<p>Key Words: Absent</p>

and effective classroom environment, and demonstrate cultural proficiency. Full-day, 200-hour, half-semester field placement in a pre-kindergarten or kindergarten setting is required.		
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<p>EDC 834 - First/Second Grade Practicum 1.5 Credit(s) This is a half-semester supervised practicum experience in a first or second grade classroom. In this course, teacher candidates provide high quality and coherent instruction, design and administer authentic and meaningful student assessments, analyze student performance and growth data, use this data to improve instruction, provide their students with constructive feedback on an on-going basis, and continuously refine learning objectives. Candidates support the learning and growth of all students through instructional practices that establish high expectations, create a safe and effective classroom environment, and demonstrate cultural proficiency. Full-day, 200-hour, half-semester field placement in a first or second grade setting is required.</p>	<p>Explicit: Present</p> <p>“High expectations”</p> <p>“Cultural proficiency”</p> <p>Implicit: Absent</p>	<p>Key Words: Absent</p>
<p>EDC 834S - Practicum Seminar in Early Childhood Education 1.5- 3 Credit(s) This seminar is taken in conjunction with EDC 834. First/Second Grade Practicum. The seminar provides pedagogical and content support to enhance the field experience(s). With a particular emphasis on effective strategies to collaborate with families as well as processes for collaborating effectively with colleagues, this seminar</p>	<p>Explicit: Absent Implicit: Present</p> <p>“Collaborate with families.”</p>	<p>Key Words: Absent</p>

<p>provides students seeking an initial license with a reflective complement to the full-time practicum. Three lecture hours per week.</p>		
<p>Master`s Level Courses</p>		
<p>EDU 712 - Models of Early Education: Past & Present 3 Credit(s) Traces the theoretical and social roots of past and present models of early childhood education (e.g., Froebel, Freud, Montessori, Reggio Emilia, Waldorf, Vygotsky, and the Child Study Movement). The social and political impetus for the development of kindergarten, nursery schools, Head Start, day care and other initiatives will be discussed.</p>	<p>Explicit: Absent Implicit: Absent</p>	<p>Key Words: Absent</p>
<p>EDU 921 - Capstone Seminar in Early Childhood Education and Child Development 3 Credit(s) This culminating seminar will help advanced degree candidates demonstrate the knowledge, expertise, and skills gained through graduate coursework in early childhood education as well as develop a more in-depth understanding of teaching and learning in early childhood settings. The requirements include preparation of a reflective project that focuses on supporting the diverse needs of young learners and incorporates teaching philosophies, research, and developmentally appropriate teaching and learning practices.</p>	<p>Explicit: Absent Implicit: Present “Reflective practice”</p>	<p>Key Words: Present “Supporting the diverse needs of young learners.”</p>

Findings:

The study's overview of Salem State's course descriptions of the Master of Early Childhood Education program included a review of the program requirements such as the introductory courses, practice courses, demonstration courses, and Master's level courses. Within the introductory courses, it was found that 6 introductory courses, 1 practice course, 3 demonstration courses, and 1 Master's Level course included words and/or phrases that were implicit components of culturally responsive teaching. These components were labeled as implicit because, within the context of these course descriptions, it was unclear if students would look at these factors through a culturally responsive lens. For example, the introductory course of Child Development has students "draw upon their own personal histories and autobiographical writings" ("Early Childhood Education," 2021). In culturally responsive teaching, educators are required to reflect upon their cultural background and experiences, ethical and racial identity, as well as address their social standing within society. Through this reflection, teachers can see themselves as both cultural and racial beings and, most importantly, can then explore their "biases, values, assumptions, dispositions, biases, and experiences related to diversity" (Samuels, 2018, p. 28), so that they can better understand and challenge stereotypes and prejudices when they face them either internally or externally (Muniz, 2019).

