Can place-based teacher preparation be culturally responsive? An exploration of one promising program

Shondra L. Marshall

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Can Place-Based Teacher Preparation Be Culturally Responsive? An Exploration of One Promising Program

by

Shondra L. Marshall

Dissertation

Submitted to the Department of Teacher Education

Eastern Michigan University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Educational Studies

Concentration in Urban Education

Dissertation Committee:
Ethan Lowenstein, Ph.D., Chair
Dorinda Carter Andrews, Ed.D.
Nancy Copeland, Ed.D.
Deborah Harmon, Ph.D.

October 30, 2019

Ypsilanti, Michigan
Dedication

Psalms 100:5 The Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting and his truth endureth to all generations


I also dedicate this work to my entire family natural, extended and God-given; Mom, Dad, Joel and Austin this is for you.

To my mentees, Alexandria and CiAsha remember that all things are possible with God.

To all the culturally diverse students worldwide this is also dedicated to you; I am rooting for you!

Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to each of my participants as you are the reason I moved beyond this threshold. Your voices captured the story that so many need to hear to advance education for all students. I will never forget any of you.
Acknowledgements

I want to acknowledge my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for keeping me focused throughout this process. As I wrote in the midnight hour I sang this song often “your name is above all names, your worthy of all our praise, mighty are the works of your hand”. I recognize that he sustained me entirely from the start to finish. When I think about this process I think of 2 Corinthians 12:9 where it states, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness”. To my parents, Lendale Sr. and Sidney Marshall thank you for your unwavering support in my educational desires. Daddy and Mommy, when I felt like I would never see the end, your calls, visits, financial support and prayers encouraged me; this is for you.

To my aunts and uncles: Carol and Wells, Billy and Janet, Maxine, Jacqueline, Sonia and Theo, Mary and Byron, Sandra, Sam and Pam, Toni and Hassan, Jean, Melinda and Tim, and Sonya and Chris you each assisted me and kept me leveled as you all have prompted Psalms 91 in my life.

To my mentor, Dr. Traki Taylor, thank you for all that you have imparted in me and for being a part of my life since I was eight years old. To my mentor, Dr. William Donohue thank you for igniting the work in me. Dr. Renée Canady my GG thank you for helping me pace myself. You told me “you got this” well look at God! To both of my lovely sorors and sista-friend’s thanks for being my accountability partners. Dr. Jasmine Lee you told me to “don’t stop get it get it” GIRL I got IT! Dr. Danielle Busby you were carefully consistent and supportive to me and you just got it without words; thank you. Thank you to my God given mentor and soror: Dr. Paulette C. Walker for always being a phone call away, your words carried me through those sleepless nights. I remember you told me to be flexible and let me tell you how that word was
golden! To my mentor, Dr. Deborah J. Johnson thank you for pushing me; you afforded me priceless opportunities.

To all of my lovely sorors thank you for the encouragement but special thanks to: Cheryl Thompson, Danita Wimbush; my personal librarian Rhonda Fowler; Marcia Jackson, Stephanie Browne, Venus J. Brown, Lural Baltimore and Janice Fuller-Roberts for being my backbone sorors you each DID THAT for me!

Thank you to THEE best two big brothers in the world Joel and Lendale A. Marshall and my sister in law Dr. Rachael Sallie-Marshall; I could not have done this without you! To my God given sisters, Alicia, NaShay, Alissa, Jehan Danielle, En’Dea, Courtney, Joy and Re’Vana thank you all for the visits, outings, support, starbucks gift cards, forced mental breaks and love! Thank you to my big sister Dr. Lorna Foster- Holliday for the numerous words of encouragement in the midnight hour. To my big sister Matika thank you for always ensuring my wardrobe was in order. To my niece Carrington, I love you so much thanks for being my rock! To my niece, Gabriella and my nephew Maxwell, you have watched me during this whole journey thanks for understanding TeeTee’s schedule and loving me anyhow! To my God children: Zion, Macyn, and Jackson thank you for showing me your sweet love, patience and making God mommy proud!

To my best friends, thank you for remaining solid in my life Courtney, DeAndela, Candice, Melvia, Mekelle, Tyloaha, Sharmee and Laneise your support does not go unrecognized.

To my doctoral committee chair Dr. Ethan Lowenstein, you have been my saving grace during this process. I appreciate you for believing in and supporting me. To my doctoral committee members: Dr. Dorinda Carter Andrews my mentor, sister, friend, and soror, thank you for sharpening me and pushing me beyond what I could have ever imagined for myself. Dr.
Nancy Copeland thank you for your candor and continual support. I would not have made it if you were not on my committee. Dr. Deborah Harmon thank you for reassuring me that you all would get me done well we have approached the finish line together! Proverbs 13:20 says “walk with the wise and become wise…” so I appreciate all of you for walking this journey out with me.

To my spiritual parents, Pastor Larry and Lady Lene’a Trice thanks for caring for me personally and spiritually. To my God parents Pastor Rudolph and Lady Bridigette Stanfield thanks for being by my side since I entered this world. Thank you, GMa Tabitha, for the steady and real love. To my God given Parents Randall and LaNette Hester thank you for your prayers, dinner and constant encouragement. To Dr. Carmen Thomas, thank you for everything! To my Harris Memorial Church family thank you! Pastor Eric C. Bogan and Lady Karleen Bogan your prayers and understanding was unmatched. To Dr. Alexandra Burrel my pseudo cohort member you have been my voice of reason and shoulder to cry on so in my J.Cole voice, you motivate me. Finally, to my Eastern Michigan University family, thank you to Cindy Guillean for ensuring that I had all writing technicalities addressed early on in my doctoral journey. Thank you to Dr. Celeste Hawkins and my soror Dr. Cheryl Price for showing me the way. To my cohort sisters: Dr. Shawn Forman and Elaine Lloyd thank you for holding me up in prayer during our countless writing sessions. As Cardi B once said, “there’s nothing that I like more than (Kulture) CULTURE”. We agreed to complete this thing and we did it for the culture.
Abstract
This qualitative dissertation explored the perceptions of three teacher candidate/alumni who were in a teacher preparation program. The three teacher candidate/alumni shared their experiences and readiness to teach culturally diverse students in K-12 settings. This study also examined the development of a teacher preparation program at a Midwest university. In addition to the voices of the three teacher candidate/alumni, the perspectives of three program developers were also engaged and analyzed. A top-down and open-coding method of data analysis was used in this study. A mini exploratory case study research design was utilized, and participants were interviewed using a semi-structured interview process to explore the following research questions: (a) How does a place- and community-based teacher preparation program inform teacher candidates' preparation for teaching Black students? (b) How do instructors within the program describe their approach for preparing teacher candidates to teach Black students? (c) How do teacher candidates describe their preparation for teaching Black students? The five key themes that emerged from the teacher candidate and alumni interviews were: community, care, cultural proficiency, relationships, and place-based education. Examining this research informs teacher preparation programs on best practices for teachers who may teach culturally diverse students since the number of Black, Latinx, and Asian populations are increasing in the United States. In addition, this study demonstrated how a place-based teacher preparation program can influence teacher candidates’ understanding of culturally responsive teaching. Overall findings revealed that the place-based education model adequately prepared them to enter a culturally diverse classroom and teach effectively.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Ever since I was a little girl, I knew that I wanted to be an educator. I can recall my first experience in a school building, which ultimately changed my way of thinking about education. I can remember at the age of seven experiencing racism while I was a student enrolled in a private parochial school in Burton, Michigan. Everyone was White except me and one other Black student in my classroom. I was standing in line, and two White girls were pushing one another. As a result of this commotion, several of us fell behind them, and we were verbally reprimanded by our teacher. Yet I was the only student who was prohibited the next week from participating in recess. I was unsure why I had to sit out for the week, but as a child, I did not know how to inquire. As a result, my parents had to explain to me that I had been treated unfairly because of the color of my skin. I noticed how my teacher was neither equipped nor prepared to assist me through my racist experience. As I reflect on this event years later, I am not certain that she even cared to assist me through that traumatic experience. The teacher also seemed to be disinterested in teaching me, and I did not feel connected to the school, the instruction, or the curriculum. After meeting with the school board about the incident, my parents pulled me and my siblings from the school. I struggled academically at my new school, since the mid-year change and the effects of the incident itself took me a while to process. At an early age, I began to see through a racial lens and process what it meant to be Black. This experience led me to pursue a profession in education because I wanted to be an advocate for fair and equitable treatment of and access for Black people.
As a young Black female, I recognize the challenges of navigating educational spaces. I also understand that when I enter any space, regardless of its context, I will always be seen first being Black. I learned about the inequity in education through my own personal experience, and I learned that these types of experiences can impact the academic outcomes of all Black students. My educational experiences as a child were not all negative. During my childhood, I also had the benefit of experiencing community-based educational practices. These practices nurtured me as a whole child. The contrast between my experiences planted the seeds for this dissertation study—What are the ways in which teacher preparation programs that use place-based education (PBE) as a framework prepare teacher candidates for teaching Black children? This question has become my passion, and it ignites my desire to research the academic disparities that we see in our nation today and how community-based teacher preparation practices might address these disparities. My lived experience illuminates how I enter this work and demonstrates that my identity as a Black woman who understands the unspoken cultural experiences that Black students face is an asset to the study and its data collection. My experiences with PBE and my understanding of the process also inform my study.

For many Black students, school experiences in the US educational system have resulted in academic failure. Several factors impact African American students’ academic achievement: (a) classroom environments where teachers engage in stereotypical and deficit thinking; (b) teachers who do not understand the challenges Black students face within the classroom; (c) teachers who are not culturally competent and do not understand the learning needs of Black students; (d) curricula that are not affirming and that are often difficult for students to relate to and to understand; and (e) instruction that does not meet students’
preferred ways of learning (Carter Andrews, Brown, Castillo, Jackson-Meadows, & Vellanki, 2019; Delpit, 1995; Gay, 1979, 2000; Haddix, 2015, 2017; Irvine, 1988; Ladson-Billings, 2000, 2001, 2009; Lynn, 2006; Milner, 2014; Steele, 1997; Steele & Anderson, 1995; Warren, 2014, 2018). Additionally, structural and institutional racism are factors that contribute to the disparities and marginalization of Black students in schools (Delpit, 1995; Morris, 2004). For example, Black students experience more incidences of stereotyping, are at greater risk of entering the school-to-prison pipeline, and experience disproportionate rates of disciplinary actions and special-education referrals and placement that may hinder their educational opportunities (Hines-Datiri & Carter Andrews, 2017; Skiba & Rausch, 2006; Wun 2016). Thus, as we examine the needs of all learners, it is important to employ a more innovative and inclusive approach to address the issues that hinder the opportunities of all culturally diverse students.

Other teacher preparation models have come before PBE such as community-based teacher education. Community-based teacher education looks at individual beliefs and emphasizes the importance of transformational relationships within communities. Scholars such as Beverly Cabello, Jewell Cooper, Nancy Davis Burstein, Bianca Ballridge, Heather Coffey, Mary Gomez, Susan Melnick, Lynda Weist, and Kenneth Zeichner have done work surrounding community-based education. This field of research has existed and focuses on instructional connections, community integration, community participation and citizen action (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2014). Community-based education assists with creating cultural awareness of students and their families’ cultural strengths (Cooper, 2007). PBE sits within this tradition of research and practice and, in the last 30 years, has developed its own theoretical framework for instructional practice. Most recently, a number of teacher
education programs have begun to explore the use of PBE as a foundational approach to teacher preparation, but there are few descriptions of such programs in the literature and little research on the experiences of teacher candidates within these programs. PBE has the potential to be a powerful embodiment of culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP). The tenets of PBE are in alignment with CRP because it is an approach that puts the community at the center of schooling. This study seeks to explore the intersection between the two within a teacher preparation program that uses PBE as an approach.

**Statement of the Problem**

**Educational Experience of Black Students**

Research studies have shown that Black students in K-12 settings are often misunderstood and labeled as at risk (Foote, 2005), lazy, stereotyped, or culturally deficient (Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings 1999, 2000). African American students are often referred to in negative ways, such as “defective” or “lacking” (Ladson-Billings, 1999) and miseducated (Milner, 2012). Foote (2005) described how Blacks are viewed academically, observing that Black students experience of failure can be attributed to their having to function within a context of systematic and structural inequity and social dominance in which they are often marginalized and labeled.

Black students’ marginalization in educational environments may be a function of their teachers’ relative lack of experience with the Black population prior to teaching these students and their level of preparedness, gained through their teacher education preparation programs, to teach a diverse student body. White teachers make up a majority of the teaching force in K-12 (Loewus, 2017), and the lack of cultural competence in teachers can result in their adopting stereotypes about Black students. The behaviors that many Black students...
present are often misunderstood and misconstrued (Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2000). When behavior is misconstrued, the notion of deficit thinking is perpetuated, which in turn impacts teacher expectations of students. Deficit-based thinking is the notion that students of color, who may identify as low income, do not academically perform well in school because they (and their families) experience inadequacies that block the learning process (Carter Andrews & Gutwein, 2017; Valencia, 1997, 2015). Educators who operate within the deficit-thinking paradigm contend that if students of color do not change their background factors (culture, values, and family make up), they may be unsuccessful in school (Walker 2011; Weiner, 2003). One way to counteract this tendency and to connect with all students is to meet their learning needs through cultural responsive methods of teaching.

In the same way that there are culturally diverse students, there are also culturally preferred learning styles, which differ from the traditional White learning styles (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2010a, 2013), which acknowledges these culturally preferred learning styles, distinguishes different types of learners: contextual, oral, relational, and holistic. Contextual learners are those who require background information and details related to the specific problem. Oral learners respond to vocal cues; they enjoy talking to others, and speaking and reading aloud helps them learn. Relational learners can see relationships between ideas and concepts. Holistic learners can see the whole picture and are intuitive, relying on feelings for both decision-making and problem-solving; these students view space in parts.

Teachers may be unaware of these various culturally based learning styles, teaching instead using their own preferred learning style (Bennett, 1995; Bennett, 2006). When teaching styles are misaligned with learning styles, academic outcomes can be at risk. The
preferred learning style of many Black students, for example, includes inferential reasoning—focusing on people rather than things—and kinesthetic learning styles (Duncan-Andrade & Morell, 2010; Hale, 1982, 1986, 2016; Hillard, 1989; Muhammad, 2012; Sealey-Ruiz, 2007; Shade, 1989). Such learners aim to be proficient in nonverbal communication (Irvine & York, 1995) and thrive in a flexible classroom environment (Gilbert & Gay, 1989).

When such specific, culturally preferred ways of learning among Black students are not aligned with a teacher’s ability to respond to those preferences, a cycle of compromised academic performance and negative teacher expectations can result, leading to disengagement on the part of the student and to the labeling of students as lazy or disruptive on the part of the teacher (Hale, 2016). A result of this cycle can be White teachers’ cultural exclusion of Black students, which itself contributes to teachers’ lowering their expectations of these students (Kunjufu, 2000).

When Black students are labeled, perceived inaccurately, or stereotyped, students are prevented from performing at their highest level. Research demonstrates that stereotype threat can negatively impact the academic performance of Black students and lower their self-esteem (Bae, Holloway, Li, & Bempechat, 2008; Carter Andrews, 2012; Pantaleo, 2016; Steele, 1997; Steele & Aronson, 1995; Wasserberg, 2014). Stereotype threat is a response to assumptions regarding identity and has been defined by Steele and Aronson (1995) as a threat whereby students are concerned that their academic performance will confirm the already existing negative stereotypes surrounding their identity. For example, Black students can enter their classrooms concerned that their teachers believe that they are incompetent or not capable of learning or performing well. Students experience anxiety while learning especially during test taking as they carry the weight of disproving teacher’s low expectation.
Students who experience stereotype threat upon entering a classroom can perform poorly (Milner & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2003). Stereotype threat contributes to the widening academic performance gap between Black and White students. However, educators can boost achievement if they counter stereotypes with positive reinforcement in their classrooms (Steele & Aronson, 1995; Steele & Cohn-Vargas, 2013). For example, teachers who see their students favorably academically excel (Pantaleo, 2016), and teachers with low teacher expectations result in students, dislike for their schooling process (Bae et al., 2008). This is a result of deficit thinking.

**Significance and Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore and understand the experiences of current and former students in teacher preparation programs that use a PBE framework for approaching culturally proficient teaching techniques. The purpose is to determine how prepared current and former students believe they are to teach culturally diverse students in K-12 settings through the PBE model. I had six participants for this study which included one current student, two former students, the department head, an instructor, and, professor. I refer to the department head, instructor, and professor as the program developers. The qualitative mini case study research method was chosen for this study rather than statistical methods of inquiry or analysis because the research questions aimed to capture the voices and lived experiences of the participants (McRoy, 1996). This research study will contribute to the body of knowledge surrounding teacher preparation programs and highlight the impact of PBE connected to culturally relevant teaching.

The existing research on teacher preparation programs recognizes the academic challenges that can impact how teacher candidates are prepared to engage and teach Black
students (Darling-Hammond, 2002, 2006; Kuriloff, Jordan, Sutherlander, & Ponnock, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 2000; von Hippel & Bellows, 2018). In this study, I chose to focus on the experiences of current students in and recent graduates of a teacher preparation program and examine an evolving teacher preparation program grounded in PBE. The full establishment of the program highlighted in this study will be launched in the fall semester of 2019. It is also important to note that my dissertation chair is one of the program developers and director for the Southeast Michigan Stewardship Coalition (SEMIS coalition), which is a program partner that heavily influenced the founding of the program. Chapters 4 and 5 will include a more in-depth description of all the participants, and I will expound on their participation in the study.

Conceptual Framework for the Study

Cultural Competency

This study is guided by two theoretical frameworks: culturally relevant teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and CRP (Gay, 2000). Its conceptual framework is cultural competency (Cross, 1988; Ladson-Billings, 2001). Ladson-Billings (2001) defined cultural competence as the ability to respect and intrinsically understand one’s own culture as well as the cultures of others. To be culturally competent, one must have a “set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enable that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations” (Cross, 1988, p. 13). Cultural competency is obtained through (a) cultural self-awareness, (b) awareness of other’s cultures and the intersection those cultures with one’s own, and (c) in the context of education, understanding how to teach by utilizing CRP.
Cross (1988) suggested that lack of cultural competence among teachers of Black students may make those teachers ill-prepared to relate to and to teach them. Cross (1988) also recommended that educators need to recognize that there are indeed cultural differences and that it is essential to become educated on those differences. Cross further focused in on valuing diversity and examined how cultural competency is necessary for positive academic performance. The lack of cultural competence in teacher education often impacts Black students and lends to the conversation around four components: (a) deficit thinking of the teacher demonstrated through the teacher’s attitudes and expectations, (b) overrepresentation of Black students in special-education programs (Waitoller, Artiles, & Cheney, 2010), (c) underrepresentation of Black students in gifted or talented educational tracks (Cross, 1988), and (d) teachers must be aware of how they present educational content. In addition, teachers must understand that their own biases, race, and experiences as they influence how the curriculum is used (Milner, 2012). Through the lens of cultural competence, which speaks to awareness of one’s own view of the world and encompasses positive attitudes toward different cultural practices, teachers can remain aware of how they present educational content.

**Research Questions**

The dissertation study examines the cultural preparedness of current or former students of the teacher preparation program who experienced the PBE framework. The main questions guiding the dissertation are (a) How does a place- and community-based teacher preparation program inform teacher candidates' preparation for teaching Black students? (b) How do instructors and program developers within the program describe their approach for preparing teacher candidates to teach Black students? (c) How do teacher candidates describe
their preparation for teaching Black students? In the following chapters, I will discuss the educational experience of Black students and the history of Blacks in education, the conceptual and theoretical frameworks guiding this study, the history of multicultural education, and the mechanisms and implications of culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) and place-based education (PBE).

**Chapter Organization**

The dissertation is organized into seven chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview and introduction to the research. Chapter 2 situates the dissertation research within a review of relevant literature. Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology used for this study. Chapter 4 includes an overview of the place-based education program description and development. Chapter 5 focuses on the cross cutting themes from the instructors and program developers. Chapter 6 discusses the findings of the teacher candidate/alumni of the program. Chapter 7 concludes the dissertation by discussing the need for teacher preparation programs using a PBE model to train teachers.

**Definition of Terms**

There are several key terms and phrases that are used repeatedly throughout this study. Their operational definitions are as follows:

- *African American* refers to those whose ancestors were enslaved and brought to the United States. The related terms Afro-American, Negro, and Black American all refer to African American.

- *Black* refers to all people with African ancestry.
• Cultural competency refers to awareness of one’s own cultural identity and openness to others cultural identities.

• Students of color refers to those students who trace their ancestral origins from several non-European ethnic groups, including African American/Black, Native American, Pacific Islander, Latina/o/x, and Asian American.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

History of the Education of Black People

The educational experience of Black people has included significant barriers. These include the repercussions of learning to read or write while enslaved, the academic gap between Black students and their counterparts within an education that evolved over time, and the outcome or the result of Black students being taught with mainstream curricula (Foster, 1997; Siddle Walker, 2000, 2001; each barrier will be explained below).