However, the introductory course in Child Development does not specify if students will be looking at their "personal histories" through a cultural and racial lens. Therefore, even though the course has a component of a culturally responsive teaching (being reflective of oneself), it does not make the distinction of whether it provides

students the opportunity to reflect upon their biases and allow them to explore their own experiences related to culture, ethnicity, and race, which is critical to becoming a culturally responsive educator. Therefore, this course was labeled as implicit as it would depend on the professor teaching the course whether students look at these components through a cultural lens. This trend of including a component of culturally responsive teaching without specifying the lens through which students will be learning the culturally responsive practice and/or idea, can also be seen in the introductory course entitled *Applying Human Development to Teaching and Assessment*, which has students explore “how people learn” (“Early Childhood Education,” 2021). A vital component of culturally responsive pedagogy is how students learn, but it examines the way people learn through a cultural lens since “culture is central to how all learning takes place” (Samuels, 2018, p. 22). Therefore, again, even though this course included a principal component of culturally responsive teaching, it neglected to mention if it is examining the idea through a cultural lens, making it unable to be labeled an explicit culturally responsive course, nor be identified as part of a spiral curriculum where ideas are repeated to reinforce and/or deepen students` knowledge of culturally responsive ideas and principles (Harden & Stamper, 1999).

This lack of a culturally responsive lens to view these critical components of culturally responsive teaching can also be seen in the same course, *Applying Human Development to Teaching and Assessment*, as well as the courses *Teaching Students with Exceptional Learning needs* and *Universal Design for Learning Methods (B)*, when these courses mentioned the learning environment. Now, the learning environment and/or classroom environment has been noted as a crucial element of culturally responsive teaching, as it needs to be reflective of the cultural and racial diversity of the classroom;

considering cultural and ethnic needs, as well as their social, emotional, and cognitive needs to create a safe, inclusive, and productive classroom environment (Brown, 2004). However, it is unclear if this course will go over the cultural and ethnic needs of students, making it unclear if this course is using a culturally responsive lens that will help students develop a welcoming, safe learning space for their culturally and racially diverse students, or not.

The same premise holds true when the course *Applying Human Development to Teaching and Assessment* mentioned family engagement, or when the course *Universal Design for Learning Foundations (A)* and the demonstration course entitled *Practicum Seminar in Early Childhood Education* mentioned collaborating with families, as collaborating with families and promoting family engagement within school is critical to culturally responsive teaching, but culturally responsive teachers note that it is important to consider the cultural and ethnic backgrounds, experiences, and ideologies of families, as well as rethink “traditional models, methods, and strategies of family engagement...[to] seek to be more inclusive in engaging a broader section of families” (Gabriel, Roxas, & Becker, 2017, p. 1), than the families that are normally involved in the schools, which tend to be the families whose home culture matches the White, European-centric, middle-class norms, values, and cultural assumptions of the school (Brewster & Railsbeck, 2003). Therefore, unless professors of these courses make note of this cultural lens to family engagement and express the importance of creating more equitable opportunities for families when collaborating with teachers and the school in general, these courses cannot be identified as culturally responsive. As a result, these courses can only be identified as implicit since it is unclear the lens through which students will obtain this knowledge and apply it in their classrooms.

The introductory courses *Sheltering Content for English Language Learners*, *Teaching Students with Exceptional Learning Needs*, and *Universal Design for Learning Methods (B)* show a connection, rather than a reference, to culturally responsive teaching when these courses mentioned differentiated instruction. This type of instruction is a vital component to ensure classrooms are inclusive to all the learning needs that are present in the room, whether that is how students obtain information (either visually or auditory), what is within their ability and/or proficiency level, what is reflective of their interests, and what is appropriate regarding their developmental level (Bondie, Dahnke, Zusho, 2019). Despite differentiated instruction mainly being used for student receiving special education services who have been mainstreamed into general education classrooms; culturally responsive teaching also has a similar focus when it comes to meeting the learning needs of all students.