The attempt to destroy African culture during the early years of slavery in the seventeenth century continues to influence educational policies and decisions today (Johnson & Smith, 1998; Woodson, 1933). To situate the historical context, Lynn (2006) described the inequality of the educational system toward Black people dating back to the post-slavery period:

As history shows, this system of education has not served African Americans well. While ex slaves and their children were taught to read the word within a European culture that denigrated other forms of communication and learning, they were not taught to “read the world” in a Freirean sense. Schooling extended the arm of the slave master in the sense that it was a vehicle through which whites could continue to transmit Eurocentric values and morals to the oppressed, namely, African and Native Americans. More important, education and schooling in America continued the deAfricanization or acculturation process because it forced Africans and others who were not of European descent to ignore their culture and their history and to accept EuroAmerican culture as their own. (p. 118)
The critical issue with slavery was the systemic erasure of African culture (and African identity) that occurred to sustain the institution of slavery. Although the education of Black people has evolved over time, it has been a journey wrought with challenges (Lynn, 2006). The institution of school itself has failed many Black students (Anderson, 1988; Gay, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c; Siddle Walker, 2001), many of whom were taught mainstream culture exclusively, with no integration of curricula from the Black community and schools. As a result of slavery and oppression, for Blacks, education became symbolic of liberation, freedom, opportunity, struggle, and advancement (Siddle Walker, 1996, 2001). Literacy, which had been suppressed among Black people during slavery, when it was illegal for Black people to learn to read or write, became a rallying point in the 1800s. Yet this aspiration came at a price. The education that Blacks received was based in the morals, values, and ideals of the mainstream culture (Siddle Walker, 2001)—the same culture that had oppressed them and that continues to do so to this day (Lynn, 2006).

The nature of education during slavery for captives and for those who were free were quite different (Harmon, 2012). Those who were enslaved in the South compared to those enslaved in the North also experienced some differences (Harmon, 2012). Some barriers to education were life threatening, including laws that prohibited slaves from being taught how to read or write and practices that included beating or killing as methods of retribution against enslaved Black individuals who displayed literacy (Anderson, 1988; Harmon, 2012). During slavery and in the decades that followed, learning was simply not an option for Black people, even though obtaining an education would always be considered the key to freedom (Anderson, 1988; Siddle Walker, 1996). Only with the abolition of slavery could Blacks, newly free, pursue an education. As Anderson (1988) stated, “Blacks emerged from slavery
with a strong belief in the desirability of learning to read and write” (p. 5). Although learning to read or write as a slave was a life-threatening risk, the opportunity was often taken without second thought (Anderson, 1988). At that time, there was a yearning for knowledge because literacy equated to freedom for Blacks (Anderson, 1988; Tillman, 2004, 2008). Both education and literacy were the means by which Blacks could become leaders in their communities (Anderson, 1988; Siddle Walker, 2001). Therefore, slaves did continue to learn to read and write, and the community of slaves protected those who were learning, particularly in the South (Anderson, 1988; Siddle Walker, 1996, 2001). Meanwhile, the community of free slaves in the North created schools (Butchart, 2010; Tillman, 2008).

In 1896, segregation was legal, and institutions enforced a policy of “separate but equal” among Blacks and Whites (Plessy vs. Ferguson, 1896). Segregation itself began after slaves were free and the South was forced to develop a public school system (Anderson, 1988). The “separate but equal” notion created the inequalities that persist today. Much of the literature reports that schools for Black students were unsafe and lacked the proper academic resources to provide an equitable education (Anderson, 1988; Siddle Walker, 1996, 2001). Much of the literature on segregation reports the challenges but fails to report the positive implications of segregation. For example, Black schooling structures were community based, which meant that individuals within those respective communities worked together to address and highlight issues or concerns (Irvine, 1988, 2002). This meant that those individuals who were involved with the community-based structure of school committed to partnerships that enhanced the educational outcome of students. Prior to desegregation, the teaching profession was a desired and highly valued profession within the Black community (Foster, 1997; Irvine, 1988; Irvine, 2002; Tillman, 2008). Historically, becoming a teacher
was a step to attaining upward mobility and provided a pathway by which women could become leaders (Foster, 1997; Ladson-Billing, 1994, 2001 2000, 2014; Siddle Walker, 2000; Tillman, 2008).

Additionally, the roles of those who worked for Black community-based schools extended far beyond the actual classroom, and parents were deeply engaged and supported the schools (Ladson-Billing, 1994, 2001, 2000; Siddle Walker, 2000; Tillman, 2008). Community members played an active role in decision-making processes in the schools and their communities (Tillman, 2008). The community-based structure enhanced the students’ educational experience and access (Tillman, 2008; Ziechner, 1993). The reason it enhanced the students educational experience was that most of their school leaders lived within their community and the curriculum used was developed to educate the whole student and to cultivate self-esteem (Anderson, 1988; Siddle Walker, 1996, 2001). For example, the curriculum was infused with student-centered ideas such as resiliency and empowerment (Siddle Walker, 1996; Walker, 1996, 2001). As Adair (1984) noted,

Traditionally the African American teacher has played multiple roles in schools. Among these have been teacher, parent surrogate figure, counselor, disciplinarian, and modeling figures. Those roles have been anchored in a collective African American identity where these teachers perceive the success or failure of their pupils as gains or losses to the African American community. That is the teacher and pupil share a common interest and mission. The teachers view themselves as ethically responsible for preparing these youth for future leadership and for making contributions to this unique mission, namely the liberation and enhancement of the quality of life for African American people. (p. 122)
Students had an active role in their education, and teachers served as facilitators using a community-based model.

Desegregation did not happen immediately, nor was it addressed in any fundamental way until the mid 1960s, virtually a full decade after it had begun (Fultz, 2004). Desegregation occurred after Brown v. Topeka. A trickle of dismissals of Black teachers followed in the wake of Brown, but these were mostly ignored amid the trials and tribulations of the highly publicized experiments in pupil desegregation in Washington, DC; Baltimore; St. Louis; and scattered communities elsewhere (Fultz, 2004, p. 15). Once desegregation took place, much of what Adair asserted above was uprooted. The years and commitment of the qualified Black community members, teachers, staff, and administrators assigned to these schools were not considered (Adair, 1984; Foster, 1997). This displacement of Black educators heavily impacted the Black community and the educational outcomes overall for many Black students (Adair, 1984; Orfield, 1969). When community schools closed as a result of desegregation, most Black students were torn from their own communities and thrown into cultures and communities that neither wanted nor valued them (Adair, 1984; Lynn, 2006).

The decline in numbers of Black teachers occurred after the court desegregation decision Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka, (1954; Ethridge, 1979; Foster, 1997; Hudson & Holmes, 1994). This decision resulted in Black teachers, principals, and administrative staff, especially in the South, losing their jobs (Adair, 1984; Ethridge, 1979; King, 1993; Roberts & Carter Andrews, 2013; Siddle Walker, 2001; Tillman, 2008). The court decision led to busing of Black students to White schools, and as a result, many Black schools closed (Ethridge, 1979). The busing of students to integrate schools also led to many
White people moving from their communities to avoid having their children attend schools with Black children (Vance, 2009). This relocation, referred to as “White flight,” resulted in the development of re-segregated communities and schools (Vance, 2009). The Brown ruling and the civil rights legislation that followed sparked an exodus of Whites in areas that allowed desegregation and prompted the notion of re-segregation (Vance, 2009). The White flight demonstrated the mixed feelings about the court decision, even among Black educators. As Morris (2001) asserted,

African American educators’ support for integration—prior to the passage of Brown—was enigmatic. On one hand, they were compelled to support efforts aimed at eradicating legalized segregation in public schools and the broader society, which could possibly lead to the demise of their careers as African American professionals. (p. 579)

The first major Supreme Court ruling concerning busing was the case Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education, (1971). The case considered the constitutional means of desegregating public schools through the court-ordered busing of students. Although equal and fair treatment was legally mandated, many states, districts, and schools refused to desegregate (Vance, 2009; Siddle Walker, 1996). Additionally, the Supreme Court ruling Milliken v. Bradley (1974) was geared toward the metropolitan Detroit area focusing on de jure segregation. The NAACP sued the state of Michigan for not implementing a desegregation plan in the city of Detroit. This was during the time when the impact of a Eurocentric curriculum and instructional practices for Black students begin to contribute to some aspects of their academic performance (Lynn, 2006). Furthermore, this was when lack of cultural competence of teachers became apparent.
The impact of desegregation is evident within the academic achievement gap and through institutional and structural racism (Gay, 2010b; Foster, 1997; Siddle Walker, 2000, 2001). Many scholars today suggest that the racial desegregation of schools was not the primary goal of Blacks who fought legal battles within the courts (Adir, 1984; Anderson, 1988; Gay, 2010a; Siddle-Walker, 1996, 2001). What they really sought was having access to the same resources as their White counterparts (Morris, 1993, 2001, 2004; Mungo, 2013; Kluger, 1975, 2004). They sought for access to learning resources and today that includes access to technology. The Brown case argued that the educational facilities for Black students were under-resourced and subpar (Brown Foundation for Educational Equity, 2004). The 1964 Civil Rights Act assisted in enforcing the Brown ruling and eliminated federal funding for all facilities and institutions that continued to unlawfully segregate (Anderson, 1988; Vance, 2009). Many schools were sued in 1965 for remaining segregated, which was called de facto racism (Vance, 2009). Consequently, the process of desegregating facilities and institutions was not the main solution to the state of education, and as a result, the academic outcomes of Black students are still impacted today (Gay, 2004, 2010).

Over the past 150 years, Black students have endured segregation, desegregation, and most recently, re-segregation (Vance, 2009). bell hooks (1994) stated:

School changed utterly with racial integration. Gone was the messianic zeal to transform our minds and beings that had characterized teachers and their pedagogical practices in our all-black schools. Knowledge was suddenly about information only. It had no relation to how one lived, behaved. It was no longer connected to antiracist struggle. Bussed to white schools, we soon learned that obedience, and not zealous will to learn, was what was expected of us. . . . When we entered racist, desegregated
white schools, we left a world where teachers believed that to educate black children rightly would require a political commitment. Now, we were mainly taught by white teachers whose lessons reinforced racist stereotypes. For black children, education was no longer about the practice of freedom. Realizing this, I lost my love of school.

(p. 3)

After some twenty years of court-ordered busing, neighborhood schools experienced a revival, and schools became segregated once again (Vance, 2009); it is the aftermath of this period of re-segregation that we experience today. As a result of re-segregation, the mainstream schools, which no longer needed to accommodate Black students, reverted to their old ways. The educational challenges and barriers of the past remain and are visible in through curricula that are unresponsive to the needs of a diverse student body, in teachers who are not culturally competent, and in Black students whose academic performance is compromised. One response to re-segregation has been the development of charter schools and their alternative approaches to teaching, such as PBE. Overall, with re-segregation, nothing from the Black communities was integrated into the “new curriculum” (Vance, 2009). Rather, Black students were expected to learn about, understand, and navigate the dominant culture on which the curriculum was based (Lynn, 2006). Although the primary intent of desegregation—to be a first step toward addressing discrimination—was noble, the effects of desegregation on the education of Black students were more insidious, and they remain demonstrable in the state of education today.

The Impacts of Desegregation

A huge piece often missing in such arguments regarding the state of education is the fact that we need much more than a pedagogical change; we need a cognitive reframing. It is
extremely important to examine how Black students learned previously if we are to understand where we are today. Thus, I pose this question: Why do some Black students seem to be academically performing on a lower level today on all ends even post desegregation?

To explore the question above, we must first understand the impacts of desegregation. Desegregation functioned to remove students from their communities—to take them out of their place—which impacted the processes of learning and teaching. Since desegregation, schools have sustained a residue of both institutional and structural racism, both direct and indirect (Dumas, 2016). Such racism, which is embedded in the foundation of an institution or structure, such as a school is evident in policies, practices, curricula, and procedures (Better, 2002). Direct institutional racism can be seen in policies that are consciously designed to have a discriminatory impact, such as apartheid (Massey & Denton, 1993) and Jim Crow, and in culturally based discrimination based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability in classrooms or in access to school-based programs. Indirect institutional racism includes race-based practices whose intent is not overtly discriminatory, but whose practices in admission process, curriculum selection, use or nonuse of culturally relevant pedagogy, or within the academic achievement gap, has race-based impacts and implications. Structural racism is a system that perpetuates inequality between racial groups through institutional practices, cultural representations, and public policies (Delpit, 1995). It illuminates areas of our history that deem Whiteness to be a privilege and color to be a disadvantage (Delpit, 1995). Structural racism is embedded in the political, economic, and social systems in the United States (Delpit, 1995; Morris, 2004). In schools, this is seen
through the absence or underrepresentation of Black students in advanced-placement opportunities.

Both institutional and structural racism are seen today throughout the educational system (Better, 2002; Delpit, 1995; Geiger, 2005; Morris, 2004). Because of this, Black students still experience marginalization, and their educational experience is often negative. In the next section, I will expound on ways Black students are marginalized based on the historical emphasis provided above. I will examine the academic achievement gap, academic performance, anti-Blackness, curriculum, multicultural education, and PBE.

**Academic Achievement Gap**

In education, there is a gap between the learning outcomes of White and Brown and Black students, and studies have shown that some Black or Brown students are challenged academically and struggle to perform according to standardized measures as a result of institutional challenges (Carter, 2008). Moreover, as Tatum (2006) has asserted, external influences, including stereotypes, socioeconomic status, and the lack of culturally competent instruction, often hinder students’ socio-emotional and cognitive development. Because of an influx of reform policies, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997), No Child Left Behind Act (2002), Race to the Top & Common Core State Standards initiatives (2009), and the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) that masquerade as being achievement driven, multicultural instructional methods have surfaced to change pedagogical methods. These ineffective policies and teacher choice in the classroom either attend to or overlook the implications of cultural diversity in the educational environment.
Academic Performance

Saunders (1997) conducted a study in which he interviewed 28 Black eighth-grade students. These students indicated that positive racial socialization contributed to their positive academic performance. Howard (2006) explained that teachers are aware of the disparities and illuminated an underlying issue such as cultural mismatch, as it relates to the widening gap. Howard (2006) captured an educator’s sentiments through his study regarding academic performance: “They each get the same curriculum. I treat them all alike. And yet, by the end of the year, and as I watch them move up through the grades, the Blacks and Hispanics fall behind and the White kids do better. They all start with the same basic equipment. What happens?” (Howard, 2006, p. 29). This quote exemplifies the need for culturally responsive teaching; to achieve equitable academic performance, teachers must first understand that students cannot all be taught in the same way (Olson & Rao, 2016).

In the next section, I will discuss the literature concerning anti-Blackness and CRP to build the conceptual framework for this study. The discussion will begin with anti-Blackness. An examination of CRP will be explored, which I will draw on as a central framework to further understand and connect race, schooling, teacher preparation, and curriculum. After that, I will explore multicultural education and end with PBE.

Anti-Blackness

I explored the concept of racialized repression in education. It is imperative to understand how anti-Blackness and deficit thinking impact teacher preparation programs in order to educate teacher candidates about how to interact with, instruct, and engage their Black students. I explored how to counter anti-Blackness and deficit thinking through
cultural competency and through curricula models such as PBE within the constructs of teacher preparation programs.

Toni Morrison (1992) wrote:

In what public discourse does the reference to black people not exist? It exists in every one of this nation’s mightiest struggles. The presence of black people is not only a major referent in the framing of the Constitution, it is also in the battle over enfranchising unpropertied citizens, women, the illiterate. It is there in the construction of a free and public school system; the balancing of representation in legislative bodies; jurisprudence and legal definitions of justice. It is there in theological discourse; the memoranda of banking houses the concept of manifest destiny and the preeminent narrative that accompanies (if it does not precede) the initiation of every immigrant into the community of American citizens. The presence of black people is inherent, along with gender and family ties, in the earliest lesson every child is taught regarding his or her distinctiveness. Africanism is inextricable from the definition of Americanness. (p. 65)

Anti-Blackness is a worldwide phenomenon (Dumas, 2016; Kohn, 1996; Nighaoui, 2017; Roediger, 1994;). It is a tool that perpetuates the dehumanization of Black people as it encourages the notion that blackness is at the bottom and whiteness is at the apex (Khon, 1996; Nighaoui, 2017). Anti-Blackness also manifests in the attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions that are embedded in White negative judgments about Black culture (Roediger, 1994; Dumas, 2016). Anti-Blackness is a thought system whose undertone is White supremacy and Black inferiority (Dumas, 2016; Nighaoui, 2017). In comparison, anti-Black
racism is a projection onto Black culture, since it is different in appearance from the White culture (Roediger, 1994). In that way, anti-Blackness impacts education as well.

Anti-Blackness impacts Black students today as it has the past (Dumas; 2016; Khon, 1996). Anti-Blackness was one cause of the White flight seen during the time of desegregation (Kohn, 1996). Dumas (2016) perhaps said it best: “School desegregation was precipitated by antiblackness” (p. 16). This is because anti-Blackness is not limited to the racial oppression of Blacks by Whites but also includes the relationship that non-White/non-Black ethnic groups have with Black people. Wun (2016) noted that “blacks are the prototypical targets of the state and its foundation. Even if non-black nonwhites (and whites) may be subject to state policing practices or racial oppression, blacks are the paradigmatic objects of racialized state repression” (p. 740).

Looking at the current teaching force, which is over 93% White, using anti-Blackness as a lens provides insight on the interaction between teachers and students. Dumas (2016) shared the following:

What does it mean to suggest that education policy is a site of antiblackness?
Fundamentally, it is an acknowledgment of the long history of Black struggle for educational opportunity, which is to say a struggle against what has always been (and continues to be) a struggle against specific anti-Black ideologies, discourses, representations, (mal)distribution of material resources, and physical and psychic assaults on Black bodies in schools. . . . Antiblackness allows one to capture the depths of suffering of Black children and educators in predominantly white schools, and connect this contemporary trauma to the longue durée of slavery from bondage to its afterlife in desegregating (and now re-segregating) schools. (p.16)
**Curriculum**

The type of curriculum and instruction that are used in schools influence students’ learning experiences. Black students may experience challenges in schools today because historically, although these students received first-class education when schools were segregated, the quality of their education and their school experience generally degraded during integration (Siddle Walker, 1996). Siddle Walker (1996) asserted that “the dominant memory of students—that their teachers cared about them should not be construed, however, to mean that teachers ignored classes’ academic content or that their efforts to engage students were always successful” (p. 126).

Exploring the type of curriculum and method of instruction used in schools can positively or negatively impact Black students’ educational experience (Milner, 2012). Curriculum is defined as the content, materials, resources, assignments, and assessments used by teachers to determine how basic concepts or standards have been met by students through evaluative measures (Gay, 2010; Milner, 2014a, 2014b). Most often, educators may not have input into the type of curriculum used by their school or district. However, with proper preparation, teachers can promote holistic student learning in any curricular environment (Milner, 2014a, 2014b).

There is a need for teacher preparation programs to prepare teachers to be culturally responsive educators who are knowledgeable about multicultural curricula and culturally responsive instruction (Gay, 2010a). The main goal of multicultural education is to provide fair and equitable high-quality education to all students regardless of their diverse ethnic, racial, and social class (Banks, 2004).
Multicultural Education

Multicultural education began as the early ethnic studies movement in the 1880s, initiated by African American scholars in the fields of education and psychology (Gay, 2004). The focus of this movement was to develop knowledge about Black history and culture (Banks, 2004; Gay, 2004). In 1973, the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education’s first Commission on Multicultural Education provided the following policy statement:

Multicultural education programs for teachers are more than special courses or special learning experiences grafted onto the standard program. The commitment to cultural pluralism must permeate all areas of the educational experience provided for prospective teachers. (p. 264)

More specifically, in 1979, all colleges and universities that desired to apply for accreditation from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education were required to show that their educational plans included development of multicultural education within their curricula (Gollnick, 1992). During this phase, the goal was to incorporate information and theories into curricula that could be used in schools and emphasized through teacher education programs (Banks & Banks, 2010; Gay, 2000, 2004; Howard, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995, 2011; Nieto, 2000; Nieto & Bode, 2008; Nieto, 2015; Sleeter & Owuor, 2011; Tinkler & Tinkler, 2013).

The next phase of the development of multicultural education was during World War II. At that time, there was a dire need to do more than just develop curricula. The goal shifted to bringing about structural and systemic changes to schools to increase educational equity (Banks, 2004). This brought about the intergroup education movement (Banks, 2004).
During this phase, White liberal social scientists, motivated by civil rights activities during the 1950s and 1960s, took an interest in the development of multicultural education focusing on a human relations approach that looked more at the similarities between racial groups than at the differences (Banks, 2004). With this approach, there was little focus on institutional racism and structural inequality. It was at this point that a philosophical difference of opinion arose between White and Black scholars (Banks 2004). Those with the human-relations approach went on to develop intercultural education, an approach that focuses on interracial harmony and desegregation (Banks, 2004). Overall, PBE has the potential to be the next phase of the multicultural education movement.