However, culturally responsive teaching adds the lens of considering the cultural differences that impact the needs of learners to help students who have been historically unsuccessful in mainstream classrooms reach their fullest potential, much like the goal of differentiating instruction for special education students (Santamaria, 2009). In that way, unless professors of these courses described the connection between differentiated instruction and culturally responsive teaching and used a cultural lens to consider students' background knowledge, experiences, and the ways they learn information due to culture, then these courses cannot be labeled as explicitly culturally responsive. Nevertheless, due to the connected between differentiated instruction and culturally responsive teaching, these courses can still be labeled implicit.

This lack of a culturally responsive lens to view these critical components of culturally responsive teaching can also be seen in the same course, *Applying Human*

Development to Teaching and Assessment, as well as the courses Teaching Students with Exceptional Learning needs and Universal Design for Learning Methods (B), when these courses mentioned the learning environment. Now, the learning environment and/or classroom environment has been noted as a crucial element of culturally responsive teaching, as it needs to be reflective of the cultural and racial diversity of the classroom; considering cultural and ethnic needs, as well as their social, emotional, and cognitive needs to create a safe, inclusive, and productive classroom environment (Brown, 2004). However, it is unclear if this course will go over the cultural and ethnic needs of students, making it unknown if this course is using a culturally responsive lens that will help students develop a welcoming, safe learning space for their culturally and racially diverse students, or not.

The same premise holds true when the course Applying Human Development to Teaching and Assessment mentioned family engagement, or when the course Universal Design for Learning Foundations (A) mentioned collaborating with families, as family engagement is critical to culturally responsive teaching, but culturally responsive teachers note that it is important to consider the cultural and ethnic backgrounds, experiences, and ideologies of families, as well as rethink “traditional models, methods, and strategies of family engagement...[to] seek to be more inclusive in engaging a broader section of families” (Gabriel, Roxas, & Becker, 2017, p. 1), than the families that are normally involved in the schools, which tend to the families whose home culture matches the White, European-centric, middle-class norms, values, and cultural assumptions of the school (Brewster & Railsbeck, 2003). Therefore, unless professors of these courses make note of this cultural lens to family engagement and express the importance of creating more equitable opportunities for families when collaborating with teachers and the school

in general, these courses cannot be identified as culturally responsive. As a result, these courses can only be identified as implicit since it is unclear the lens through which students will obtain this knowledge and apply it in their classrooms.

Additionally, the demonstration courses Classroom Management Seminar for Elementary School and Early Childhood Settings and Classroom Management and Positive Behavior mentions “positive behavior supports” and “pro-active, interactive, and reflective decision making to shape classroom management” (“Early Childhood Education,” 2021). Now, positive behaviors supports, and classroom management is an extremely vital component to culturally responsive teaching since teachers need to listen to students and carefully observe their behaviors in order to understand how to effectively and carefully interpret and respond to their behavior (Edwards & Edick, 2013). However, culturally responsive teachers make sure to “interpret and respond to behaviors as indicators of culture rather than make assumptions in classroom management issues” (Edwards & Edick, 2013, p. 5). As a result, these courses do not mention seeing behavior through a cultural lens and having pre-service teachers consider students’ cultural backgrounds to avoid making assumptions and incorrectly interpreting their behavior. The course also does not mention the goal of culturally responsive teaching when regarding classroom management, which is to create a classroom environment where students behave not out of fear or a desire to earn an extrinsic reward, but due to their own personal responsibility (Weinstein et al., 2004), therefore these courses must also be labeled as implicit reference to culturally responsive teaching, rather than explicit.

Furthermore, the practice course Language Arts and Social Studies for Young Children mentioned that pre-service teachers will learn about how to promote children’s literacy skills while “fostering their knowledge and understanding of themselves, others,

and the world” (“Early Childhood Education,” 2021). Now, this statement reflects an important purpose of culturally responsive teaching, for students to become aware of the intersect of cultures and themselves as cultural beings who are a part of a “larger social picture” (Edwards & Edick, 2013, p. 11). However, since the course does not have a culturally responsive framework where it indicates the exact awareness students will develop about themselves and others around them; specifically, if they will develop awareness of how they are either a racial or cultural being (or possibly both). The course seems to be using the research of Bishop (1990), who inserted that Black, Indigenous, and students of color need to see themselves reflected in books since not seeing themselves in books or seeing themselves portrayed in a negative or laughable light in books, will lead them to learn “a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part” (p. 1). While students who are a part of dominant social groups in society need to see other cultures and people represented in books in order to “understand the multicultural nature of the world they live in, and their place as a member of just one group, as well as their connections to all other humans” (Bishop, 1990, p. 1). However, since the course description does not include this reference to Bishop (1990), as well as mentions how culturally responsive teaching also provides opportunities for students to reflect on their own culture and other cultures present in the classroom and larger society; as in, establish within the course description that students` will be looking at books and themselves through a cultural or racial lens, than this course must also be labeled as implicitly culturally responsive, rather than explicitly.

Now, besides for courses that included components of culturally responsive teaching without specifying whether these principles and ideas were examined through a cultural and/or racial lens, 5 introductory courses and 1 Master`s Level course seemed to

be the program's attempt at a spiral curriculum, as the courses included words and/or phrases that were related to a culturally responsive teaching pedagogy, but did not include components that would suggest that the course was actively using a culturally responsive pedagogy. Rather, these words indicated a reinforcement of important ideals of a culturally responsive pedagogy, like the need to learn more and/or address diversity among students. For example, in the Introduction to Literacy Development course, the description indicated that it would focus on literacy and language development for diverse learners. Now, the main idea of culturally responsive teaching is to use the students' cultures as the basis of their teaching and the students' learning process (Frye & Voght, 2010). However, the course only indicated it would be aware of the literacy and language development of diverse learners, referring to the students' linguistic diversity. This means the course would allow students' to become aware of the differences among students regarding their linguistic ability, but it does not indicate how the rest of their cultural identity would impact their learning and how their culture should be reflected in the curriculum and the materials used in class. Therefore, pre-service teachers would begin discussions about diversity among students in this class and have develop a positive awareness of linguistic differences among students, but they would not leave with a culturally responsive mindset as it is not indicating any vital component of culturally responsive teaching, or a general framework.

This was not the only course that specified how students would become aware of linguistic diversity among students, as Sheltering Content for English Language Learners also included in its course description that students would develop linguistic awareness, as well as awareness of the socio-cultural factors affecting language acquisition. Now, the latter specification within this course description seems promising, however, just like its

mention of linguistic awareness, this element of the course has nothing to do with using students' cultural background and their prior experiences to influence instruction and the materials used in class. Rather, again, this specification in the course description is to increase students' awareness of what may be affecting and/or influencing their future students' linguistic acquisition, so that they can be better informed of what their future students are experiencing. In other words, when courses mention the social-cultural factors influencing students' learning and/or abilities, these courses then need to mention how it will prepare students to use this kind of knowledge to inform their teaching to be culturally responsive, as that is one of the most important components (Fyre & Voght, 2010).

Apart from these latter courses, other courses, including the introductory courses Technology Methods in the Early Primary and Elementary Grades and Universal Design for Learning Methods (B) and Master's Level course Capstone Seminar in Early Childhood Education and Child Development, all specify that pre-service teachers learn about diverse learners and/or supporting the diverse needs of learners. Now, again, learning about the diverse needs of students in class and how to support their needs is critical in culturally responsive teaching, but it is also important that students learn about how to use their knowledge of students' diverse needs to inform their curriculum, teaching, and materials, so that diverse students will be able to experience success in their class. The term "support" is promising, but the knowledge teacher's gain about their students' cultural background, experiences, and needs as learner not only needs to be something that they support in class, but also something they view as an asset, as well as something that can be reflected in their curriculum and instruction (Gay, 2013).