Some Black scholars split away from the intercultural education group and formed a new ethnic studies movement in the 1960s and 1970s (Banks, 2004). During this time, the civil rights movement shifted to the development of the Black power movement and ownership of the community (Banks, 2004). Other ethnic groups, including Native Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans, as well as women’s rights groups, the disabled, and gay rights groups, emerged and demanded to be incorporated into the curricula and structures of schools and higher education institutions (Banks, 2004). During this phase, the goal was to infuse ethnic content into mainstream educational curricula (Banks, 2004).

The fourth and current phase of multicultural education is focused on developing theories and conducting research. The focus is on creating practices that interrelate variables that connect to race, class, and gender. Addressing systemic issues and structures to achieve educational equity was the primary goal (Banks, 2004).

During this evolution of multicultural education, three models for multicultural curricula were developed. The first was an integrative multicultural basic-skill model that
involved using multicultural resources within the curriculum—including multicultural perspectives and experiences—and teaching multicultural histories (Gay, 1979). In addition, the cultures of ethnic groups would be embedded within the curriculum. The second model, discussed by Christine Bennett (2006), was a global and multicultural model that leads to the acceptance of cultural diversity, respect for human dignity, a responsibility for the global community, and respect for planet Earth. The third model comprised visual models developed by James Banks (1991) that helped operationalize multicultural curricula and instruction and that included the five dimensions of multicultural education. Christine Sleeter (2005) stated, “It is the teachers’ responsibility to find out, become familiar with, and respect knowledge students bring to school, and to organize curriculum and learning activities in such a way that students are able to activate and use that knowledge” (p. 106). This reiterates the importance of incorporating students’ culture within the curriculum. Ladson-Billings (1994) further argued that “real education is about extending students’ thinking and abilities” (pp. 124–125), which further supports the multicultural education dimensions.
Five dimensions of multicultural education. Banks (1991) presented a multidimensional concept of equity comprising five dimensions of multicultural education: (a) content integration, (b) knowledge construction, (c) prejudicial discrimination, (d) equity pedagogy; and, (e) empowering school culture and social structure. Content integration is an instructional approach in which subject matter content is presented from different cultural perspectives. Knowledge construction occurs when content is presented in ways that reveal racial and social class perspectives in contrast to the dominant culture’s perspective (Banks, 1991). Prejudicial discrimination reduction refers to creating opportunities to learn more democratic attitudes and behaviors (Banks, 1999). Equity pedagogy is using culturally responsive instructional strategies to enable all students to learn. Empowering school culture and social culture involves being involved with opportunities to restructure schools to achieve educational equity (Banks, 1999). As Goodwin (1997) asserted,

The concept of multicultural teacher education has evolved through three distinct phases: exclusion, inclusion, and infusion. During the exclusion phase, pedagogy to address the needs of culturally diverse school population was, to a major extent, absent from teacher education curricula. The idea of multicultural teacher education was excluded from common conceptions of what teachers needed to know in order to be effective. During the inclusion phases, an awareness that teachers needed to be prepared to work with students who were culturally and ethnically diverse was incorporated into teacher education norms. However, the responsibility for multicultural teacher education resided in special courses of workshops. These special offerings were not integrated into the “regular” teacher preparation program, and student participation in these courses was generally on volunteer or self-selection
basis. Thus, multicultural teacher education, while included in teacher education, remained on the periphery of professional preparation. The third phases is where the fields intentions seem to be now—infusion. (p. 21)

Aspects of Multicultural Education

Culturally responsive pedagogy is one aspect of multicultural education that is used in this paper. There have been many studies that utilize CRP, and I will discuss a few to provide the framework for this study. I explore a model that could be used to support all student learning because instruction that centers the student and his or her cultural background is extremely important for all students, as it gives them an opportunity to incorporate themselves into their own educational experience. To describe CRP, Ladson-Billings (1995) conducted a three-year study of teachers who were teaching Black students successfully. She suggested that CRP must meet three objectives: it must positively impact students’ academic performance, cultivate cultural competence, and grow critical consciousness so that students are equipped to challenge the status quo (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Her study is important because it adds to the existing literature and addresses the intendment of the academic and sociocultural identities of Black students (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Because this research supports the development of new instruction methods and new ways of thinking to successfully teach Black students, it is important that it continue (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Howard (2001) conducted a qualitative study that examined four elementary school teachers and their CRP. This study looked at how CRP impacted these teachers’ instruction and how they understood their students. There were three effective pedagogical strategies that worked for these teachers: holistic teaching, skill-building strategies, and culturally
consistent communicative competencies. These teachers believed in their students’ academic abilities and believed that their students could excel. Howard (2001) asserted that “teachers’ belief in student capability also has cultural connections” (p. 198). This present study is important because it adds to the conversation about the need for CRP and how each participant incorporated her or his own instructional approach to extend CRP.

Finally, Saifer, Edwards, Ellis, Ko, and Stuczynski (2011) posited that CRP could be used to enhance a student’s motivation and his or her academic engagement. In this view, if CRP is implemented properly in classrooms that serve Black students—that is, if students’ unique learning processes and teachers’ instructional measures to support all students are both taken into account—these students might experience higher academic performance. Curriculum usage, as discussed above, is essential to promote high academic performance through culturally responsive curricula (Paris & Alim, 2014).

Culturally responsive instructional practices include CRP (Gay, 2000), culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1997), and culturally responsive teaching (CRT; Gay, 2000). Gay (2000) defined CRP as using cultural knowledge and prior experiences of diverse students, including their frames of reference, to make learning more interesting and relevant through a strengths-based approach. Ladson-Billings (1992) defined CRT as a pedagogy that is committed to collective empowerment. For example, Ladson-Billings (1992) indicated that teachers who are culturally responsive ensure inclusion of “cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (p. 32). Culturally responsive teaching is defined as a facilitation instruction model that supports the high academic performance of all students so that all students feel welcome, safe, and supported in their learning environment (Gay, 2000).
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Multicultural education is an approach to curriculum and instruction that has proven to be effective with Black and diverse students. For some teachers, multicultural education means little more than acknowledging a religious holidays or incorporating into the curriculum a text by a non-White or non-Western author. This is an effective model because it has been developed to cultivate educational equity for all students and challenges the mainstream curriculum (Banks, 1994; Goldenburg, 2014). Multicultural education has evolved over time and has been greatly influenced by the fight for civil rights and social justice (Gay, 2000).

Geneva Gay (2000) defined CRP as follows:

Culturally responsive teaching is defined as using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively. It is based on the assumption that when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference of students, they are more personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and are more easily and thoroughly. (p. 106)

Several scholars have used the metaphor of a bridge to describe how teachers can connect students to school by infusing the classroom experience with their home cultures (Gay, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto, 2002). Additionally, some scholars argue that the cognitive and learning styles of some Black students are largely impacted by the culture (Gay, 2000; Kuykendall, 2004; Sullivan, 2009), and indeed that there are cultural particularities of all ethnic groups (McIntyre, Rosebery, & Gonzalez, 2001).
Leaders in the field of multicultural education have advocated that the underachievement of all students of color comes as a result in the lack of using culturally responsive instruction (Gay, 2000, 2013; Banks & Banks, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995; Nieto, 2001). Therefore, in addition to CRP as a mode of multicultural education, PBE is the final pedagogy that I will discuss as a method to reach students.

**Place-Based Education**

Place-based education is considered a pedagogy that centers teacher education best practices within learning, teaching, and community (Lowenstein, Grewal, Erkaeva, Nielsen, & Voelker, 2018). Research shows that PBE, when done well, can have a positive impact on student learning, academic performance, behavior, and community involvement (Liberman & Hoody, 1998; Powers, 2004). PBE has also been shown to be an approach with the potential to enhance the school to community relationship by helping students learn how to transform local places and spaces (Gruenewald, 2003). Many scholars have defined PBE which immerses students in their local place drawing from culture, heritage and service (Demarest, 2015; Greenwood, 2008; Martusewicz et al., 2015; Smith & Sobel, 2010). PBE can be defined as an approach to teaching and learning which is hands-on, inquiry-based, contextually embedded, and community-supported approach that occurs in and with a place or community, is about a place or community, and yields benefits for a place or community (Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative, 2018). Moreover, as Putnam (2018) indicates, PBE requires a shift in teachers’ mindsets to a view that is flexible and more open to change, a process whose implementation requires unlearning what has been previously taught and reeducation in a new methodology that considers a shift in disposition and skills. Lowenstein
et al. (2018) have identified three core pedagogical anchors within PBE which are transformative: inquiry-based instruction, connection to place, and informed civic engagement.

The term “place-based education” is used interchangeably throughout the literature with “community-based education,” “place-conscious,” and “critical pedagogies of place” (Theobald, 1997; Sobel, 2004, Greunewald, 2004). Each of these terms is grounded in the overarching concept that links alternate learning environments, such as community and the actual learning space, with the standard classroom format. David Sobel (2005) defined PBE in the following manner:

Place-based education challenges the meaning of education by asking seemingly simple questions: Where am I? What is the nature of this place? What sustains this community? It often employs a process of re-storying, whereby students are asked to respond creatively to stories of their homeground so that, in time, they are able to position themselves, imaginatively and actually, within the continuum of nature and culture in that place. They become part of the community, rather than a passive observer of it. (p. iii)

Building from David Sobel’s (2005) perspective, Kincholoe and Pinar (1991) articulated how place impacts the learning environment:

Place infuses events with values that transcend their capricious distribution in space…. . . . The endurance of place perpetuates hope, not in the static, conservative sense that romanticizes and mythologizes, but in an emancipatory, hopeful sense that accentuates significance, and tragedy. (p. 7)

The significance of place has been assessed in the social science literature. Kinchlo
and Pinar (1991) described place as a space where meaning is made. For example, the school space in its entirety can be described as a collection of materials and resources. But conceived as a place, the school is a cosmos of meaning-making opportunities connecting culture and experience. Kinchloe and Pinar (1991) further argued that a sense of place should provide a “sense of direction and identity that might power individuals to struggle and to endure” (p. 21).

PBE as a term was seen in educational literature in 2002, and since then, there have been contributors who have described how PBE has evolved (Gruenewald & Smith, 2008; Smith & Sobel, 2010; Sugg, 2013; Woodhouse & Knapp, 2000). According to Grunewald (2003b), a critical pedagogy of place “(a) aims to identify, recover and create material spaces and places that teach us how to live well in our total environments (reinhabitation) and (b) identify and change ways of thinking that injure and exploit other people and places (decolonization) (p. 8). Additionally, quantitative and mixed research methods have explored how the main facets of PBE were examined (Greunewald, 2003a, 2003b; Jennings, Swidler, & Koliba, 2005; Powers, 2004). Colvin (2011) and Sugg (2013) provided resources in efforts to explain the use and necessity of PBE within classrooms. Barratt and Barratt Hacking (2011) explored PBE on an international level and determined how widespread the practice is in other countries.

PBE and the core pedagogical anchors are great pedagogical opportunities to reach all learners and learning styles. The classroom is not the only one space in which students learn; learning also happens outside the classroom. PBE can be effective where there are students from diverse backgrounds and where cultural beliefs, language, and learning styles are all considered (Bowers, 2006; Lowenstein & Erkaeva, 2016; Lupinacci & Happel-Parkins,
Through the model of PBE, educational programs such as teacher preparation can develop the best approach to educating students. Students need to be informed and active citizens, and through PBE instruction, students are taught on this holistic level. Lowenstein and Smith (2017) posited that “place- and community-based education—an approach to teaching and learning that provides opportunities to immerse students in the issues—and possibilities for civic engagement—that exist within the context of their own communities” (p. 51). Its benefits include connection to community and care for the environment. There are also measurable curricular benefits and outcomes (Smith & Sobel, 2010).

**Using place-based education as a model in teacher education.** In general, PBE has been used as a model to advance school reform agendas (Place-based Education Evaluation Collaborative 2010; Sobel, 2005). Although PBE is gaining national recognition, there is still a need for teacher preparation programs that include this model as an instructional methodology (Lowenstein et al., 2018). Lowenstein and colleagues (2018) have, attempted to synthesize the literature on teaching practices in PBE into three pedagogical orientations—student-centered inquiry, connection to place, and informed civic engagement. Teacher preparation programs could potentially use the three pedagogical anchors, outlined by Lowenstein and colleagues in PBE to shape their programs. Student-centered inquiry means that the process and content of teacher preparation coursework should include key components such as basing instruction on questions and curiosity, reflection, democratic dialog, and situating complex issues of social and ecological justice within a cultural, historical, and community context (Lowenstein et al., 2018). Connection to place means
considering how the teacher helps to connect students and issues they are concerned about to community assets, relationships, and strengths. Community and its entwined interpersonal relationships supports the connection to place (Lowenstein et al., 2018). Informed civic engagement reiterates the Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative definition of PBE, which emphasizes that students cannot learn about a community or be actively engaged in a community and not take away how important it is to involve themselves in civic actions within that community (Lowenstein et al., 2018). For teacher preparation programs to enact a place-based approach, teacher candidates must experience these anchor practices in their own learning in powerful ways. They must not only learn about PBE in the abstract but must themselves experience their professors modeling these approaches in practice with them.

The formation of community partnerships is critical to the enactment of PBE and is a dimension of all three anchors. Lowenstein and Smith (2017) offered six tips on forming community partnerships: (a) identify relevant coalitions and networks, (b) let students help, (c) be aware of the kind of partnerships you are forming, (d) discuss teaching goals and processes with your partners, (e) anchor your inquiry in student civic engagements, and (f) just jump in. Each tip aligns this work as a place-based model. For example, to encourage and maintain conversations and cultivate relationships with students, it is important that place-based educators know where community collaborations happen. To encourage student participation, teachers can assign students the task of knowing the places and spaces where community work happens and bringing that to the classroom. By using PBE as a model, students also learn how to form these connections. Students are taught how to form partnerships, how to build and identify community strengths, and how to expand their role from the classroom to the community as a worker or partner. For example, a field experience
might be planned around ideas generated by students. It is essential to create and cultivate reciprocal relationships and partnerships to benefit both the school and the entity (Poulou, 2017). Making lessons tangible and ensuring that students understand the civic responsibilities we all have to our communities would create a wonderful learning space.

The Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative (GLSI) also has guiding principles for PBE. Their principles focus on PBE that involves issues of environmental stewardship. These are to (a) situate environmental learning and stewardship in the places students live, grow, and play; (b) equip students to understand how all humans in various ways, affect and are affected by the natural environment, and that the community’s environmental resources, laws, beliefs, and perspectives influence and are influenced by broader physical and social systems; (c) build your place-based stewardship education effort out of rigorous experiential learning, support it with appropriate teaching practices, and integrate it into your local educational system; (d) cultivate collaborative, mutually beneficial school-community partnerships; (e) explore local environmental issues over a period of weeks or months, with sufficient time for all parts of the inquiry cycle and relationship development, and offer opportunities to repeat the process over the years of schooling and; (f) deliver meaningful benefits to the local environment and the community through PBSE. Each guiding principle either sets the focus, develops the foundation, deepens the impact, or develops skills for participation and democratic practices (GLSI, 2018).

Lowenstein and Smith’s (2017) final tip for the formation of community partnerships is an important one—the notion of just starting somewhere; although it may not be perfect, it will be a starting point. To that end, constructing community partnerships is essential to catapulting true progression. Enos and Morton (2003) defined transactional partnership as
surrounding an agreement on completing a project. A transformational partnership is willing to make positive change in both the community and organization while allowing uncertainty and meaning to authentically lead the direction and outcome of a project. Finally, Lowenstein and Erkaeva (2016) suggested that in order to form the best partnerships, those that ultimately bring cultural change, it is important to resist a one-size-fits-all approach (p. 4).

One question that arises from the literature on PBE is how the above-described pedagogical anchors and guiding principles might be used to shape learning objects and learning processes within teacher preparation programs. How can PBE be integrated into existing courses? How might it be used to shape capstone student teaching experiences so that they ask teacher candidates to form community partnerships? How can teacher education programs help candidates to understand and get practice with creating place-based projects that can be used to leverage student motivation and understanding? How might teacher preparation programs give candidates opportunities to engage civically and learn how to connect their teaching to community issues?

Julia Putman (2018), the principal of the James and Grace Lee Boggs School, a place-based school in Detroit, was asked to write a white paper for Eastern Michigan University on the skills and dispositions necessary for beginning place-based educators. She asserted that to be effective in implementing place-based education, educators should align their core beliefs with PBE and that undergraduate teacher preparation programs could play a powerful role in fostering this alignment. First, people need to be able to feel a sense of belonging within their own respective communities (Putnam, 2018). Educators themselves should experience a sense of belonging and community before they go into teaching, because if someone goes into the teaching profession looking for a community or a sense of belonging, they will not
have the skillset to develop it and help sustain it for their own students (Putnam, 2018; Smith & Sobel, 2010). They also must have a sense of purpose and a voice to carry out tasks or goals (Putnam, 2018; Smith & Sobel, 2010). Furthermore, beginning teachers should have the knowledge and skills to be productive members within their own communities (Putnam, 2018; Smith & Sobel, 2010). An additional core belief is that people need to experience joy within their own learning environments (Putnam, 2018). An effective place-based educator also recognizes that schools are not only for self-gain but also for teaching students that they have a responsibility to care for their own communities (Putman, 2018).
Overlaps between place-based education and culturally responsive pedagogy.

Scholars discussed above have shared the importance of considering local space as a place to support learning opportunities for all students (Boggs, 2011; Demarest, 2015; Greenwood, 2013; Lowenstein et al., 2018; Martusewicz et al., 2015; Putman, 2018; Smith & Sobel, 2010; Sobel, 2005). PBE emphasizes creating communities of belonging and membership to the community and that creates the potential for addressing the needs of Black children (Boutte & Johnson, 2014). Lowenstein et al. (2018) described PBE for youth as an “opportunity to shape their realities and determine the course of their learning as they build their capacities as community leaders” (p.9). Trinidad (2011) explored how a place-based-driven curriculum cultivated the sociopolitical development of young people. Although her research is not based in schools, it informs questions surrounding the principles of critical place-based pedagogy that are addressed by students in the classroom (Trinidad, 2011). Her work conceptualizes the use of critical Indigenous pedagogy for Native Hawaiian students and supports students engaging in local activism. Critical indigenous pedagogies of place are grounded in the Native epistemologies and through a sense of community are nurtured.

Lee (2006), looking at critical emancipatory pedagogy of place (CEPP) of Native Canadian students over a seven-week program, found that through the place-based program, students displayed an increase in their motivation and their critical reflection. Garcia and Shirley (2012) shared the experience of working with Native tribal communities in Arizona. They argue that schools should be treated as sacred spaces where the curriculum is molded by the indigenous knowledge of the tribal community along with the culture (Garcia & Shirley, 2012). This research also suggests the need for CEPP and the need for a place-based
indigenous curriculum. It highlighted how the use of CEPP prompted students to seek additional knowledge from elders and to explore life histories and language. Through this research, students eventually formulated and posed questions and concerns surrounding hegemony (Garcia & Shirley, 2012). Here we see more of a focus of PBE, but there is a connection to CRP because of the emphasis on the tribal community and culture and the connection to the sacred place.

Uline and Kensler (2017) described green schools and a practice called whole school sustainability (WSS) as a rapidly growing phenomena in K-12 education which focuses on sustainability-focused framework and practice to this work. The work by Kensler and Uline (2015, 2017) indicate schools impact the health of the local and global socio-ecological communities. In 2017 there were 1,872 certified and 2,193 registered Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), K-12 school projects (U.S. Green Building Council [USGBC], 2017a, 2017b). Additionally there are 735 Eco-Schools which span across 45 states and the District of Columbia (National Wildlife Federation [NWF], 2016). The Green Schools Alliance membership is increasing along with the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School awardees (Uline & Kensler, 2017). The green school model increases student engagement and community engagement. Here we see more of a focus of PBE but there is a connection to CRP overlap because both student engagement which includes their culture and their own communities. PBE leaders and administration are critical to students becoming educated on sustainable practices (Sobel, Gentile, & Bocko, 2014). For example, “[f]ormal educational leaders, including school district superintendents, school principals, and other district level administrators, play especially important roles, because they serve as
gatekeepers of change; they facilitate or impede change efforts” (Kensler & Uline, 2014, p. 20).

Lupinacci, Lowenstein, Burke, and Lazarowicz (2017) shed light on the challenges we are facing including the humanitarian crises, the impact of climate change and the concern for democracy. They posed the following questions:

Who/what benefits and who/what suffers unjustly in connection with the knowledge(s) and action(s) shaping what is—and historically has constituted—Education for Sustainability? Specifically, we ask how do concepts like equity and environmental justice demand the full attention of educators and educational leaders committed to social justice and sustainability? (p.27)

We are experiencing a social suffering. There are 7.4 billion people in this world and there are 700 million people living in poverty (United Nations, 2016). There is a need for environmental justice work which provides insight on the destructive practices that are prevalent in marginalized communities (Lupinacci, 2017). One destructive occurrence happened in my hometown Flint, Michigan, around 2015, and the water system drew water from the local polluted river, which exposed residents to lead. What Flint experienced was an injustice and those types of destructive occurrences impact communities greatly (Lupinacci, 2017).