Beyond these courses, the introductory course in culturally responsive teaching, not only mentions key words and/or phrases that indicate learning of vital component of culturally responsive teaching, but also key words that are important ideals of culturally responsive teaching; however, these ideals not actually components of this approach to teaching. Specifically, the introductory course entitled Culturally Responsive Teaching not only mentions components of culturally responsive teaching that are important to learn to eventually be able to use this approach to teaching, but also lists “multicultural education” and “diverse learners (“Early Childhood Education,” 2021). These terms have previously been exposed as not a component of culturally responsive teaching, but an ideal because to be considered a component the course would have mentioned how pre-service teachers would be taught to understand, appreciate, and use their knowledge of students` diversity to inform their instruction (Samuels, 2018). Even though the course is meant to teach students about culturally responsive teaching, it is important to specify how diversity within a culturally responsive classroom is used to inform curriculum, instructional methods, and interactions with students, which this description does not include.

Additionally, multicultural education, is an extraordinarily important field of study that incorporates into curriculum the “purpose, content, concepts, principles, theories, and paradigms from history, the social and behavioral sciences, and particularly from ethnic and women`s studies: (Walter, 2017, p. 24). However, it is reflective solely of the curriculum and what students are being taught, while culturally responsive teaching not only reflects the histories and realities of students` experiences into the curriculum, but also uses the knowledge of students' cultural background, prior experiences, and needs to inform how instruction is taught, a teacher`s interactions with

their students, as well as the expectations teachers create for their students (Fyre & Voght, 2010). In other words, multicultural education is reflective of some of the important ideals of culturally responsive teaching and will help pre-service` develop an awareness of what they need to include and/or have present in their curriculum in order to would be responsive to their students` histories and experiences. However, multicultural education does not prepare teachers to use this student-centered approach to teaching that would allow them to use their knowledge of students` diverse backgrounds and experiences to create classroom, curriculum, expectations, and family and student interactions that will enable their students to experience academic achievement (Fyre & Voght, 2010).

The Culturally Responsive Teaching course also outlines the “issues” that will be reviewed in the course, which includes “ethnicity, race, socio-economic status, gender, gender orientation, gender identity, sexual orientation, and language and other facets of identity” (Early Childhood Education, 2021). Now, these identities and/or social groups are important ideas in culturally responsive teaching, as the approach to teaching outlines how a teacher should be responsive to all these diverse groups and identities in society. Nevertheless, the course does not specify if professors of this course will review how these factors influence learning, how they affect the needs of students either academically or socially-emotionally, how they influence the behavior of students, and how they affect the way that the students and families view the teachers and school (Frye & Vogt, 2010). The course also does not specify if it means to bring up these “issues” to counter pre-service teachers own biases so that they are able to create more equitable and inclusive classrooms. Rather, the course description outlines that these “issues,” will be discussed in class so it is hard to note the components and/or components of culturally responsive

teaching will be reviewed within the discussions of each, or all these social groups and identities. Therefore, it can be stated that this course, though contains components of culturally responsive teaching, also contains key words that are reflective of important ideals within culturally responsive teaching, but not actually components that would help a pre-service teacher be able to utilize this student-centered approach in their future classrooms.

Interestingly, the introductory section of the Master`s program only included 1 course that contained words and/or phrases that indicated a culturally responsive framework, while both the practice sections and demonstration section of the Master`s program each had 2 courses that also included words and/or phrases that showed vital components of culturally response teaching was being taught. Specifically, within the Culturally Responsive Teaching course it specified that students would learn “habits of mind needed to become effective educators...ways in which culture impacts and informs teaching, learning, and classroom climate...[and] strategies to promote learning, intercultural relations, and self-esteem among all learners” (“Early Childhood Education,” 2021). When it comes to habits of mind, this is a reference to the mindset teachers need to develop to understand “their evolving identities and how they influence (in)actions, counter or perpetuate biases or deficit paradigms, and expose or ignore injustices. When teachers are provided opportunities and spaces to be “reflective, interrogate their assumptions, and investigate the realities of their biases, they are better prepared to consider how to promote equitable and inclusive classrooms and better positioned to be agents of change” (Samuels, 2018, p. 22).