Finally, to frame how PBE can be seen in action, Telda (1995) posed the following questions to examine the practices used to instruct Black children:

We need to regularly ask ourselves, “Are my actions/thoughts/motives beneficial? . . . If the community knew my thoughts/actions/motives, what would they say? If the earth, the plants, animals, birds, fish and insects could speak, what would they say
about our/my relation with them? Have our/my actions been beneficial to them? (p. 23).

PBE considers the entire student and focuses in on the student’s community and community members and it does not discredit either contributions. Culturally responsive pedagogy supports the learning and instructional approach to support holistic academic performance (Perry, Steele, & Hillard, 2003). In theory, the pedagogical stance of PBE is well aligned to core components of CRP. However, there is a need in the literature to explicitly connect PBE and CRP as well to conduct descriptive studies of teacher education programs and exploratory studies of such program’s influence on teacher candidates’ understandings of CRP and how to teach black students.

Banks (2004) advocated for social action. Further, Emdin (2016), and Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2010) are all moving in a direction of using community as the classroom and are advocating that teachers should learn about their students through civic community aspects and through civic engagement. Although these scholars do not use the actual phrase “place-based education,” there is substantial overlap, especially within the anchors. Santone’s (2019) book *Reframing the Curriculum: Design for Social and Sustainability* seeks to connect PBE and CRP in its aim to understand challenges posed to educators, and it provides insight on connecting to curriculum through social justice. In the text, Santone explores how curriculum and pedagogy are visible in actual classroom practices and delves into the “hidden curriculum.” The hidden curriculum refers to the concepts, beliefs, norms, values or the like that students receive in school unintentionally (Santone, 2019). She encourages teachers to look at the intersections of democratic education, PBE, and CRT and to facilitate using those structures. She deeply explores “what is at stake,”
“what’s at stake in our curriculum,” and “changing the story: curriculum design with the stakes in mind” (p. 4). Santone states that the book “refutes the idea that teaching through an equity lens is political. Equal opportunity is not a controversial issue; it’s in the Constitution. Educators must advocate for equity” (p. 4). PBE and CRP overlap in their goals, components, and processes.

Therefore, I hypothesize that if teacher preparation programs embody a PBE framework, CRP outcomes would be attained.

**PBE Framework and CRP Outcomes**

In this section, I have reviewed the literature on anti-Blackness, CRP, and PBE to frame this study. My research intends to provide an understanding in the context of teacher preparation on anti-Blackness, the need for cultural competency, and the benefits of implementing CRP as a method to understand best practices for student success and to promote high academic performance. Anti-Blackness, CRP, and PBE all deal with the ethnically diverse student. There is a connection between CRP, along with multicultural education, and PBE because most of that work emphasizes social justice and the voice of the students. Both approaches focus on the cultural assets and strengths of culturally diverse students. PBE, however, strongly emphasizes community partnership and understanding the social and ecological context of place. As pedagogies, CRP and PBE could be situated in dialogs about anti-Blackness and serve as a best-practice model within teacher preparation programs. Scant research shows the intersection of anti-Blackness, CRP, and PBE. Pointing to the critical need for such research in the field, Christopher Emdin (2016) offered the following poignant recollection:

I was preparing these white educator to teach. As the colors of the sky slowly
deepened, I thought again about the follow-up questions the teachers had asked: How do we get disinterested students to care about themselves and their education? Why are our students not excited about learning? Why aren’t they adjusting well to the rules of school? Why are they underperforming academically? These questions were remarkably similar to the ones the mostly white teachers in my workshops in urban areas like New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles routinely asked me. . . . I had done my best to address the teachers’ questions carefully and consider their evident frustrations. In an effort to not offend, I steered clear of the elephant in the room—that is, the very obvious racial and ethnic differences between these mostly white teachers and their mostly Indigenous American students. Instead I shared a number of teaching strategies that I know from experience worked for all students. I mentioned hands-on activities and guided inquiry in science, real-life application and modeling in mathematics, and ways to incorporate writing across the curriculum. (pp. 2–3).

McCollough (2000) asserted that many Black students experience several forms of marginalization in the education system. Often, Black students’ way of communicating, body language, and demeanor are misinterpreted. This is because of the many stereotypes associated with Black people coupled with teachers lack of cultural competency and their being unprepared to reach all students (Delpit, 1995). Since teacher preparation is so key to this project, I ask a fundamental question: What changes in teacher education preparation programs could assist underprepared teachers who teach Black students and could PBE be the vehicle for such teacher preparation? The next chapter will expound on the conceptual framework in which this research will be situated.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Through this study, I explored how a teacher education program equipped preservice teachers to teach Black students. Understanding the perceptions of both program participants and program developers/instructors’ experiences, will be useful for other teacher education programs to improve their program structure. Essentially, I tried to better understand how program participants learned and made meaning of their own learning. To improve practice, educational research needs to draw upon the context in which the activities happen and how the participants made meaning. Qualitative research methods best meet these needs.

According to Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995), African American students tend to do best through culturally relevant teaching. This means that students must (a) have experience with academic success, (b) develop and maintain cultural competence, and (c) have a deep understanding or critical consciousness with which to challenge the status quo of society.

This chapter provides the purpose, research design, method, data collection, and data analysis process of my study. The central questions in this study will build upon identifying the readiness and level of preparedness of current students and alumni after matriculating through a teacher preparation program. Because this study is focused on the internal perceptions and understandings of this demographic, a qualitative mini case study approach emerged as a sufficient method of inquiry.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine how a teacher preparation program prepared preservice teacher education students to teach Black students through a place-based approach. This study examined how a place-based teacher preparation program incorporated
theories, models, and instructional practices that have been identified as best practices for teaching Black students.

Three exploratory questions guided this study:

1. How does a place- and community-based teacher preparation program inform teacher candidates’ preparation for teaching Black students?
2. How do instructors and program developers within the program describe their approach for preparing teacher candidates to teach Black students?
3. How do teacher candidates and alumni describe their preparation for teaching Black students?

This chapter outlines the research design, participant selection, setting, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures.

To answer these research questions, I used qualitative methods for data collection and analysis that included participant interviewing, which was the central data collection procedure. Qualitative methodology was used to “help . . . understand the attitudes and behaviors of people with their natural, social and cultural contexts” (Jocelon & O’Dell, 2005, as cited in Valdez Noel, 2006, p. 72; Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Interviews are one of the richest sources of data in case studies. Thus, I used semi-structured interviews with focus questions designed to explore the experiences of a teacher preparation program (Hays, 2004). According to Hays (2004), one of the richest data sources in case studies are interviews; hence, semi-structured interviews were used in this study to illuminate how current or alumni of the teacher preparation program made meaning of their educational experience while in the teacher preparation program. Additionally, open-ended interview questions led to conversations with rich content, which led the study.
Research Design

In this qualitative study, I used multiple embedded (mini) case study as the research method and approach. The reason I chose to do a mini case study was simply because case studies are typically used to understand or gain insight on a phenomena that has been unexamined (Yin, 1994, 2008). I chose the qualitative method because the flexibility of qualitative research designs was best suited to the nature of my research questions (Lichtman, 2006; Robson, 2011). Additionally, qualitative research is inductive, and because of the questions, I wanted to be able to construct and reconstruct my research design if necessary. I developed questions to be asked during the interviews, which also allowed for open-ended questions to be asked. Through the interviews, I was able to determine some patterns and similarities, especially regarding teaching methods learned through the teacher preparation program.

I compared each participant’s experience within the program and his or her interpretation of how culturally responsive he or she was as an educator. Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) explained how an effective teacher is one who has a pedagogical understanding that goes beyond basic steps to address the academic needs of students, especially African American students, through culturally relevant teaching.

To investigate the experience of those who were current students or alumni of the teacher preparation program, I began the data collecting process by obtaining interviewees’ demographic information. I also obtained demographic information from the program developers. To garner all details necessary, I conducted a total of 14 interviews distributed among the six participants selected for the study (two or three interviews per participant). (see Appendix C)
Case Study

The data collection methods used for case study typically include interviews, observations, and field notes (Schram, 2006). Through the case study approach, the different experiences of students enrolled in a teacher preparation program illuminated major differences and similarities between the participants in the study as it relates to their educational experiences and their level of preparedness upon completing the program.

Case study requires multiple sources of data, which are collected and analyzed by the description of the case, themes of the case, and cross-case themes gathered from data analysis (Merriam, 1998; Schram, 2006; Stake, 1995; Wolcott, 1994, ). A case study is grounded in the triangulation process, which uses more than one source of data or evidence collected within a study to make meaning (Yin, 2009). Stake (1995) argued that case study can be used to examine complex issues, such as a teaching strategy that is successful with certain student populations and could be explored to gain more meaning and understanding through a case study.

With a mini case study approach, I examined and analyzed the data through a different lens. This study was an exploratory case study as I intended to gain a deep understanding of the perceptions of the program developers and the teacher candidate and alumni. Using qualitative research to explore how teacher preparation programs prepare preservice education students to teach Black students, I captured the voices of students who were enrolled in the teacher preparation program, alumni who were enrolled in the teacher preparation program, teacher education professors, the teacher education department head, and the program director, who was also the developer of the teacher preparation program. I also reviewed document artifacts consisting of syllabi of the blocked courses a cornerstone of
the program is a 9-credit block of courses, schedules of the blocked courses, unit plans from participants, course reflections of students, and program write ups.

To investigate the participants’ backgrounds, I began the data collection process by obtaining demographic information from all six participants via a questionnaire that solicited information about their teaching background and educational experiences. The interviews were conducted after receiving the completed questionnaires. I used an interview protocol to determine (a) how their experience in the teacher preparation program affected their perception of how their teaching ability; (b) what knowledge and beliefs they held about their teaching practices that they believed were culturally relevant; (c) what courses, specifically through the teacher preparation, program shaped their cultural proficiency; and (d) what experiences they had that impacted their beliefs about culturally relevant pedagogy. During the interview process, the participants were asked about cultural competency, their teaching philosophy, and how well the program prepared them to teach Black students. The questions were non-conclusive of the interview questions, but were inclusive.

**Setting and Site Context**

The research site for this study was Eastern Michigan University (EMU), a public university. EMU is a learning and research institution offering over 200 undergraduate majors and minors and over 150 graduate programs. The student population ranges between 20,000 and 21,000 students. EMU’s mission is to enrich the lives of their diverse community and help to prepare students with skills that will be beneficial to their respective communities locally and globally. The vision of EMU recognizes of student-centered learning, quality programs, and community advocacy.

**Recruitment and Participant Selection**
I recruited the current student or alumni for this study by reaching out via email to determine if they were interested in participating in my study. This approach is considered purposeful sampling. I was provided their information by my advisor. Originally, I was put in contact with over eight students. I was responded to by several teacher preparation students, but some stated the timing was not ideal due to their new teaching assignments. I had three students agree to participate.

I originally intended to interview eight or nine participants, but schedule conflicts and accessibility limited the number of participants included in this study to six. Each of the six participants was either considered a program developer, a student currently in the program, a student in his or her student teaching component of the program, or a recent program graduate. To select the participants, I asked for recommendations of former teacher candidates who embodied the ideals of the program and who demonstrated a deep connection to PBE as a model. Two previous students of the teacher preparation program who met these criteria were recommended by one of the program developers of the teacher preparation program at the university in which the study was conducted. One current student was also recommended the same way. Since I also desired to hear the voice of the department head who supported the development of the program, the department head was also included among the participants. Two additional individuals were recruited as participants: the program director/developer, who had served as a professor within the program (and who is also my advisor and my dissertation chair), and an instructor.

For anonymity of the participants, pseudonyms are used for the student/alumni participants. Due to the newly established program, and the ease with which the program and its developers could be identified, the program developers—Wendy, Ethan, Iman—allowed
me to use their names within my study. Laura, Jake, and David are pseudonyms for teacher candidate and alumni participants. To recruit participants, I reached out to the program director/developer, Ethan (my advisor and my dissertation chair), and he recommended the participants for this study.

Methods of Data Collection

Data was collected over seven months and included the demographic survey along with the qualitative methodologies. The qualitative data collected for this research project was derived from interviews, from which I gathered rich descriptions of detailed experiences and perspectives regarding the teacher preparation program. Each interview was at least 45 minutes and about a week were in between each interview if a follow up was necessary. Artifacts for analysis were also recommended by my advisor. The artifacts analyzed included the syllabi of the 9-credit blocked courses, the PBE program proposed description, a grant application, and two or three course assignments of David, Jake and Laura.

I conducted 14 interviews. The majority of the participants had two interviews. Depending on if additional clarity was needed, follow-up interviews were conducted. Three participants had three interviews (Ethan, David & Laura). Two participants had two interviews (Wendy & Jake), and one participant had one interview (Iman). Iman’s interview lasted over an hour and was extremely descriptive; therefore, a follow-up interview was not needed.

Individual interviews were conducted with the department head, program developers/instructors, and the teacher preparation students and alumni. These individuals were selected because they could provide insight on the research questions that guided my study. This data collection strategy was useful for answering the questions that I asked to determine how
participants made meaning of their experience with the teacher preparation program.

Examples of the questions asked to the program developers: (a) What is the main objective for the courses that you teach?, (b) What instructional methods do you use that you see critical to being a place-based educator, (c) How do you prepare the teacher candidates in your classes and program to teach African American students?, (d) Who teaches the courses that have topics of race, culture and power within the course program?, (e) How diverse is the teaching staff in your department? and (f) Tell me about your experience with placing students in diverse settings? Examples of questions asked to the teacher candidate and alumni were (a) What type of courses did you take in your teacher preparation program to facilitate learning for culturally diverse students, specifically African American students? (a) How might you have felt better prepared by your teacher preparation program? (b) How could they have better prepared you to reach/teach culturally diverse students? (c) What did you learn in your program about PBE and how has this influenced your teaching? The document/artifact review included the current student and alumni reflection, papers, and curriculum unit. I also reviewed the syllabi and the program description of the teacher preparation program. These documents were reviewed because it provided triangulation for the data analysis which included interviews, the syllabi and the assignment of the teacher preparation program students.

**Data analysis.** The data analysis process came from the data collected from artifacts/document; demographic surveys; and formal interviews, which were audio recorded and then transcribed for analysis. I used a case study design to explicitly detail the in-depth descriptions of the teacher preparation program. Using the three research questions as a guide, I analyzed and reviewed the transcriptions of all data obtained from the interviews.
After I obtained the data from the interviews I looked for relationships across the data, and created categories/themes. Codes were repeated by participants, and they formed buckets which then became themes. I coded and categorized each bucket manually. Nine themes emerged from these in-depth exchanges between the program developers and teacher candidates/alumni: community, other mothering, partnership, care, sense of belonging, cultural identity, cultural proficiency, relationship, and place-based education. Five themes emerged from the in-depth exchanges with the teacher candidates and teacher preparation program alumni solely: community, care, cultural proficiency, relationship, and place-based education. Four additional themes that may not have been displayed in all cases emerged from some of the participants’ interviews: strength-based approach, high expectation, voice, and teacher education.

My analytical process was first through conducting interviews and having each interview transcribed (Appendix H). Analysis of collected data was ongoing, and I used a single-case analysis as soon as transcriptions were available. Codes were inductively generated from the participants’ descriptions of the teacher preparation program. Matrices were also constructed from the data and used to identify patterns, comparisons, trends, and paradoxes (Maxwell, 2013). I also coded each transcription and utilized etic codes but also looked for the emic codes that emerged (Pike, 1967). Etic codes emerged from existing literature, my perspective, and my research questions, and emic codes came directly from the voices of the participants. I then I looked across each transcription for recurring patterns of codes. Some of those codes were grouped into buckets and then became themes for this study based on my research questions. Inductive codes emerged from repetitive themes from the participants. The codes were: teacher education, barriers, instructional strategies, student
teaching, educational challenges, school experience, diversity, and preparation. I also used a top-down coding method and had codes identified before the research analysis started. The top-down codes were codes that I went into the research study expecting to see from the data analysis. Those top-down codes were the following: community, caring, other mothering, culturally responsive pedagogy/curriculum, and place-based education.

Each case was reviewed, and I wrote a short interview summary after each interview. Those analytic memos were shared with my critical friend group, which met with me weekly. They did not review the transcriptions but they reviewed my notes where I interpreted the interviews. These memos were shared because when the group reviewed the memos, I received great clarifying questions that helped with my analysis and guarded against bias or misinterpretation. An example of a question that I received was “Did you get that from the data or is that your assumption?” This helped me ensure I was allowing the data to lead me.

Validation of data is achieved by triangulation (Denzin, 1970) of methods and through comparing the individual perspective of each interviewee demographic: department head, program develop/director, instructor, student, and program graduate. After single-case analysis was done, a cross-case analysis then pulled the conceptual framework out from the dominant themes that emerged.

Published materials and interviews of program designers/leaders, course instructors/professors, and survey/interview teacher preparation students were reviewed. The teacher preparation institution’s mission statement was also reviewed. Additionally, the program goals and standards, course syllabi, and teaching materials for the block of classes was reviewed. The data from the study was analyzed to highlight themes through the coding process (Lichtman, 2006).
The process of triangulation included multiple sources utilized to fully understand the experience that the participants shared (Glense, 2006). The multiple sources included interviews, field notes, and documents/artifacts. Peer review and member checking was also essential because it ensured that the participants’ ideas were represented accurately and not distorted by the researcher. Consensual validation, structural corroboration, and referential adequacy are all very important aspects of qualitative research as they ensure accuracy through the study. Consensual validation occurs when the themes from the data analysis match the stories of the participants. Structural corroboration means to collect data in several ways, which triangulate the data (Eisner, 1991). Referential adequacy happens through the literature review, which basically supports or negates the findings of the study. Intersubjectivity is when the details shared about a participant resonate with another person through the findings. When intersubjectivity is established, the qualitative researcher has captured an authentic story (Eisner, 1991).

**Trustworthiness**

I wrote analytic memos after each interview. To guard against my own researcher bias, I also used a critical friend circle. I sent my writing memos and data analysis plan to this circle to obtain feedback. I met with some committee members to discuss my research plan and to ensure that I was approaching the research analysis process accurately. I also sent each completed transcription to each participant to ensure that I captured the interviews accurately and to member check. After writing each participant narrative, I sent the completed narratives to my critical friend circle to ensure that I allowed the data to lead me. I received feedback and questions that helped with my analysis. I also worked with selected committee
members to ensure that the data analysis was captured best. All transcriptions were password protected.

Cohen and Crabtree (2006) referenced Lincoln and Guba’s research on trustworthiness, which identified four main criteria:

1. Credibility—confidence in the “truth” of the findings.
2. Transferability—having the ability to show that the findings have applicability in other contexts.
3. Dependability—having the ability to show that the research findings are consistent and can be duplicated.
4. Conformability—displaying a degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the respondents and not researcher bias, motivation, or interest.

According to Cohen and Crabtree (2006), credibility can be established through triangulation of data, peer debriefing, referential adequacy, and member checking.

The claims made from this study can be trusted because I member checked with each participant. Member checking is most often used in qualitative research and is a quality control process in which the researcher aims to ensure accuracy of the recorded interview (Coffey & Atkins, 1996; Doyle, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To that end, I sent each transcription to each participant for his or her review. I only proceeded with analysis if the transcriptions were approved by the participant. This was another measure that I used in my capacity as a researcher to guard against researcher bias.
Researcher Positionality

As a Black woman who was a student in a K-12 classroom, I enter this work in several ways. Because I can recall what worked well for me during my own education, and with my intrinsic understanding of Black culture, my identity is an asset to this research project. Participants may have felt comfortable sharing their own beliefs since I am a part of the Black community and I can intrinsically understand the lived experiences of being Black in America and can see a deeper meaning of the stories that they shared. My interviews with instructors were informed by my experiences as a doctoral candidate, teacher educator, and former instructor. Being a former teacher assistant to a doctoral-level urban education course in the teacher education department also helped me understand the pedagogical approaches that could be used with students who attended schools in urban areas. My identity informed the document review because I conducted syllabi audits as a success center coordinator, which added to my critical eye in understanding the content of these documents. I also served as an executive committee member for a university, and my understanding of how to assess academic performance was essential to this work. It was my duty to assist “at-promise” students and provide them a success plan of action to move forward in their academic pursuits (Swadener, 1995). In addition, the lived experiences that I bring to the work are assets. Critical reflexivity is allowing the process of self-reflecting to happen as the researcher to allow each participant stories to be revealed. Through the critical reflexivity listed above, my sentiments as the researcher do not tamper with their stories. I am a Black female who is closely attached to the focus of educational experiences of Black students and teacher instructional methods therefore it was necessary for me as the researcher to to manage my positionality, subjectivity and reflectivity. I monitored myself during this entire
research process due to close social proximity to the topic. To that end, I account for both the asset of this and the liability. Culturally, I was in tune and familiar with the Black experience; however, I did keep a research diary with my thoughts to ensure I did not make claims based on personal sentiments and past experiences.