When it comes to the statement of “the way that culture impacts and informs teaching, learning, and classroom climate” (“Early Childhood Education,” 2021), within

the course Culturally Responsive Teaching, two other courses in the program mention a similar idea of using instruction that reflects students` diversity of prior experiences, background, and their abilities, and/or, at the very least, mentions how instruction should be appropriate for students` of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. These other two courses are the practice courses Literacy Instruction and Assessment in the Early childhood and Elementary Classroom with Field Experience and Science and Mathematics Methods in Early Childhood, and these three courses all together teach pre-service teachers that they need to be using the perspectives, cultural characteristics, experiences of Black, Indigenous, and students of color to teach them more effectively; since using their cultural backgrounds, prior experiences, and their abilities will make it easier for them to learn the material now that it is situated within their frames of reference and is also more personally meaningful to them (Gay, 2002). This is the main component of culturally responsive teaching, so the fact that two courses outline for pre-service teachers how they will learn how to do this, while another course describes how they will learn how to create instruction that is appropriate for an ethnically diverse class is crucial to developing a culturally responsive mindset and being able to use this approach to teaching in their future classrooms.

Culturally Responsive Teaching was also the only course that mentioned how it would teach pre-service teachers “strategies to promotes learning, intercultural relations, and self-esteem among all learners” (“Early Childhood Education,” 2021), which is crucial. The reason why it is so critical in the education of pre-service teachers is because culturally responsive teaching recognizes the importance of and knows how to use diverse instructional strategies in order to teach an ethnically diverse group of students since culture impacts how students` learn and, therefore, students of different cultural and

ethnic backgrounds will need different strategies that are reflective of their learning styles and needs in order to experience academic achievement within their class. Culturally responsive teachers are also explicit about respecting the diverse cultures and experiences of different social groups present in society and their classroom, and even uses their knowledge of their culture and experiences as resources for teaching and learning.

Culturally Responsive teachers recognize other group`s strengths and achievements, and promotes knowledge of other cultures, as well as understanding among the student who are part of the dominant social group in class. Therefore, culturally responsive teaching ensures actions and decisions on the teacher`s part creates intercultural relations among the students; as well as the teacher and the students themselves since the teacher also works to build their own trusting relationships with Black, Indigenous, and/or students of color and their families (Edwards & Edick, 2013).

Additionally, the self-esteem of ethnically diverse students is critical within a culturally responsive classroom since the point of this student-centered approach to teaching is to use students` cultural backgrounds and prior experiences to inform instruction. When this occurs, students can see themselves reflected in the curriculum, which increases their self-esteem and helps them create a stronger racial and ethnic identity (Muñiz, 2019). When pre-service teachers learn how the self-esteem of a student is important when it comes to learning in their course, they will also be able to see how incorporating students` culture and histories into the curriculum not only makes it more personally meaningful to them, but also is another factor that increases their self-esteem in school. Therefore, this course manages to combine three important components to culturally responsive teaching in one single semester for students, that is, they will learn

about how to increase self-esteem among all their students through a culturally responsive lens, intercultural relations, and diverse instructional methods.