As well as being an asset, my identity may have posed challenges to data collection and analyzing. Although I felt that study participants felt comfortable sharing with me their experience with Black students, I do recognize that my own identity might have posed challenges. Because I am Black, some of my participants may not have shared their true emotions regarding their experience with Black students so as not to offend me. Also, I do believe that my own racial discrimination or negative schooling experience could have imposed a challenge by virtue of my critical view of the educational system and my feeling that some of my own teachers were not prepared to teach or interact with me decades ago.

Confidentiality

As the principal investigator, I had sole access to the study data. The interviews that were conducted were audio recorded, and 10 were transcribed by an external transcribing company for data analysis purpose. Four of the interviews were transcribed by me for data analysis purpose. I member checked and provided each participant a transcript of the recording. The participants reviewed the transcripts and made minimal corrections, which ensured that I had captured their stories accurately. I kept all documents in a locked file. Upon transcription completion, I destroyed all audio recordings. I took extensive field notes during interviews and when I reviewed the document artifacts. Upon request, the findings of the entire study were sent to the participants. The protocol for protecting participants was
explained before the study began, and confidentiality was key. All informed consent forms were obtained prior to any interviews being conducted at the front end of the study.
Chapter 4: Program Description and Development

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the developmental phases the program. This chapter is a description of the chapter. The place-based Secondary Teacher Preparation program has been in its developmental stages for the past several years. Due to this development, the program has experienced several phases of growth. At first the program consisted of three blocked courses, and now those courses along with others are an extension of the PBE pathway at Eastern Michigan University. The blocked courses consisted of a curriculum methods course, along with a school-based practicum and a social foundations course (Lowenstein, Grewal, Erkaeva, Nielssen, & Voelker, 2018). The blocked courses provided those instructors leverage to meet with their students from 9:00 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. twice a week (Lowenstein, et al., 2018). Those three blocked courses provided flexibility and the instruction was based on the needs of the teacher candidates (Lowenstein, et al., 2018).

The official launching of the official entire program was Fall 2019. The program has been evolving over time and each student or alumni participant in this research experienced a different phase of this program. There has been a total of three phases towards the full establishment of the program. The first phase included the three blocked courses taught by one professor. The second phase included a school partnership and team teaching. The third phase included more partnerships and the development of a place-based office in the college of education. Post all phases there is now progression towards full program establishment.

During each phase, there are three specific individuals who received funding through the John W. Porter Distinguished Chair in Urban Education designation, which was pivotal in the full program establishment. The John W. Porter Distinguished Chair in Urban Education was named in honor of one of Eastern Michigan University’s former presidents and the state
of Michigan’s superintendent of public instruction. It is the first endowed chair in the College of Education at EMU and was largely funded by both the C. S. Mott Foundation and the McGregor Foundation (John W. Porter Distinguished Chair in Urban Education, 2019).

In this chapter, document/artifact analysis of the program description draft and past course syllabi were included. Additionally, those who assisted with moving the program toward full program establishment were included in this section as well. There are sections describing the program developer, the teacher education department head, and an instructor of the PBEpathway. This chapter outlines the inception, evolution, and highlight the future hopes for the teacher preparation program.

**Participants**

Wendy currently serves as the department head and was a John W. Porter Distinguished Chair. She has been one of the individuals to push the development of the full place-based teacher preparation program. Ethan is the program director and also served as an instructor in the beginning phases of the development of the program, including the blocked courses. He also was a John W. Porter Distinguished Chair. Iman is a full-time instructor within the teacher education department and also served as the John W. Porter Distinguished Chair. These three have worked tirelessly together to establish the place-based teacher preparation program.

Laura is currently a student within the program and has experienced the third phase of the program. Jake is a graduate of the program, has experienced the second phase of the program development, and is currently teaching on the East Coast. David experienced the first phase of the blocked courses and is currently teaching in the Midwest. To conceptualize
the phases of the program, the program development chapter will provide in a depth review of each phase.

**Department Head**

Wendy is in her early 50’s and holds a doctorate in curriculum and instruction. She has been in higher education since 1994 and at her current university since 2000. Wendy seemed extremely excited each time we spoke. She wore a warm smile each time we met and spoke with such passion as she reflected and chronicled her experiences. She considers herself a teacher leader because, she affirmed, “I am a teacher at heart”.

Wendy is the department head of the teacher education department. Wendy was the director of student teaching for four years prior to her current role as department head. She recalled:

The reason I actually stepped into that role after being just, not just but a faculty member, was I wanted actually to be thinking about that connecting our final culminating capstone experience for all our students going through the program; back into our department, so that there actually was real coherence across the program, which means that you have to have some programmatic alignment, you have to have conversation; open communication. So one of the things I did worked pretty intentionally on was remaining a faculty member, while I was director of student teaching. I would come to all of the faculty meetings. I would have regular conversations with all the people who were teaching all the classes, because I wanted to know about the students as they were matriculating through the program early on, we started, paying close attention to students who might have any challenges, or struggles while they are going through the program.
When I asked Wendy to clarify her role in the program she responded:

I actually helped to support moving to the program creation. I have not taught in the blocked section that Ethan has been part of for a number of years. I have taught my own version of a blocked class. Yeah, so I’ve come along the journey with Ethan and Iman.

Wendy also shared along with being an individual supporting the program creation she also taught a course. She stated:

So, I taught Curriculum 305. Practicum 305 and I taught it in collaboration, with [a professor] who taught the EPS Assessment, the 340 assessment class, so two days a week we would be out for the whole school day, all day with a group of our EMU preservice teachers. The goal of the blocked course, were actually to think about the relationship with students, understanding their context, learning a lot about adolescence [through] a human development lens and then thinking about how does that inform planning, instruction and assessment of students given what we know about them in a specific school context.

Dedicated to being a teacher leader and encouraging students, she is constantly pushing for the school community notion. Wendy seemed to discuss passionately regarding her actions with students but she also spoke passionately regarding her interactions with her fellow colleagues. She stated:

I reluctantly identify as an administrator, I am not a scheduler, although I will schedule to advance other interest but what I really care about is how we are first creating a holding environment that really does create a sense of community and
belonging for our students while they are here; but that it’s significant that they feel part of something truly like amazing. So that instructional piece is all about making amazing happen in all those phases in which students are coming through our program. And then I am always thinking about as they exit; while there is a space between which is when they are out in the field and were building relationships with cooperating teachers and school administrators, and building our network and that way thinking about where are our students going? and what are they learning out in the field?

Wendy continued to share about how she interpreted the preparedness of their students once they entered their field and as they situated their selves within the community:

How is what we are doing as part of our program aligned with what they are experiencing out in the field? What do we need to learn to do what we do better? I don’t mean better in the sense of; in the interest of all the students with whom we are serving or working. I’m never caught up with the idea that better is in terms of some other external measure. It’s truly about the context in which our graduates are going into. So, what does it mean for those students in that environment, and for those educators in that environment? There is a whole range of different schools, classrooms, districts, and are we actually preparing our educators for the students and communities that they are going into, or they are already a member of, is the other part and that’s like a blind spot too.

She continued: “I see now that we are moving towards, a more shared space, in terms of teacher preparation. There is more work to be done”.

Wendy also shared about the structure of the overall teacher preparation program currently and when she was asked if a cultural competence component was included within the program she quickly responded:

Oh no…no… so, we have supervisors who worked with the student teachers, but I wouldn’t say they are really courses going on while they are student teaching. They are mostly out in the field. Any leverage you are going to have is going to happen while they are going through the program, and then when they are out in the field they are out full time for the most part. They might be taking a class or two. The supervisors hold seminars and they are talking about things like classroom management, and you know putting resumes together, completing or culminating assessment. I don’t think, I mean unless there are situations that emerge while they are in their context, which could happen, the difference between like that and like what happens when they are with Ethan out in the field for several days, I mean, like that’s where you’re going to open up people to look at who they are, what their values are, what actually their behaviors are with other people.

Wendy continued and shared about student teaching placement. When asked if the program aimed to place students in culturally diverse settings she responded, “I would say, that is probably in all honesty, that is not the top criteria for placement.” She explained:

I don’t know if you know the process here, but they identify three preferences so, at that point we are trying to usually accommodate the student’s requests, and that’s an interesting moment; and I love your question because we have found that students who have gone through this fellowship program or through like Ethan’s class would request a context where they feel they have been prepped for. Right? Many of our
students because they are often working to pay to go to school, they are moving home for student teaching. So, wherever home is, it’s probably going to be setting the stage for where they are going to put their preferences for student teaching. So, if they are from Detroit, they want to go to Detroit. If they are from any other, yeah. If, secondary they cannot return to their high school just because it’s been too short of a time, but other than that they are typically going home. So, if you take our demographics then you know where they are going.

Wendy also shared some aspects department wide which they could improve in overall, she shared:

I think one of the things that we can do better is actually to commit ourselves to creating a much more inclusive diverse learning community. I would like to see us moving away from the idea of courses being in contained pods where I mean very little is share pushed into that space or pushed out of it. Those seem to be happening all around, but people seem to come to campus, go to class, and then leave. I would love it to be much more fluent. I would love for there to be much greater diversity amount students and faculty and all of instructional staff. I would like to see space where our students can easily hang out and learn together, and not just sleep on the floor.

Wendy was such a joy to interview. She seemed excited and very thoughtful. She gave off warm characteristics; she was compassionate and loving. She seemed extremely passionate in her responses and often stated “You are asking some good questions” or “You got me thinking” or “These are tough questions”.
I appreciated that she was so open and honest. She has an excellent vision for the future of the program. What I most enjoyed about Wendy was her ability to communicate so genuinely. Her comment about being reluctantly called an administrator was powerful; I was shocked at this. She really had a deep yearning to make the teacher preparation program better and help students join a community of learning. She seemed to have intentionally talked to faculty and staff to understand how to make the most immediate changes. I so enjoyed hearing her story.

**Program Developer/Instructor**

Ethan discussed the inception of the program very poignantly, and he shared his affiliation with a community organization. Ethan has been working with the Southeast Michigan Stewardship Coalition (SEMIS) for 11 years. The SEMIS Coalition is a hub of the Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative (GLSI), which was developed in 2007. GLSI provides support for PBE and experiential learning opportunities throughout the state of Michigan (Southeast Michigan Stewardship Coalition, 2019). The SEMIS coalition is considered the hub organization in southeast Michigan. The SEMIS coalition maintains partnerships, which includes over 30 schools and over 32 community organizations (Southeast Michigan Stewardship Coalition, 2019). Ethan serves as the Director of the SEMIS coalition. He shared:

We have been working for eleven years now [with SEMIS] in schools with teachers and community educators, and youth in south east Michigan, mostly Detroit, and now we are focusing on Detroit and Ypsilanti, and we also have some schools in Ann Arbor and Bloomfield Hills, and some other places in the area [so] we have learned
quite a lot about how to structure teacher professional learning environments for place-based educators. But we have worked primarily with practicing teachers. He continued to share insight about the actual program development. He explained:

It literally started with me, blocking a curriculum course, a practicum course and the social foundations course in that phase one of program development. It was that block of classes I taught all three classes, by myself [and] I situated those classes in SEMIS coalition school in Detroit, where we met so for example [David] was in that first phase. So really all he had was me and those three combined courses. I would say in the second phase I received the John C. Porter Urban Education [Distinguished Chair] it was a grant from the College of Education and the goal of that grant was to create a fellowship, for faculty and staff who were interested in place-based education and the goal of that was to sort of generate capacity to build capacity to, build on those block of classes, and to ultimately create a program. At that point we had no idea [of] what it was going to look like. So, we were just sort of building on the energy that was existing and Iman Grewal was part of that fellowship she was one of the fellows in that program and she and I had known each other for a very long time but we had never really worked closely together and place-based education just resonated with her, she was like “this is it; I’m totally all in” and [so] she started to make changes to her human development course and that was the course that our candidates take right before they take the block of classes that I had created. The other thing that happened is that; it was a lot to teach those three courses on my own and it's not always so great for the students either to have the same professor (laughter). So, I began to team teach the course in that second phase when we were at
Detroit Institute of Technology. That's where [Jake] was, you know [that was] the cohort that he was in. So I began to teach that with a doctoral student in eco justice; her specialty is eco justice education.

When I asked about the vision of the program Ethan stated:

We have worked with K-12 teachers in their schools and so about five years ago I started to think about what it would look like to apply the same philosophy and the same methods within undergraduate teacher preparation?

He continued to passionately and carefully share about the original thoughts about the inception of the program:

What would it look like if we started to shift into undergraduate teacher preparation?

So, part of the vision is that, as you know, systems change in education [and that] is really complex, and there are so many different pieces. Instructional reform almost never works at a broad scale. So, if you do a systems map and you’re looking at; what do teachers actually need to engage their students in really rich community teaching and learning? It takes quite a lot of knowledge, right on the part of the teacher. The other piece of the vision is a firm belief that this is the kind of education that we need right now in this time, in our place at this point of the world history, and I used to be pretty mild as an advocate in terms of this approach, but I really believe that this is the approach that we need to be focusing on right now.

Ethan shared the reason of using a Place-Based approach for the program. He explained:

In many urban schools where youth can be disconnected from [their] community and can also internalize really negative messages society sends them about
themselv
es in their communities. Place-based education is a method to provide youth, especially those who have been; I actually changed my language here I used to say disengaged students and now I am trying to say students who have been disengaged from school students that schools have disengaged. If you think about cultural proficiency, to get outside of your own self as a cultural being and to become aware of your own biases and also be able to take somebody else's perspective. You have to be immersed (laughter) in the cultural milieu that the students are in right? So it's almost kind of ridiculous that we expect people to develop linguistic diversity or develop code switching abilities or develop an understanding of their own biases without immersing themselves in community right it's kind of like a no brainer (laughter). Like if I want to learn Spanish. I could try to learn Spanish, I mean I took like what like 10 years of Spanish, in school [and] I still couldn't speak Spanish, until I went to a Spanish speaking country right and was immersed in the in the language and in the culture. So it's very hard to develop cultural proficiency when you're not situated within a community and in different kinds of communities.

Ethan continued to share about the idea to help teach our teachers to teach students how to be active and engaged citizens of their own respective communities. Through the discussion he sincerely communicated his commitment to ensure that future teachers are well equipped to help students develop into their best selves. He explained:

Place-based education, as we practice it, is an approach that integrates issues of social and ecological justice we are at a point in our world’s history and we face multiple and interconnected social and ecological crises as well as significant social crisis. Unless we help to prepare youth to be caring contributors to community within that
context and empower them to address the significant social and ecological problems that we face, then we are done as a country and we’re done as a world. So that’s part of the urgency too, [and] behind why we need this kind of education right now.

Ethan humbly retold the whole intent regarding the type of graduates he hoped the program would help develop:

One of the hopes is that the teacher candidates experience [learning] in a way that is connected to community in very deep ways [so] by the time they graduate there is sort of no going back. They have already experienced what it’s like and seen the power of what that feels like to engage in place-based education. A second hope is that a place-based education is a strength-based approach you know [and] when place-based education is done well, it flips teachers’ mindsets from a deficit view of community in their students to a strength-based asset based view of their students and communities.

To teach the teacher preparation students how to view their students with a strength-based approach, Ethan shared about how some teachers could shift their outlook about their own students:

So that they are [not] looking [at] their students as being problematic, and that the communities are filled with deficit of abusing food or [that] communities are poor, [or that] people don’t care about the community in those communities, parents don’t care; there’s lots of deficit views. Also in teaching teachers can say, how am I going to address my students’ problems? Whereas strength-based view says, what strengths do my students have? What knowledge do they have? What are their passions, what are their interests? Where is their wisdom in this community? Where is their
knowledge and wisdom that parents have and then how do we use those strengths to address problems, because there are significant problems in [our] communities and, young people do have issues that they face. But it’s very different to approach those problems from saying that we all have strengths and let’s use our strengths together. The other idea behind the strength-based approach is that no one individual can succeed on their own, that’s kind of a myth, an individualistic myth, and so how can we sort of come together as a community and pull all [of] our strengths together, [since] each of us has different strengths. How do we combine those strengths so that all of us can be supported and successful?

Ethan continued to share about the human development course Iman taught. He indicated:

She then began to integrate place-based education as a way of teaching that course and so she developed a strong partnership so that getting the students out into the community in that course and integrating more ideas about place-based education [in] that course. So, then it became possible for somebody to have both, both Iman course and the block of courses sequentially. We could tell that there was a big difference when they had both of our courses sequentially, that the students just were coming out and much more powerful and learning so much more. And when we situated the course at Detroit Institute of Technology in that second phase, that's also what we started to bring all of the resources that SEMIS [coalition] had to provide to the students in those courses at Detroit Institute of Technology. There was an incredibly powerful group of student leaders at a teacher who had been in SEMIS [coalition] for many years and we included those student leaders in as teachers of our students. So, we would meet with them during lunch, [and] they would tell us about their life as
students they would talk about their place-based projects [that] they were doing in the community. They would invite my students to take part in community activities and activities that they were doing. The teachers also took on a real mentor role with my students so they would also talk about all of the amazing things that they were doing [and] the challenges that they faced working in an under resourced school. At that point, also another example of how we brought in SEMIS resources, is we involved, students in the place-based activities that were happening at the school.

He shared about a field day experience of his students which was rooted in the place-based activity:

So I think that's the first or second day we were at DIT [Detroit Institute of Technology] with our students. We had this huge field experience planned for all of the ninth or tenth graders in the entire school. So, our students also had the[opportunity] to directly experience what it looks like to facilitate place-based and community-based experiences and they sort of took on that role as facilitators and honestly, like, we just forced them to jump right in. You know, they just jumped right in! (laughter) and I think the experience was challenging for them [at first] but also very rewarding and they were able to develop extremely close [and] lasting relationships with some of the students at DIT, and with the teachers. I think that was an ingredient that was really deeply impactful was especially in terms of cultural proficiency that they were able to see the incredible strengths that the students brought in spite of all those challenges, and all of the amazing things that they were able to do in the community [and] they were [also] able to see all of the incredible challenges that students face from not having enough food to eat, [to] not having
access to water, or their parents working two jobs and still not being able to make rent. So I think that that student leadership piece is pretty huge.

Ethan shared about an experience from a high school with his students in the blocked course:

We started going to Bloomfield Hills, and Bill would show us around Bloomfield Hills high school, which is incredible, you know you walk in and there's literally a fireplace. Every four classes are clustered, and they each have their own little cafeteria that students could walk out of class anytime and eat. We did that in order to show the incredible inequity is that that exists. There's also amazing things that they're doing Bloomfield Hills High School around issues of race and equity. Bill started us into a discussion around what they saw as the similarities and differences between the two environments and also this question about what it means to be White, what it means to be a White teacher and what it means to be White in our society. That discussion had such incredible power because the students were located in place, and were able to see experientially and feel experientially what it felt like, and what they saw in those two different places with those community partners.

Ethan shared about the fellowship which assisted the development of the program:

“We got a grant they got a grant that included us to form a fellowship program that focused on youth voice and youth adult partnerships, how to create youth adult partnerships.” The grant that Ethan made reference to includes the result of partnering with the Neutral Zone, SEMIS Coalition, and Eastern Michigan University. The Neutral Zone started in 1998 and is a nationally recognized arts and leadership space that engages over 500 high school aged students on an annual basis. One of the pillars of the Neutral Zone is how teens have control
regarding how their own time is spent and how they successfully collaborate with adults on
decision making and problem solving.

He continued to share about the partnerships that assisted the development:
Continuing to build those partnerships and formalizing relationships that had already
been started by SEMIS [coalition] and then initiating some new relationships, like
Iman did with 826 Michigan. The other thing that happened in that time period was a
commitment from the dean's office. So, I received the Porter Chair. One year the
following year Iman received the porter chair this came with this came with $50,000
each year to support program development, and then the following year we brought in
Wendy Burke, who's now the department head and she was the third year of [the]
Porter Chair. So we had three continuous years of support of the college [of
education] with significant financial resources. [However] to create what happened
after that first year of the fellowship, we had these faculty staff fellowships, that
evolved into creating what we call learning community; place-based learning
community and that involves both our students, faculty, staff, and folks that usually
are not part of these conversations like folks in advising in college of ed admissions.
One of the strange things [about] EMU [College of Education] is that we're separate
from the College of Arts and Sciences. But the College of Arts and Sciences is where
the content methods courses are like English methods, social studies methods and so
we started to involve folks from across [campus]. Anybody who was involved in
teacher preparation we created a community a learning community that had place-
based education at the center of it. And [then] we started to discuss what would it
look like to develop a formal program. So those three years of college of education
support were critical for us to build that community out and now there's quite a few people who are interested in contributing. The important thing there too was that our students were at the table we were sort of walking the walk. You know our students were at the table in creating the program because we were committed to creating a program using the values of student voice.

He continued:

Let me also say that for many years, because we have a very strong eco justice education program at EMU at the Masters level and also because Rebecca Martusewicz, who was one of the founders of SEMIS [coalition] and Johnny Lupunaci who was another founder member, [and] teacher member who was a lecture here [EMU], developed a social foundations course that had an eco-justice focus to it. So that's when I combine three courses during the first phase I had never taught that social foundations course before, but I was able to take what they had developed and adapted and because it had an eco-justice focus and was very strongly rooted in that and because it was so aligned to what we do at SEMIS that it that provided a huge amount of power for this analysis of both social issues of social and ecological justice combined.

When Ethan was asked about the program development and the time it took, he shared:

It took 10 years altogether you know, it took SEMIS generating the knowledge of how to do this kind of work. And then, five years ago, was the turn of the bend in the road of leveraging all that knowledge and all those relationships back into undergraduate teacher preparation.
Ethan also shared what kept him dedicating his time to the full program establishment:

I think I see the power that it has, in terms of what's what K-12 students can do. I see the power that it has to transform communities and the power to create communities of love and belonging; and there was no going back after that for me (laughter). I will no longer teach in any other way than using a place-based approach, including, including the doctoral course that I teach and expanding this idea that teachers are not only in the classroom but teachers are also in the community and they’re neighbors and they’re family members and youth are teachers. So this idea that teaching is not something, [it is not] who we are, it's something that we do; we're all teachers we're all learners. And when we started doing this work with our teacher candidates they were able to develop [and] grow so much more powerfully and so much more quickly than if they were just reading about it in a textbook.

In addition to the full program establishment, Ethan shared about additional developmental aspects. He shared:

After the three years of the Porter Chair and involving professors and students and teacher candidates and so on in those discussions we now have a very robust students for place-based education student association that was formed after phase two. Then in the following years, because we were involving our students in the creation of the program in the place-based learning community that student organization has really taken off. And a lot because of the efforts of Iman who has kind of done a lot of mentoring with students. I think that's the other thing that happened as we were going along in when Iman became part of the planning team. I think she brought in this human development perspective; she engages in other mothering. Iman plays a role
as an other mother, and does it very expertly with students of color, and also students in poverty. There's a couple ways that she does that. She makes sure she's both nurturing and firm, so she will nurture students in her course they know that they could come to her for everything to discuss anything whether it's not about not having enough to eat or whether they're having trouble with their courses, but she's also firm in her expectations; she's relentless. There's no barrier that the student is facing that she will not help the student, get past that barrier over a long period of time and she's also very flexible; she just shows students a lot of love. So students will come to her and talk to her for hours about their situation and she maintains these relationships over a long period of time. So just to give you an example of that is right now, there's a student who, you know, came out of one of the first times that she taught the place-based course, who was deeply in debt to EMU [and] a school had already hired him as a community liaison and the school said oh my gosh this person is an amazing person we want him to be a teacher in the school but he has to get his teaching certification. But the [student] had all of these barriers to work through, you know, student debt, figuring out how to finish these courses. Right now, she's put together a circle of support of ten people around him, to make sure that he gets past the barriers that he faces.

He continued to share specifics about the program once it is fully established. He explained:

“When it's fully established she'll [Iman] be the coordinator of the program. My role will be as a core member of the program.”

Ethan continued to share what supported the full establishment of the program:
The other thing that we did last year, is that we also created an office for place-based education in the College of Education! A sense that you get from the development is that we're just plowing forward, there was no funding attached to that office for place-based education. We got a room, we got the deans permission, we slapped a sign on the door. All right, office of place-based education is now open, yes so (laughter) we're sort of like stepping into this without having the full resources to and we're imagining a kind of teacher preparation that's completely different than the way it normally is and we're going there. No matter what is it our way, and I think you have to do that. I think if you feel constrained by the system as it is the system will crush you. Because higher ed is structured in a very hierarchical way, and the boxes that we've created everything from faculty culture to how courses are to how we work with students, or, you know, how we build community with students is all reinforced by these structures that are sort of pushing us in the opposite direction so you kind of have to imagine a different way and then you just have to walk into it. And so you know so Paulo Freire, and Miles Horton from the Highlander folk school had this phrase, you know, we make the road by walking. And so it's kind of that, that idea that we make the road by walking in the road does not exist. (laughter) We're going to make the road by walking.

Ethan shared more about the progress and student organization:

It is very much looking at the strengths of the relationships and the partnerships and the relationships with the young people and then sort of moving into the seeing what emerges from year to year, and always pushing to the next to the next level. So, you know, a couple weeks ago, the students for place based education hosted their first
student led conference at EMU which was a huge deal. I think there were over 100 people at that conference and it was led completely by students and Iman played a large of role in sort of advising, but they lead the conference themselves and so we've also, you know, we created that office for place based education.

He continued:

They're starting to create that space everything from having a fridge with food. Changing what's on the walls. So this other idea about place based education is you have to change the physical place, and, then that comes back and changes you. So, you know, so having young people having the teacher candidates and their voice sort of physically present in in the department of teacher education is about changing the culture of what we're doing.

He explained:

You can imagine what we're trying to do is create a continuum of support from high school through practicing teacher, and lining up the partnerships and the relationships so that there's no gap in teacher support and in belonging to a transformational community so the idea, as we've been developing this program is that we start to immerse our candidates in, in SEMIS and the Great Lakes stewardship initiative and to develop relationships with practicing teachers are doing place based education while they're still in the undergraduate program our candidates also volunteer for our community forum and go to the community forum. And so they see you know it's really hard to be a place based educator right now in our schools, especially in under resourced schools right where it's the pressures are test prep and, and where a lot of the environments are highly chaotic still amazing things going on but highly chaotic.
He shared about the program design:

It's really important as part of our program design that our teachers see that it's possible to do this [and] we're not just like talking about something that isn't possible. It's very possible and to develop relationships with practicing teachers so that they start to see how teachers who are teaching, engage with place-based education in teaching.

Ethan continued to share about the program's first graduates, which was in Fall 2018, and it was three of them. The received a notation on their transcript which indicates that they have completed the place-based program. The developers did not wait until the formal launch of the program, he shared:

We're going to create a sequence of experiences and when we feel comfortable [enough] that those experiences lead [our] students to candidates [and] beginning knowledge of place-based education are powerful in a very different way than other candidates, we're going to create a criteria for them to receive that notation on their transcript.

The ceremony was what Ethan stated was “very moving and each candidate to give a short speech.” The families were also invited and they were given an opportunity to speak about the changing they saw in their teacher candidate.

I continued and asked Ethan about the challenges he faced with the program establishment:

It's challenging to for a lot of folks to be in that emergent space for a long period of time, it's just challenging. I think it's challenging at this point, [because] the majority of the program generation has been a lot of the work has been done by three of us,
you know by Wendy, Iman and myself. That's challenging to be at an institution where there's not more resources [and] that we don't have a larger team. So, we're at a really critical point in our department where there's a huge number of retirements but there's also the university because we're [a] working class university in the state of Michigan and state of Michigan has defunded us systematically over the last 30 years; there's not a lot of faculty hiring. There's not a lot of resources in the university; we're not a University of Michigan with a $10 billion dollar endowment. So that's been really challenging because we all wear a lot of hats! I wear the hat of both SEMIS [coalition] director [and] I've also been working in the in the statewide organization [in] GLSI I play a leadership role. And there's this and then there's working with doc students (laughter), and teaching (laughter). I think that that's been really challenging for that not to take a toll on our health, honestly. So, it's kind of similar to K-12 in that way, where the system is kind of designed for you to burn (laughter).

Ethan also shared about the lapse of funding. He shared:

There's a gap right now between the money coming (laughter) and us doing the work so that's what's been challenging is that these last couple of years and especially as we're launching the new program, we're in a little bit of that moment where we're like plowing ahead but we don't yet have the money [or the] resources in hand to fully actualize it but we're going ahead based on faith that those [resources] will come. I think the other thing that's happening is [that] we've developed a statewide reputation for the innovative work we're doing so there's a lot of people who are starting to notice us, and look to us for, and also nationally I think for a different way of doing teacher preparation.
He continued to share about the challenging aspect of funding and he stated:

Grace Lee Boggs had a saying. She said, I'm probably not going to get a completely right, but you know she would say like, what's the reward for good work? More work! (Laughter)

This concept is what provided Ethan and the program developers the ability to stay in motion.

The development of the program is extensive and the full establishment of the program has taken over ten years of consistent work. He finally shared the current and final phase of the program and he explained:

We're at the phase right now where we're formalizing some of these core partnerships, with the Bright Futures program, and they've been involved in the place-based learning community so that [is] one of the things we want to do is find a part of that college survival piece is that our students need meaningful employment while they're here. We want to provide them with employment opportunities that'll build their skills as urban educators. Bright futures has already hired some of our students to work in their after school programs, and we're going to tighten up that relationship. We have a relationship, we're tightening up with the WISD. So how do we coordinate with the Intermediate School District in terms of teacher support? We've been in conversations with the United Way of Washtenaw County, [and] we're formalizing a partnership with Ypsilanti schools [and] we will be working to formalize a partnership with Detroit Public Schools community district [and continue] formalizing a partnership with the Bogg school and the Bogg center and of course the Neutral Zone that's been part of this for a while now.
He shared more about the program:

So in terms of the program design and [the] launch we're going to be coming out with a group of core partners who are all in this together for this common goal. I think that's sort of this final piece in terms of these phases of launching the program is to formalize these partnerships. Then the office for place-based education role is going to be to coordinate the efforts of the place-based at programs, SEMIS [coalition], the Bogg school and other schools who are committed to place-based education and these other community partners. They'll be gathering these folks together to talk about how to enact and promote place-based education in the region [and] at EMU and then yet advocate for place-based education. Then we're also going to be applying for some big funding, because we've proven that we're far enough along that we could start applying for some big funding.

Ethan provided the historical perspective of the full program establishment and outlined how the program would continue to thrive off university support, community partnerships and collaboration. Each phase displayed how important it was to form positive relationships to assist with the main goal. I had an opportunity to serve on the advisory board for the SEMIS coalition around 2012 and 2013 thus I can recall being a part of the conversations surrounding partnerships, professional development and the need for place-based education. Ethan has been a true advocate for this work since I originally met him.

**Program Developer/Instructor**

Iman is in her early 50’s holds a doctorate in educational studies. She has been in higher education since the early 90’s and has over 25 years of teaching experience. She has taught K-graduate educational levels. More specifically, she has been at Eastern Michigan
University for about 20 years, and she was an international student from India. Iman became a Waldorf-trained educator and came to Eastern Michigan University as a part-time instructor. In 2003, she became a full-time instructor. Iman seemed extremely passionate when we spoke regarding the full establishment of the place-based education program. Iman explained:

I graduated five years ago in 2014. Ethan was the Porter chair [that fall]. I was the Porter chair 2016 a year after having graduated and feeling like if I could do my PhD I could do about anything in life. But Ethan and I ran into each other and he was the Porter chair that year, and he said Iman do you want to be a faculty fellow? I was doing some work around place-based education and I asked what that meant and he said you’ll figure it out. And in the years to come. I've come to realize it's very difficult to give elevator speech on placed-based education because it's an experience; you have to experience it to really understand it and you have to experience it in many different ways.

She shared about her dedication toward the full place-based teacher preparation program:

You know when you find something that really speaks to you There's that aha moment that happens and you feel that instant affinity to something. And that's exactly what happened. As soon as I started to get place-based education it seemed to have some elements of Steiner Waldorf education and completely sort of encapsulated with my teaching philosophy and purpose and practices around education work. And then the following year I was the porter chair and Ethan I talked
a little bit started to start a team up; a little informally at that point. During my porter chairship I was in the presence of place-based education on Eastern campus. Starting the place-based learning community was one of the things that was important to bring together, what had become isolated parts of the teacher preparation program. The students would come to us in their third year. So, our first goal was to bring more integration, and a sense of community in the teacher preparation program. Ethan had started thinking about this teacher preparation pathway when he was a Porter Chair and then when I became the Porter Chair. We started to dig much deeper into that and involve the whole place-based learning community.

Iman carefully explained the phase of the program at that time:

So at that point the place-based learning community met once a month. It included students, and then sort of faculty from college of Ed and College of Arts and Sciences, administrative staff, advisors and together we started to create a vision for this program, and to us it was really important that we have students voice giving shape. So, towards the end of my porter chair we had our end of the year meeting off campus at a park, and an African American male student [that] I've been working with and had a close relationship [shared] that one of the most important things for him, that he had not received any of his classes so far was a sense of acknowledgement that he was a human being and deserved dignity.

That comment from her former student propelled the program establishment. She recalled:

And to me, this was so powerful in the sense of acknowledgement and equity has been for me, the anchors of shaping this program. And I'm very very vocal at every
gathering to be able to notice who's at the table and who's missing, and how important it is to have the voices of Black and brown educators and students shaping this program because they're so absent from teaching and from, decision making and so I have said very verbally this is a fantastic place [because] we have an opportunity to shape a program. We have so much autonomy in giving shape to this program.

Iman described the program's intent:

And so, what we're doing is developing this program really to create a sense of community from freshman year onwards. So, when we're recruiting we're very careful to recruit students that have a strong representation, both in ethnicity, race, income, sexual orientation, age, you know, things that are sort of countered to traditional students, right, so that we have a large diversity.

She continued:

We're going to offer a lot of relationship-based experiences. So, each student is going to have a peer mentor and a faculty mentor. We're trying to keep Fridays free and we will give [the students] $1,000 stipend so they can keep their Fridays free, and the Fridays will be focused on nontraditional learning and learning in depth. We're going to do a lot of community building activities so they [will] go to communities and learn how to be part of the community, we’ll go hiking we will do fun things together, we're going to cook together (laughter). We're going to have study sessions [so] that our students can all sit down together, and we can address any concerns or habits around studying, note taking, understanding homework, scheduling, financial planning; how [to] manage your money, how [to] make decisions or priorities, [and] communication. So, this is this really is a very, community centered program [that]
we are trying to do. So, the first two three years, students will be taking their own set
of classes that will be coming together every Friday for a community learning and
gathering space. What is most important for me [it is] really sad to say that we have to
rethink what teacher preparation is! To me, a teacher preparation is a long-term
engagement with students starting from freshman year of university, all the way to
when they become teachers, and when the have professional development. So, to me,
to think about the eastern teacher preparation program, the Bogg School, [and]
SEMIS as one long process. The significant change only happens with long term
engagement and support.

Iman reiterated how the place-based program would engage the students longer than
just a short period of time which she identified as problematic:

So that’s the problem with the way [the] university course [is]; I only get them for
four months and then they move on. And so with this program that we're building
we're hoping with a longer term engagement they leave our program with a really
large toolbox [and] with skills and ideas and ways to model place-based [education]
because the students [that] are in the place-based [and] neutral zone fellowship
programs have a larger toolbox because we meet for three hours and it's completely
focused on active learning, restorative practice, identity development, student adult
relationships, [and] student voice. All [of] those factors and models are taught and
added to their toolbox. So, the more opportunities we have for them to be engaged in
place based work the larger their toolset. Currently with my class one semester four
months; the effectiveness is there but limited.
Iman also described some of the challenges experienced with the program establishments:

Because what we realized is that the vision we have for teacher preparation is an antithesis of the structure of the university. Right…everything is so defined and fixed, and sequential and the model we're creating is collaborative, it is adaptable, it is complex, it's interdisciplinary; for literally five seconds Ethan and I even envisioned quitting the university and starting [a] teacher preparation program (laughter); it was only five seconds (more laughter). But then we are committed to creating the program within the university structure. So, the biggest challenge has been essentially the entire structure of the university. Because it is hierarchical [and] we're trying to create a democratic space, its strict, it's sequential and we're trying to create collaboration and adaptability. There are very strict rules on who can teach [because of ] the union, [and] how decisions are made; again, for us it's a collaboration [and] student voice is important. The second biggest issue we run into is funding support and there is three of us working on this. I am the only brown person on this team. I'm the one who does not have the prestige, or the security of a tenure track position I'm still an instructor. So, my oftentimes unknown space of my worth gets judged by my positioning. We're also limited in financial support we were very lucky for the first three years of course development. Ethan, then I and then Wendy had Porter chair funding. But the Porter funding finished last year and this year we've had no funding at all. We've been working with the university to help us find grants to fund our work.
Additionally, Iman shared some great components of the program establishment. She stated, “We’ve also gotten a lot of support let’s not all be negative. The engagement office, the foundation people, the porter chairs are very essential to the creation of this program.”

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the development of this program. The themes that emerged were: community, othermothering, sense of belonging, cultural identity, cultural proficiency, partnerships, and place-based education. All three, Ethan, Wendy, and Iman were key in the program development, creation, and of a now fully established program. They seem to each believe in the holistic preparation of students and in the place-based model, which emphasizes that partnership is central. The dedication that they each outwardly displayed regarding student success and student learning is visible through the establishment. None of them had much direction, nor structure. The program was developed as they progressed, and it grew in the same manner. After interviewing Wendy, Ethan, and Iman, I could understand the story of how the place-based education teacher preparation program came about. All three were committed to education and believed in the place-based model. The next chapter will provide details surrounding the cross-cutting themes and include analysis.
Chapter 5: Program Development Cross-Cutting Themes

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an analysis of the program developers' experiences and perceptions described in chapter 4. The themes that emerged were: community, othermothering, sense of belonging, cultural identity, cultural proficiency, relationships, and place-based education.

Community

Community is defined as a place that a person resides or a group of people with common interests. Communities are filled with a wealth of knowledge and insight. Local communities offer multiple learning opportunities and education should be the conduit between the community and liberation (Jefferson, Gutierrez, & Silverstein, 2018), Buras, Ferrare, and Apple (2013) explained the importance of community:

Many of the most intense debates over public education pertain to governance and competing conceptions of the role of the state and civil society in decision-making processes. Needless to say, it is time to rethink the dominant strategies for improving public education. We must build new networks – community-based as well as digital ones – to defend a vision of schooling rooted in equity and responsive to community needs rather than the interests of billionaires and well-heeled education managers. (p. 2)

This section will shed light on how community was essential for the program development.

Wendy shared how she believed school community happens:

And so how does that happen? It happens when you feel not only that you matter, so that your identity is connected, but that what you are doing has some sense of purpose
in a larger connection, like connected to a common good. Right? We would become part of that school community; we would do, be whatever was happening in that school.

She continued to explain how connecting with students within the community is essential and also not an extremely difficult task:

Geesh… I think that’s where we have so messed up! It doesn’t cost a lot to actually connect with kids and young people and adults; it shouldn’t cost a lot. I guess [the] philosophical standing around what the purpose of education is, which is to be in community with others to as learners [and] to explore, to advance, to progress. In one way or another around thinking about individually, but also as a community.

Ethan agreed and shared his beliefs of how cultural competence is anchored in building community:

So that is I think often times we are really good at that awareness dimensions. You know you can be aware [and know] that all teachers need to be culturally competent. You can even understand how it impacts students if you are not culturally competent. But if you don’t have the skills to actually build community then; I think that’s typical of teacher educations programs, that they kind of leave at the awareness dimension. Students don’t have the opportunity to practice before they enter the classroom [to] be confident that they know how to build community.

He continued to explain about the ability to build community within the academic semester:

Iman and I are teaching this class right now, and I even don’t use the word, term anymore because like what is a term, like if you serve in your term? A term confines you, a term is temporary. You know, you don’t build community in a term, you know
what I am saying? You don’t build your human capacity in three months, and so even
the language of term is confining in terms of how we think. It requires that you think
about building transformational community and seeing growth as a long-term process
where you actually can’t take out the individual from the collective growth. In other
words, an individual’s growth is dependent on the power of the community’s growth,
and you can’t grow as an individual without others in that community.

Iman recalled a course project that she had her students do which involved them
going out to the community to garner a better understanding on the importance as an
educator learning the community of students. This connects to Ethan’s point about growing
as a community. She shared:

And then a community organizer, who happens to be an art teacher and co-director of
SEMIS, came in and worked on the artistic angle and [to better understand the] social
intelligence of the community they walked [around] and they heard stories [from
members of the community] and they talked to the students and they talked to the
residents, and they took pictures and they noticed how deeply their own deficit
thinking was influencing the meaning that we’re going to the spaces where their
students were living and most impactful was when they talked to the student high
school students who talked about their neighborhoods. At the end of the semester,
each group presented their photo voice project and everyone’s was different because
it gave a lot of opportunity for students to shape this experience, and it was not easy
for them because it seemed to undefined. Let's take all these big concepts and let's
examine what is community? What is deficit thinking? What are your biases? and
how do you get comfortable with being uncomfortable? How do you go out into the community?

A great way to build relationships with students in the classroom is by cultivating community. Wendy shared the importance and the need for community, Ethan shared how building community is necessary for cultural competence, and Iman examined what community was for her students along with the biases associated with community as an assignment captured different perspectives. They all demonstrated how the community must be included in teacher preparation and will better prepare future teachers on a holistic level. They each also modeled how to build community so it could be carried out in the classroom.

**Othermothering**

Othermothering is defined as a “phenomenon in which non-blood related women assume some parenting roles to support biological mothers and their children” (Carter Andrews, Brown, Castro, & Id-Deen, 2019, p.38). Much of the research surrounding othermothering focuses on Black women in higher education (Guiffrida, 2005; Flowers, Scott, Riley, & Palmer, 2015; Mawhinney, 2012). Although othermothering is interconnected to African tradition and was visible through slavery and the Jim Crow era in education, many can display othermothering qualities. All three of the developers shared their way of displaying othermothering.