Lastly, the demonstration courses Prekindergarten/Kindergarten Practicum and First/Second Grade Practicum both mentioned how pre-service teachers will be learning to establish “high expectations” for their students and will develop “cultural proficiency” (“Early Childhood Education, 2021). Now, establishing high expectations for all students is a vital component of culturally responsive teaching since one of the main problems that Black, Indigenous, and students of color face in school is being seen from a deficit-based perspective and given low expectations, not allowing them to engage in challenging course work that would allow them to expand their skills and achieve academic success (Fisher & Frey, 2017). However, culturally responsive teaching prevents this by emphasizing high expectations for all students so that Black, Indigenous, and students of color can engage in productive struggles and experience academic success within school (Hammond, 2015), making it an important component to review. These courses also mention cultural proficiency and/or cultural competence, another important component of culturally responsive teaching since teachers must be in a place where they understand that one, they are a cultural being and that, two, they must be able to appreciate and understand students` culture so that they can use their students` culture as a basis for both teaching and learning, the latter being one of the most fundamental points of culturally responsive teaching (Frye & Voght, 2010).

As a result, the five courses that contained explicit reference to culturally responsive teaching mentioned all together that students would be able to learn how to develop the habits of mind to become an effective educator, how to use students` cultural background and experiences to inform instruction, how to use diverse instructional

strategies, how to establish intercultural relations, how to promote the self-esteem of students, how they need to establish high expectations, and how they need to develop cultural competence and/or proficiency as a teacher, all critical components of culturally responsive teaching. However, these components could have been reinforced in other courses that were either attempting a spiral curriculum. For example, courses that referred to diverse learners could have added within their course how students would be able to learn how to inform their instruction by using the diversity of their students` culture, experiences, knowledge, and abilities. Also, using students` cultural backgrounds experiences to inform instruction, using diverse instructional strategies, creating intercultural relations, and developing habits of mind to become an effective teacher could also have been reinforced in the courses that implicitly referenced components of culturally responsive teaching. Furthermore, no courses within the program described how pre-service teachers would be examining classroom management, the classroom environment, and family engagement and/or collaborating with families through a culturally responsive lens, which are important components of culturally responsive teaching in terms of students` feeling safe, welcomed, and empowered within their learning space (Hammond, 2015), and their academic achievement since parent involvement increases students` success in school (Brewster & Railsbeck, 2003).

Recommendations and Implications:

The course description had only one required elective in culturally responsive teaching, which is promising, as this can create positive awareness among teachers and help prepare them to be culturally competent (Taylor et al., 2016). Also, four other courses within the program, emphasized critical components of a culturally responsive teaching pedagogy, while 6 courses used curriculum spiraling to keep conversations

about diversity within the classrooms. However, to be effective, researchers have found that the components and ideals of culturally responsive teaching need to be reinforced in all courses, so that teachers will be able to develop and strengthen culturally responsive teaching practices, as well as avoid unintentionally providing instruction that is ineffective and even hostile and antipathetic to Black, Indigenous, and students of color (Muñiz, 2019).

Now, Gay (2003) asserted that culturally responsive teaching programs should include critical racial and cultural consciousness along with self-reflection for teachers to become conscious of themselves, their students, and others in society as cultural and racial beings with different lived experiences. Additionally, critical cultural consciousness helps teachers develop an awareness of the differences in power, privilege, and inequalities between groups and social relationships (Kumagai & Lyson, 2009), and, within that understanding, become aware of the contexts in which they teach. Furthermore, self-reflection aids students to be able to continually question their knowledge and assumptions to provide effective instruction for their Black, Indigenous, and students of color (Gay, 2003).

As a result, Salem State University's Master's in Early Childhood Education program can begin to develop a culturally responsive framework by adding a critical racial and cultural consciousness component to its courses, as well as a self-reflection component. Specifically, Salem State can begin to add these components to their courses Child Growth and Development and Capstone Seminar in Early Childhood Education and Child Development, since these courses already have students take part in reflection and/or autobiographical writing. This idea of developing a critical cultural and racial consciousness can also occur in courses that mention supporting "diverse learners,"

and/or the course Sheltering Content for English Language Learners as it mentions developing “linguistic awareness,” as well as awareness of “socio-cultural factors affecting language acquisition” (“Early Childhood Education,” 2021).