Wendy shared a component of othermothering:

I think where I see so much promise in place-based education is about bringing people together. To understand and support one another [otherwise] I don’t know why else we’d be here. I am pretty sure that’s this big picture and we are supposed to figure that out. I think that’s my purpose.
Ethan explained his beliefs of othermothering:

I think that's the other thing that happened as we were going along when Iman became part of the planning team. I think she brought in this human development perspective, she engages in othermothering. Iman plays a role as an other mother, and does it very expertly with students of color, and also students in poverty. There's a couple ways that she does that. She provides students in her course, she makes sure she's both nurturing and firm, so she will nurture students in her course they could they know that they could come to her for everything to discuss anything whether it's not about not having enough to eat or whether they're having trouble with their courses, but she's also firm in her expectations, and in her. She's relentless. There's no barrier that the student is facing that she will not help the student, get past that barrier over a long period of time and she's also very flexible and she just shows students a lot of love. So students are will come to her and talk to her for hours about their situation and she maintains these relationships over a long period of time.

Ethan continued to share about Iman and how she had a student who was in debt to EMU; however, he was already offered a job as a community liaison, but he needed to obtain his teaching certification. Iman pulled together 10 supporters to ensure that this student completed his courses and obtained his teaching certification. He continued to share about Iman’s approach:

For Iman, she also engages in othermothering. She is probably one of the people that I have seen who is extremely effective and brilliant in the way that she cares [about] whole students. So anyway, that’s just something that I’ve been thinking about and thinking about how you teach [and] it’s such an important thing,[but] how does that
get learned? The first way that I think that gets learned is you have to see it modeled. And then you have to figure it out for yourself from your own identity what does it look like to othermother?

Additionally, Ethan shared his own outlook:

I am a very female identified mother, identified Jewish man; I would say in dominant Jewish culture, you can’t generalize with anything right, but there is a way in which masculinity functions in Jewish culture where feelings are ok, we are mother identified. You know, there is the strong Jewish mother, and I think I identify as a Jewish mother; I do identify as a Jewish mother. You know in terms of othermothering when I think about how I have worked with students it comes from the cultural space of mothering and caring that I’ve, you know I worry, you know check in with me, call me, I’m going to check in with you. You know, you’re going to eat, how are you feeling? I mean all of that like the art of hospitality, you know? The classroom is a home, you know.

Ethan believed that the way he managed his students was displaying othermothering characteristics.

Iman explained how othermothering impacted one of her students which was the same student Ethan described:

This young man was in my class and was absent a lot, and I started talking to him saying Why are you absent? At the end of the semester he came to me and said Iman I have one question for you. I said what is it? He said why did you care whether I was in class or not? He said, I’ve been to so many classes I just don’t show up and nobody cares. And he gave me a big hug and said thank you for caring and I thought, it felt
good for a moment and so sad to me because it's so signifies how isolating and exclusionary our practices are.

In these reflections, the program developers shared at least one instance regarding othermothering which aided in their student’s success. They all displayed how this type of care for the student enhanced the students experience, which added to their preparedness.

**Sense of Belonging**

Belonging is the feeling that a person experiences when they are in a place that accepts and supports them. Creating inclusive spaces is essential, especially to support positive academic performance.

Wendy recalled:

I want people who are part of the instructional group here, so there’s faculty, and lecturers to also feel that they are part of the community. I’d like it to be more seamless. I’d like to reduce hierarchical relationships among faculty, instructors and students going through the program.

She continued to explain her outlook on the type of experience she desired for students, faculty, and staff:

I want them to feel part of this here. I want to be part of their experience and want them to feel connected to the college. And by college, I mean the whole unit. We were talking about thinking about how we support students in their development, as writers, which is really developing them as learners, throughout the program, and so that it’s really about the whole thing, which for me is also about giving support, creating community, a sense of belonging, yes, all those pieces come together when you say, here are resources, but knowing students are bringing resources. So again
that’s where that hierarchical vision needs to be examined. Because students bring all kinds of gifts. Why don’t we try our best to have students sharing whatever it is that they are interested in, or passionate about, or help them to develop something they are already, ready to do. You know youth programming.

She concluded, describing how a sense of belonging is connected to community:

I think it’s feeling that, I am a part of a community [and] I feel a sense of belonging. I understand and value the other members of that community [and] I also feel understood. On a really personal level I feel I can be myself, my true self.

When Ethan was asked about his commitment to implement the full establishment of the program, he shared very poignantly the process and also connected the desire to also see sense of belonging:

It took 10 years altogether [and] it took SEMIS generating the knowledge of how to do this kind of work. Five years ago, it was the turn of the bend in the road of leveraging all that knowledge and all those relationships back into undergraduate teacher preparation. I think I see the power that it has, in terms of what's what K-12 students can do. I see the power that it has to transform communities and the power to create communities of love and belonging.

Wendy and Ethan both shared insight regarding the sense of belonging. When people feel like they belong, they tend to respond positively to their environments. This is the case for adults and youth alike. Cultivating community sustains an environment where a sense of belonging continues to happen. This concept is necessary for teacher preparation programs as they develop and prepare our future teachers.
Cultural Identity

Cultural identity is how a personal identifies with a specific group. This could be related to national origin, ethnicity, social class, religion or generation. Wendy stated:

Our students come to us as cultural beings. They are already members of community. So how do we also not negate who they are coming [as] into our program, and we stretch as needed, and we think about our community in different ways.

She continued:

I'll say it this way, for someone who came from a relatively diverse community to choose to go to a non-diverse setting and vice-versa [or] they don’t want to, or they don’t prefer [to]. What that says to me is our program did not provide any disruption in their thinking about who they are. You could use that as a strength but somehow, we said ok it’s ok to be you, and you can right

When aiming to support different cultural identities, Wendy described her department:

We still have a very sort of classic national trend here with 96% white female [in the department]. That’s who we are still. [Through] The fellows program we did run into ways for students who don’t fit that model and who actually are minoritized students or who come from a different background than White.

Ethan agreed with Wendy and shared:

The goal [is] that folks stretch themselves from wherever they are, and then also you know that in terms of their own racial [or] cultural identity development, that were able to help them get to the higher phases of that identity development and that looks
different if you are for example a person of color, than if you are a white person. The phases of identity and development look different.

Iman shared her perspective regarding cultural identity:

Let's make the most of it and really understand what it will take to translate a more traditional educational system, K through 16 into one that will allow students that are Black and brown to become interested in teaching but also be able to succeed. I've been thinking about this whole term of students of color, and I've had a huge issue in my head saying, anytime you say students of color and white students were equating a whole large group of students in one category in the white students in one category and we're still sort of comparing the two, why not do away with all terminology and use the same criteria for labeling all students so we say White students so why don’t we say, Black and Brown students Right. It instead [enforces that] there's inequity. Because how we name something signifies so much of or shapes to large extent, practices, and ideologies and values so at this point I'm very dedicated in always noticing the inclusion of Black and Brown students. I also noticed how often, when I have Black and Brown, how isolated they are you know they'll sit by themselves they are reserved and I've noticed, so the student that I have talked about acknowledgement was in my class several years ago, and this is class that I teach now have transformed it so that it's a textbook free test free experience based class.

All three, Wendy, Ethan, and Iman provided insight on how cultural identity plays a huge role in education even on a higher education spectrum which often happens in K-12 as well. Understanding that there are cultural differences which impact students learning should lead teachers on how they present and teach content to their students.
Cultural Proficiency

Cultural proficiency is understanding how cultural identity impacts learning and teaching materials in a culturally centered and relevant manner.

Wendy highlighted aspects of the department and how they are supporting teacher candidates’ preparedness:

One of the things we are doing is actually using a new product in live tech so we can see where students have gone in their field experiences, who they worked with, what assignments they have done, [and] we get a better handle on how they actually had experiences in communities that are different than the ones in which they come from. Some of our students are very well prepared, for at least the place they are going into, but I wouldn’t say I can verify and say that every student or graduate is ready.

Wendy also shared how preservice teachers begin to develop their cultural proficiency through the faculty hired within the department:

You have to hire culturally competent people right …is that part of our matrix? You bet There is a whole thing on that. When we review applications, just because I have been on a number of searches, are we looking for that, absolutely. How do you know that the person that you hire [or] what they’re going to do while they are in that class? I think the only way to do that is to really develop a culture of open practice, where people really do think about collaborative professionalism.

Ethan agreed with Wendy and shared how as students go through the program one of his goals for the program is that those graduating become socially aware. He shared:

I honestly prefer that [socially aware] to cultural competency, because cultural competency, you are either competent or incompetent, and it could easily lead to
some deficit thinking, and it could [also] lead to false ideas, of “oh I’m culturally competent, or you’re not culturally competent.” You lose some nuance there and the way that I define social awareness, it comes out of the developmental psychology, you’re self-aware of your biases and your own assumptions. You are able to take the perspectives of others, who are different than you, you are able to empathize. When I say take somebody else’s perspective you are not inserting yourself that they are when you’re taking that perspective. You are actually trying to learn how the other person sees the world. So I can take my White, upper class self, and think about what if I were an immigrant who was coming in from Mexico, this is how I would think, right, or this is what I would do” But that’s false, that’s false, you’re still seeing the world from your own perspective. So rather than doing that, it requires a tremendous amount of listening and a tremendous amount of taking the initiative to understand how people who are different than you define the world. So, it means reading a lot. It means inserting yourself into cultural community spaces where you’re the only person who might be different in that space to understand, how people, define themselves, communicate amongst themselves. It requires a lot of humility, a lot of I think courage. I mean this for anybody. So, there is self-awareness’, there is other awareness, and then there is the ability to negotiate your perspective with other people’s perspectives, yet in healthy ways. And so that’s what I mean by social awareness.

He also stated how cultural proficiency is not something that you can learn in a short amount of time:
Look at Robert Selman; a scholar [and] he has a book called The Promotion of Social Awareness. So that’s the first is to be and become more human to know how to build community and become a transformative teacher leader to build one’s own social awareness. If you are talking about cultural proficiency then that’s an emergent experience, you know what I mean? You can’t develop cultural proficiency in the abstract. You actually have to be emerged in real relationships and you have to develop relational skills and awareness within the context of real relationships. So, you know in our program we locate our candidates in learning in schools, and in communities, and I think one of the powerful pieces there is that we ask the youth to join us as teachers. So that we ask the youth to speak with our candidates and to talk with them in terms of their own life experience that they have a lot of valuable experience that they can share with our teacher candidates about what their lived experience is like.

Wendy’s outlook on the departments cultural depth was communicated as she shared how one of her goals is to ensure those who are teaching our future educators have cultural proficiency and are knowledgeable about how to use that as a lens teach that in their classrooms. She also shared that the practice of her department ensuring teacher candidates are getting experience in culturally diverse settings. She so eloquently shared the first step in getting students engaged with cultural inclusion is responsibility, and she also shared that the department needs to model this notion:

I am responsible to you, you are responsible to me and my practice then becomes part of my enactment of, you know, my cultural proficiency and competency. Are we
actually preparing our educators for the students and communities that they are going into, or they are already a member of?

Some teachers begin to cultivate their cultural proficiency through their teacher preparation program and especially through their student teaching placement. Through a place-based educational model, cultural proficiency could be enhanced. On a departmental level, Wendy shared how this was one of her focal points in terms of student engagement. On a program level, Ethan made it clear that becoming culturally proficient does not happen over a 16-week course but rather over time while immersed in cultural experiences.

**Place-Based Education**

Place-based education is an instructional method that involves opportunity for experiential learning, service learning, and other forms of community outreach (Dani, 2019; Semken & Freeman, 2008).

Wendy shared about how place-based education was visible in the teacher education department:

We got involved in that initiative and that was a local concern. The students were engaged in it, and we brought in all the students in to [start] thinking about, well what does it mean to support a school project like this? In what ways do we leverage, you know, political capital, social capital, why would we do that as educators? It became a sight for thinking about what it means to become one with the community.

Wendy shared about her outlook on the infrastructure of school and future aspirations regarding that:

Where we no longer say, these are the assignments that you need to do but allow the students to actually have some choice in that and say, “I’d like to do this with a group
of young people, because this is going to help me think about leading a project from start to finish”, that involves learning, [that] involves teaching and it’s changing the whole idea about who’s the teacher.

Wendy continued to offer her outlook on place-based education:

I can just share that the reason I support place-based is because it really gives a name to an approach in a real concrete way, and it’s a way to communicate how we really do center and prioritize relationships as the means for anything. Identity makes it possible actually to have relationships with other people. Both informal and formal learning spaces. So, I think about it both from a sort of a classic traditional education space, and then all the space in between where people are together. Where I see the push backs though without that vision. I’m watching as I see schools try to organize themselves. I see it like [a] very traditional 1950’s model of scripted curriculum, very hieratical relationships among adults and youths. Actually, the hieratical among the clearly identified formal leader of that building. What would it look like if we had more of our students involved in the process of preparing educators of running our programs, of making decisions actually that affect them. Because ultimately I want students to also have that kind of relationship with their future students.

In agreement, Ethan shared:

You know [you should] create classroom learning environments that are safe and inclusive, [but] how [do you] differentiate instruction? You know in order to meet those objectives is you have to use a place-based approach I would argue. So, you actually have to connect to your place in order to develop partnerships with others. The place-based approach actually requires being comfortable with complexity,
which I think is a core you know, a core capacity that our candidates should also have
is being comfortable with the complexity.
Ethan also believed that restructuring the state of education would shift how we
prepare teacher candidates using this model:

The first objective is for my students to be and become more human. Alright, so that
is we live in a time where there are many systems and social economic and political
structures that are dehumanizing. So the first thing that our candidates need to do is,
become aware of those systems and mind sets, and their influence on how the culture
is working through them, and then, then also sort of liberate themselves in terms of
understanding how what Grace Lee Boggs would say in terms of growing our souls.

He continued:

The second one would be that the students actually learn skills in how to build
community. So, that they make a shift from seeing themselves as students, to seeing
themselves as teachers. Then they make a shift from seeing themselves as teacher to
seeing themselves as teacher leaders, and then they make the shift of seeing
themselves as teacher leaders to seeing themselves as transformational teacher leaders
who have both the awareness and the skills to build a caring and just community.

Ethan also shared about how place-based education can be used to assist students in
urban areas:

Place based education is a method to provide youth, especially those who have been. I
actually changed my language here I used to say, um disengaged students and now I
am trying to say students who have been disengaged from school; students that
schools have disengaged. Especially in many urban schools where youth can be
disconnected from community and can also internalize really negative messages about, as society sends them about themselves in their communities. Place based education is an approach that integrates social and ecological, issues of social and ecological justice.

He affirmed:

I will no longer teach in any other way than using a place based approach, including, including the doctoral course, you know, including the doctoral course that I teach and expanding this idea that teachers are not only in the classroom but teachers are also in the community and they’re neighbors and they’re family members and youth are teachers. So this idea that teaching is not something, who we are, it's something that we do, we're all teachers we're all learners. So, teacher preparation is not abstract. It’s what does teacher preparation look like in our time, in our place, and as Grace Lee Boggs would say, you know at our time on the clock of the world, right? Where we are facing incredible environmental crisis where we don’t even know whether the world will exist as we know it in a couple of generations. We are facing incredible social crisis, I’m not arguing that place-based education is the only way to teach, I think this is very important. All I’m arguing is that it’s the most powerful way to teach given the context that we’re in as a society, as a world, as a culture

Iman agreed and shared how she modeled place-based education within her classroom:

I think place-based is way of being it is not a particular thing I do it’s the way I am. So I will give you an example of what I mean by that. The most important thing would be, what I hold most important in my teaching is building relationships. So
every class starts with the community building, I ensure that even in my class of 50 students I know the names of students. I start every class by saying, how was the last few days gone. Do you [have] something to share, and students, almost consistently have said that that's one of the most precious experiences they've had in class is to be able to bring their personal selves into the classroom for us to talk about food and music and movies. We turn on the music and dance occasionally, but doing away with textbooks and test is one other way so I give them a lot of current literature to read. We have a lot of dialogues, I lecture less and they're always group work so with my class of 50 students I divide them up into smaller groups of five students, and they get to know each other and develop a sort of network in the small group. They share contact information and ask questions. We also bring food into the classroom and I always give them time to revise, because I think in place based it is really important for us to believe that learning is a process, you don't teach a concept test it and then move on.

Place-Based education is a much-needed approach on both the higher education level and in K-12 schools. The three developers shared how pertinent this model has been in the advancement of the full program establishment.

**Relationship**

Relationship displays how people or entities are connected. Much of the program establishment was guided through the relationships with community organizations, teachers, schools, and departments across campus. Wendy shared:

I do think it really those anchors where its inquiry driven connection to place and community with some kind of civic mindedness, and all of those aspects of the place-
based and happened when you [have] created relationships that matter. I feel like one of the things we do well here is privilege our relationships with one and other. Would that hold to some metric outside of here? I think the reputation actually shows it does, but that’s, its local you know. It’s not like the national metric that says you know, whatever. I don’t even (laughter) some of that it just noise cause I know actually that the people here care so deeply about our students and what they are doing.

She continued:

Well, you got to know who you are if you are going to be in community with other people really authentically. If you don’t you are kind of putting on a show I think; you’re posturing, you know, and we’ve all seen that. I mean people who you know talk a good game but in reality they don’t socialize with people different than themselves. They’re not comfortable in communities in which, you know they don’t live. I think it’s the cornerstone for how any of us are able to learn about and from one another. So I think even the idea that in order for me to engage in a symbiotic relationship I need to see, hear, understand you. But I also need to be seen, heard and understood. So that is the why we would have to have a relationship in order for us to be in teaching and learning relations within our normal setting. That’s how teaching and learning is possible, I guess that’s what I want to say.

Ethan described a very poignant experience with his students in the blocked courses:

We had this huge field experience plan for all of the ninth or tenth graders in the entire school. So our students also had the experience to directly experience what it looks like to facilitate [a] place based community based experience and they sort of
took on that role as facilitators and honestly we just forced them to jump right in. I think the experience was challenging for them but also very rewarding and they were able to develop extremely close [and] lasting relationships with some of the students at DIT, and with the teachers and I think that was an ingredient that was really deeply impactful especially in terms of cultural proficiency that they were able to see the strengths they were able to see all of the incredible challenges that students face from, you know, not having enough food to eat, not having access to water. Their parents working two jobs and still not being able to make rent. But also the incredible strengths that the students brought in spite of all those challenges, and all of the amazing things that they were able to do in the community. So I think that that student leadership piece is pretty huge.

Iman also agreed that relationships help with sustaining the learning community. She shared of an experience with a student in her classroom:

I've had a close relationship with [my students] wife [who] had grown up homeless, shared her story in my 322 class. So I've had a pretty close relationship [with her] and she shared her experience of what it felt like to what it's been like to be homeless from the age of, I think six and to come to the University and a number of Black and Brown students have gone up to her and said thank you for sharing your story, because in our mind all White students were privileged.

She continued to share about how the student felt comfortable enough to share:

A lot of this [is] you know conversations and experiences, but it took a lot of her to be brave, to be able to share. So, it was is the combination of my asking her and giving her the support and for her to be brave enough to share so when she came into the
blocked course this was a second time of her taking a class with me. The house she
was living in got burned down and whatever few memories she had a mother who
passed away when she was six were gone. When she was in a very difficult space and
we spent a lot of time in my office talking. And then she was open enough to share
what was going on with her life to the class and that changed so deeply, how the
students learned to be with each other. This is not just about concepts, it was about
relationships, it was about care. It was about love and support.

I was once told by one of my mentors that nothing exceeds relationships. I agree and
especially regarding the place-based education teacher preparation program development.
Wendy, Ethan, and Iman displayed deeply rooted relationships in their community, their
organizational commitments, and through multiple partnerships. Iman discussed a couple of
ways that she cultivated relationships within her classroom and with her students.
Establishing relationships deepens teacher development and readiness.

The seven cross-cutting themes include community, othermothering, sense of
belonging, cultural identity, cultural proficiency, relationships, and place-based education.
The program developers made connections between the themes and the program structure.
By uncovering the factors that contributed to their pedagogical approach, I am better able to
understand the need for a place-based education teacher preparation programs.