These courses already have curriculum elements where a critical cultural and racial lens can be added to help pre-service teachers understand the different lived experiences and beliefs of students, as well as histories of power, privilege, and inequities. Not only can a critical cultural and racial lens be added to these courses, but the program can also examine where to add other components of culturally responsive teaching to these courses to better improve the teaching practices of pre-service teachers. For example, pre-service teachers within courses that describe supporting diverse learners can learn how to specifically use their students` cultural background, prior experiences, and abilities to inform instruction; how to use diverse instructional strategies that support their students` learning needs; or how diverse students and their families tend to experience schooling and how teachers can improve family engagement (Gay, 2002). Furthermore, when it comes to courses that mention “differentiated instruction,” the program can continue to have their pre-service teachers explore how students` culture impacts learning and how teachers need to be able to scaffold content and support learning needs, but not mistake students` learning style and/or needs from a deficit angle, but rather from a assets-based perception (Kieran & Anderson, 2018).

In fact, courses that mention classroom management techniques, the classroom environment, and family engagement can also investigate adding not only a racial and cultural lens that would help their students develop critical racial and cultural consciousness, but specifically how culture and race relates to issues of classroom management, as in, how teachers need to be aware of how culture influences behavior

and not to make assumptions of students' actions (Aceves & Orosco, 2014); the classroom environment, as students must feel their identities are not only validated within the classroom, but that they are also safe from microaggressions and, therefore, are able to effectively engage with the material and experience academic success (Hammond, 2015); and family engagement, specifically how parents of Black, Indigenous, and students of color are often the target of negative biases of the teacher (Brewster & Railsbeck, 2003).

Therefore, this study proposes that Salem State University's Master's in Early Childhood Education program, look to adding a cultural and racial lens to its courses, as well as opportunities for self-reflection, so that students can begin to develop a critical cultural and racial consciousness, as well as awareness of their own biases so that their prior assumptions will not affect their future classrooms. After the program has successfully moved to incorporating this racial and cultural lens in their courses, Salem State University can then look to adding specific components of culturally responsive teaching, and/or a culturally responsive lens to components of culturally responsive teaching that are already present in these courses, but currently do not mention the cultural and racial dynamics of issues such as classroom management, the classroom environment courses, and family engagement. The result of these changes will be early childhood educators who are culturally responsive and, therefore, equipped with the ability to create effective, equitable learning environments for diverse classrooms (Saumells, 2018).

Conclusion:

The purpose of this study was to examine how embedded a culturally responsive pedagogy was in a Massachusetts pre-service teacher preparation program for Early

Childhood Education. The study found that even though this program had included a course that was specifically about culturally responsive teaching and key phrases indicating review and/or discussion of certain culturally relevant teaching components, it did not properly reinforce a culturally responsive pedagogy throughout the program, meaning that students will not be able to embrace these ideas and practices, especially if these ideas conflicted with their views before they arrived in the program (Samuels, 2018). With changing student demographics, teacher preparation programs can no longer ignore the education conditions that have created an unjust learning environment for students that are from racial, cultural, or economically diverse groups. In fact, researchers Taylor et al. (2016), have indicated that it is a “demographic imperative” for in-coming teachers to be able to both strengthen and apply their multicultural knowledge, skills, and mind-set to help create the educational opportunities that students need to experience engagement with their studies and, subsequently, academic success (p. 43). Researchers have referred to teaching as an ethical activity; therefore, it is not only the ethical obligation of teachers to effectively teach culturally diverse students (Villegas & Lucas, 2016), but also the obligation of teacher preparation programs to ensure that in-coming teachers are prepared to administer a culturally relevant pedagogy, ensuring that future generation will be receiving an education that effectively helps them learn and grow (Samuels, 2018). As a result, pre-service teacher preparation programs need to both be encouraged and held accountable by administrators and the surrounding community to properly prepare teachers to be culturally competent so that students will be able to effectively learn and grow within their classroom.

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