Wendy, Ethan, and Iman all seemed to be dedicated to the development of the
program but most importantly, they all seemed to model instructional methods that were
place-based and culturally responsive focused. Through the program developers' interviews, I
began to see the intersection of PBE and CRP through each phase of development. For
example, PBE focuses on connection to place, informed civic engagement and inquiry-based
instruction. CRP focuses on educators being intentional, not using grades/tests as the only means to determine academic performance and seeing culture overall as an asset. Wendy alluded to ensuring the teacher candidates were prepared to go into their communities, which is in alignment with being intentional, which is a component of CRP. Ethan shared about understanding how to engage students in their community, which is in alignment with the connection to place and a component of PBE. Iman described the program as a community learning and gathering space and explained how using other topics, such as financial planning and decision-making for example, as critical topics. This is in alignment with CRP because tests and grades are not the only way to determine if a student is learning or not. This displays how the themes from the program developers align with both CRP and PBE. One aspect that did not align so well with CRP was the lack of diversity of the department instructional staff and faculty along with ensuring teacher candidates experienced diverse student teaching placement. Those are two areas where the program could grow and areas where they could push further to advance CRP as a pedagogy for Black students.
Chapter 6: Teacher Candidate/Alumni Findings

In this chapter, I will be discussing the teacher candidate and alumni perception of the teacher preparation program. I will also be discussing cross-cutting themes, which were: community, care, cultural proficiency, relationships, and place-based education. I will also be discussing additional components which were not themes displayed by each teacher candidate or alumni.

Research Continuation of Thematic Analysis

The intent of this qualitative research study was to gain an understanding of the lived experiences of individuals who were or are students the place-based teacher preparation program. The methodology utilized in this research study was mini case study. Through interviews of the six participants, who were recommended by one of the program developers, rich data was collected. Once the interviews were conducted, they were transcribed, coded, and analyzed along with document artifacts. The document artifacts included syllabi and previous assignments of the students/alumni.

The participants included the department head, program developer, instructor, and three students who were recommended by the program developer. Participants were interviewed individually, and the research questions that guided this research were (a) How does a place- and community-based teacher preparation program inform teacher candidates' preparation for teaching Black students? (b) How do instructors within the program describe their approach for preparing teacher candidates to teach Black students? (c) How do teacher candidates describe their preparation for teaching Black students? Through the interviewing process, themes emerged from the responses to the research questions. This chapter will provide the responses of the current student/alumni participants. This chapter is organized
based off the themes that were presented through the data analysis of the teacher candidates and alumni.

**An Introduction to the Program Participants**

**Laura**

Laura was thoughtful and really pulled out some key aspects regarding her experience in the teacher preparation program. She was in her early 30’s and identified as Caucasian/White female and pursuing her teacher’s certification in Spanish and minor in TESOL/ESL. She is a current student in the program and has had one year of teaching experience with 6th and 7th grades, which includes her practicum and student teaching assignment. She mentioned early on in her interview how she was a nontraditional student and experienced some of the teacher preparation courses towards the end of her degree program. She stated:

I am a post Baccalaureate student, and so I first got my degree and said: ‘I’m not going to be a teacher’ because at the time, there weren’t a lot of job opportunities [here in Michigan]. My friends were moving out of state to go teach, and I knew it was just a tough place, and lots of politics. Honestly, there are so many politics, and that’s the main thing that discouraged me from becoming a teacher. So after graduating, I became a missionary as an Americorp member and after my term of service I came back here to Michigan realized ‘hey, I was being paid really well to work with kids at an after school program [and I was] teaching art. I thought about it for a while, and indeed I really wanted to work with kids, and so I went back to school to get my teacher’s certificate.
Laura spoke often about how if teachers have relationships with students the way they interact with them could change. She shared a story about one student which she had through her student teaching experience that stood out to me. She shared:

There is one student in particular who is a very sweet student. I like her very much, and she is African American and she is so smart, so brilliant and I think, like she is misunderstood sometimes in the classroom because she has a higher level of energy and perhaps wants to speak out when it might not be considered appropriate or it’s because of the general constraints of a classroom. I have still been reflecting on that, and for me I have like a different level of patience and I so not see her that way. She’ll get in trouble and sometimes I do not think was necessary but again she’s like, so smart and wants to start, I don’t know how many businesses. She’s a great leader, great writer, [and] she is very intelligent.

Laura called her brilliant; however, this student was labeled as problematic by other educators. This student was Black and was very well advanced, and because of this, she would get bored and complete her work quickly. She, in turn, had some challenges with other teachers in terms of behavior. Laura really explained how that bothered her and that story was so heartfelt. This is when I could see how her goals for instruction were grounded in love and care. Laura shared how she would use this student as a student helper because of her passion, and the student enjoyed that. I wanted to know more about that situation with that student. Honestly, I could not wait to interview her again because what stood out to me vastly was the different perspectives of this student. To me, “that” student is many of our Black students experience with schooling, they are labeled negatively and misinterpreted. Overall, Laura responded to my questions slowly and with great thought.
Jake

Jake was a pleasure interviewing. He was concise, willing, and helpful. He is in his early 30’s and obtained a bachelor’s degree in journalism and holds specialist certification in social studies education. He identifies as a Caucasian/White male, and he is a previous student of the teacher preparation program. Jake has five years in the teaching profession and have taught seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth grades. Jake is currently teaching on the East Coast. He has taught subjects such as history and U.S. history, respectively, in districts located in the Midwest and the east coast post his graduation. Jake shared early on that his fiancé is completing her doctorate, so he told me that he knew how his participation would be helpful. He was responsive and helpful. Throughout our interview, it seemed to me like he deeply cared about his students. I asked him what he thought the characteristics of a quality teacher were, and he shared “Number one would be dedication, and then after that I think in terms of as a person, I think, empathy is one of the biggest ones to me.” He displayed cultural proficiency and social awareness. He explained how his experiences were really in synch with having a desire to connect with his students and that was through getting to know them. He was honest about his experiences and even with his student teaching. He was truthful about the selection of this current district and shared that the selection was based solely on his current personal circumstance and job opportunity.

He seemed to be very caring and self-aware. He mentioned some failures but shared how the teacher preparation program assisted in shaping how to navigate these challenges. For example, Jake passionately shared:

I am just in general, would like to imagine myself as a kind person, and I think what was challenging for me was that I was just too kind with my first year of teaching. I
think I was just almost too empathic. Like sometimes, twelve year old’s need like a firm hand to guide them, and like a firm voice, and I think I was not firm enough. So I think one of my challenges was almost being too kind.

Jake did share how the teacher preparation program assisted him understand how to navigate because he witnessed excellent modeling through his experiences in the blocked courses.

**David**

David is in his early 30’s and has two and a half years of teaching experience. He identifies as a Black male and holds a bachelor’s degree in mathematics education. He seemed extremely energized and excited about education and also about ensuring all students learn. He seemed to have a personal duty to his students because he said many times “I am here for you,” “I won’t give up on you,” or “I believe in you” throughout the interview. David has taught grades spanning from sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, and twelfth, and has taught classes ranging from geometry, calculus, algebra 1 and grade level specific math. He was real, honest, and authentic during his interview. During our time together I often thought “did he really say that?” His remarks were not offensive or inappropriate, but if all teachers were as real and direct as David, the state of education would be better. I counted it such a joy to speak to David as he did not hold back. David shared his own insight about his educational experience. He described his initial interest in education overall:

I went through public schools, through middle school and it was good. I had some good experiences, some bad experiences. I had a lot of caring teachers but I didn’t have a lot of teachers that could relate or looked, like me, and so I often felt as if like things they were asking me to provide things that I didn’t have the resources to do at home and so there was a misunderstanding like regarding my community where we
came from. So I remember that I got put into a reading support class, I’d been reading novels and chapter books from early elementary now I got put in this class, and I’m here and I looked around and I notice with my friends who happen to be all from my neighborhood and happened to be all looking like me. I’m looking around and that was one of those moments that I remember that I’m being taught to do something. I remember thinking “I can teach you how to do this”. After that I went to high school and I had a terrible, terrible, terrible educational experience. I went to a private school and it was terrible, and so, I wanted to do something where I was helping and being a part of helping people and there are so many individuals, and so many families that have so much to offer and they get overlooked because of where they live.

When David was asked what originally sparked his interest in teaching he shared:

I enjoyed working with teenagers at least at my church, I said let me try teaching, and so I went from there.” What really sparked it was those experiences that I had and wanting to provide an alternative for what I had experienced as a student. I really just enjoy just having fun in my classroom and so finding places for students to kind of like, just enjoy themselves and just enjoy the process of learning.

When he spoke about his students, he was so passionate and proud of these young people. For example, David recalled an instance where he gave students a choice on how to take a test in his class: He explained:

Like I’ve gotten so many like incredible, creative things that if you looked at the student, you wouldn’t know like they are able to do these things. If I never ever was like, ‘ok here now it’s on you.’ So, I have gotten students that made me videos. Like
literally made me movies [and] I have gotten students that produced songs, and for me I feel as if they have engaged in their learning because they are able to communicate it in a way that they feel comfortable and passionate about. As opposed to like, obviously, I have to give tests, but that’s not their thing.

That is a compelling approach, but he gave his students choices on their learning environment and how to display what they learned. I appreciated his dedication, and I wondered if he would ever lose his fire or motivation based off the constructs of schooling. On one hand, I don’t think he would ever change his posture. He absolutely loves teaching and loves helping students. Based off his own experiences as a student and the deficit views implied, David shared:

I told them the story how I had a math teacher that told me I wasn’t good at math and I would [never] be good at math. I told them these stories. I’m told them about my perseverance. I told them the things that I had to do. I told them about the mistakes that I had made, and then I tell them that I expect them to make mistakes, [but] we are going to work through them together, because I expect them to get to calculus (laughter).

When he spoke, I thought of the student that Laura mentioned and I saw a parallel comparison. For example, they both explained how their students were essentially labeled by other teachers and explained how they both saw their students is a positive way. He seemed to be so honest. He had a great vision and is an emerging teacher leader. He advocated for his students and empowered all youth that encountered him. David believed, as an educator, he had a duty to his students. He recalled:
Now I feel it’s my duty to disrupt some of these things. I feel like it is my responsibility to no longer be ok with having conversations about not just students but about people without doing our due diligence with seeing the strength and the capabilities that they bring to the table.

His statements were so eloquent to me; that’s teaching, and that is what I consider caring, everything else is secondary. He shared his own place-based use in his instruction. It was powerful.

**Teaching Preparation Program: The Real Deal**

The themes that emerged from the data captured through the participants’ interviewers and course-work artifact analysis centered around their beliefs about instruction and student-to-teacher interaction (*building safe/positive relationships*). The themes shed light on how a place-based teacher preparation approach assists with enhancing academic performance of their Black students through culturally relevant pedagogy. The themes that emerged were community, care, cultural proficiency, relationships, and place-based education.

**Community**

Community is a locale that includes and values people, place, and experience. Each participant agreed on the importance of the community of their students that they taught and how honoring their students’ community.

Laura shared how she believes that community enhances the academic performance of students. She stated:

Having those community building activities and sitting in circles stories will come up and present themselves when there is a comfort to be vulnerable as the students have
worked over time, with the circles process that we were trained in during the fellowship it’s not really about yourself. When you have community in a classroom I think you are able to be more open and vulnerable and self-aware also in terms of expressing things that you wouldn’t typically be comfortable with exploring.

Laura shared:

One of the things I really, really value is community. That everyone in my class knows each other’s names, and really has a deep respect and value for one another, and one another’s opinion of whatever is shared in class. We have legitimate complex problems that need to be solved, and so if we can teach our students how to think and solve complex problems related to inquiry in their community especially, they are going to be able to use that skill to solve the complex problems we’re dealing with today in the world such as global warming and you know the issues with immigration and having enough food for the whole population.

She explained:

But it’s really nice to have that student, like a student driven space where they can really be the facilitators and that’s really empowering, specifically to those that are on the fringes of society or that have commonly not been represented or have not had the voice to voice such things and so they are really empowered by learning, not just from the class and they are also learning how to be a part of the community, and be a positive change in that community.

She shared how learning in the community was impactful:

It is where any school you [don’t] only learn from a textbook let’s say, but you also learn from your community. You go out into your community or your community
may come into the classroom, and you might have an inquiry lesson where you select something in your community that you see or perhaps you want to change in a community.

She shared her desire to ultimately come back to her own community and work in underserved areas: “And be able to move beyond that and work in a more underserved, very low income area and ultimately, I want to give back to my community where I am from.”

Jake agreed and shed light on how also creating a sense of community within the classroom is essential and it is important to ensure this happens first. When school starts, he includes his students in those classroom community expectations. He stated:

I mean I think since school starts in a week, this is what’s on my mind the most is I can do before I can even get like into any sort of content, we do multiple lessons on like expectations and norms for the classroom, and just try to create that sense of community inside the classroom.

He continued:

Because if you can’t relate to community, that the students are in, then you are not going to be able to relate to the students, and they are going to like, sense that disconnect. So, to me it’s important to like, get yourself associated with the place and with the community where you are teaching.

Jake also indicated how he felt it was important to really know where his students background:

I have to try my best to understand where they are coming from, and I try to implement that just by connecting the historical concepts to things that are going on either in their community or things that are happening at a national, like current, news
level that effect mostly like Latina/Latinos in America and try to connect that and connect their heritage to the study of America.

David also concurred that being familiar with students’ community is important along with bringing that community into lessons. He explained how he enjoyed getting the students involved. He shared about a time students wanted to discuss the impact of a hurricane on the west coast. He gracefully shared how he includes his students:

Allowing the students to have that dialog and talk about this part of their community if I [didn’t] provide them a space to speak about things that I would have never known that some of the students were carrying such weight. Because of this like we are in Michigan we are not being affected by it. It’s not raining here, you know we don’t see the flood they have. But they have such a weight because they felt the weight of their community.

Overall, the participants agreed that a sense of community needs to be adopted and considered in classrooms. Being inclusive of community enhances a rich learning environment. Community inclusion also offers opportunities for culturally relevant pedagogy to be brought into the curriculum. When educators include the community into their instruction, it considers that students come to school with prior lived experiences that could impact their learning. This level engagement will lead educators to a better state of education.

Laura and Jake really honed in on community. Laura shared her desire to create this as a community in the classroom, which included respect for one another, as well as bringing outside members of the school who resided in that community into the class to do an inquiry-based lesson. Jake also indicated that if there's no community, oftentimes there is going to be a disconnect within the instruction as well as the learning outcomes. David said that students
must have the space to bring in aspects of their community and to talk about things that may be of concern of them which impact their community. All three of these students saw the importance of community, community work, and community impact and how they should include this component within their instruction. Providing space for students to bring their respective communities in their classrooms is important. It’s also important because it lets the educator know where the students come from because how students live is an important factor of teaching within the classroom.

**Care**

Care is the concern and consideration of someone/something. Laura asserted her sentiments regarding the characteristics of a quality teacher and explained her concerns regarding the problem with educators who don’t care:

A quality teacher is someone first of all who cares, [and who] wants to be there. I think I’ve heard many teachers that don’t seem to have joy in being there. I think that really having that is central focus and intentionality with all of the students.

She shared that it is essential for educators to be compassionate, intentional, and in tune with their students’ emotions. Jake concurred and shared so candidly about his journey about connecting with students in this manner, he stated:

Sometimes I get angry with them as well, but trying as much as I can to show them that their emotions are not only ok, but it’s expected it’s accepted. Like human beings have emotions, and not to just like try to put them in their place when they might want to lash out but to try to tell them “Hey let’s talk about this [and] work through it”.
Jake also explained how he decided to stay in the school district that he is currently in, which also shed light on his care for his students. He asserted:

So I feel like these kids need teachers. They need teachers who are going to be able to hack it. I can hack it, so I should stay there. I want to help these kids. They need help too. I could probably go to a private school, or try to teach outside the city, and my life in terms of the behavioral management might be easier, but I don’t know if I’d be doing as much of a service to students as I am at this school.

Jake shared his outlook on where he teaches currently:

We had a dean of restorative justices and so our school is like at least, at some level attempting to really do restorative justice work with students so less suspensions and more circles and conferences and mediations, and so I think that’s important as well.

Through his caring actions, he continued to share about how he handles his students. He indicated:

I always have my door opened and I am always open for students to come and tell me problems if possible. Like if it’s a[n] abuse issue or something maybe where like therapy may be required, [or] sessions with a counselor are required [I tell them that]. [But] I let them know that its’ 100% just me, like you can talk to me. If you want to come into my room and scream your head off about whatever is going on, cause they are hormonal middle schoolers. Like come in my room if you are angry or if you are frustrated, that’s ok like everyone gets angry and scream about it. It’ll work itself out.

So that’s one way of just trying to connect with the kids and so that “I understand you’re angry, I understand you’re frustrated, that’s ok”. Sometimes I get angry with them as well, but, trying as much as I can to show them that their emotions are not
only ok, but it’s expected it’s accepted. Like human beings have emotions, and not to just like try to put them in their place when they might want to lash out but to try to tell them “Hey let’s talk about this, this work through it”.

He continued to share:

So empathy, I think the standards dedicated to just knowing, like, teaching requires a lot of emotional and like psychological energy and if you aren’t prepared for that, if you aren’t prepared, then I think it is really easy to burn out at least at the school I work at. That’s what I notice of a lot of teachers who you know a lot of teachers from fellowship programs, whether it’s Teach for America or things like that and we have a lot of good ones, but I have definitely noticed that quite a few of the young teachers who come from fellowships are the people who get burned out, and aren’t really prepared mentally and emotionally for what teaching in our neighborhood does, so I think strong mentally and like psychologically and knowing what you’re getting yourself into.

He explained:

I just know that these kids who already have a negative view towards education a lot of times by the time they hit 7th and 8th grade, they need teachers who are going to [be] patient and be dedicated and show that compassion and I think that really stuck with me. After being there for four months as a student teacher, and then staying there as a sub, I didn’t want to leave. I wanted to be with those kids, cause I know that I have the patience and I know that I have the dedication to continue to work with them.
Jake shared about his involvement in the teacher preparation program and the blocked courses he experienced which influenced his decision to teach. He then shared his perception on his administrator:

Like we were talking about some programs don’t offer classes in like diversity and democratic classrooms and democratic societies, and I think that’s one of the main things that just really helped me, and I think that’s why I ended up student teaching. It shares a lot of those exact same values and the principal really cares about them. Or cares about restorative justice, even if it’s not implemented as well as it could, like he clearly cares, and like the fact that he does passes on through admin, to the culture team, then to the teachers, at least in some regard at school caring about those kinds of things.

Jake stated how he enjoys seeing his students happy:

I just love seeing the look at kids’ faces when they are having a good day, whether it’s because of something that is going on in my class, or something that is going on outside of school. I love just seeing them happy, I like seeing them engaged and [I like seeing them] just having a good time. Sometimes it’s in the classroom, sometimes [it’s] out in the field during like recess or whatever. I just love seeing happy twelve year olds.

David affirmed that care can be displayed in multiple ways even through content specific ways. He goes on to explain how he does this especially through summer school and how he teaches math with his students that already may feel defeated. He shared that together they would get through learning the content. He then explained how students are looking for specific educators:
They are looking for someone to love them, and so I think like a model teacher is someone that cares deeply and passionately about their students. They care so deeply and passionately that they will fight for their students.

He continued:

They want someone that will care about them. Someone that loves them, someone that loves them even [though] they know that they are difficult.

David goes on and shares some of the challenges that are based off the constructs of the classroom. He asserted:

The challenging part is the fact that like I feel as that there are limitless amount of opportunities for me to open up the learning space and for me to be able to see them.

David agreed and shared his outlook on his students regarding math achievement. He shared that many students are told that they cannot achieve in math, but he communicated his expectation. For David, care is closely related with having high expectations for students:

I won’t let up on you...I promise you like, I have high expectations of you I think that it’s not enough to just care about and love and fight for your students, but you have to push them beyond what they even think of themselves. I love everyday of what I do, I don’t love all of every day but I do love every day; I really do love it, just because I get to work hard and be just about a part of helping a lot of students that slip.

David shared how many educators are looking at their students with a deficit view:

They are seeing all of the things that these students don’t have and all the things that students can’t do, and they don’t see how much it takes for them to actually get up in the morning and make it to school and how they are way tougher than I am. They are way more capable than I am.
Largely, the participants agreed that to connect with students and to be able to engage them in their learning environments care is primary. In their own way, the participants created opportunities to display their care and enhance their learning communities for their students’ best interest. Jake used the word service to describe his approach to teaching. Laura mentioned that a quality teacher is someone that cares. And through this model of compassion and intentionality, both Laura and Jake shared about the connection with the students that is necessary to sustain a learning environment.

Jake mentioned aspects of restorative justice, which have similarities to place-based education. Restorative justice deals with conflict, offering the students the space to facilitate their own conflict resolve. This displayed how his school aimed to have more circles and less suspensions. Jake had an open-door policy, which displayed the method he used to allow his students access and less of the hierarchical schooling structure, which provides barriers between students and teachers. David also agreed and shared how students that he received, especially teaching in summer school, are oftentimes already in a space of defeat, and students in that circumstance need teachers who care. This section described some of the key components sharpened through the teacher preparation program. All three participants have garnered a sense of care and empathy towards their students, their students’ ability, their students experience, and ultimately, their students learning experience.

**Cultural Proficiency**

Cultural Proficiency is understanding how cultural identity impacts learning and teaching materials in a culturally centered and relevant manner (Banks, 1988; Corwin, 2012). Laura mentioned the need for cultural proficiency in her instructional methods and shared
how should would have appreciated taking a more cultural specific class. She described her piqued interest:

I haven’t taken many undergraduate classes. I know obviously with general gen eds we take literature, but in the grand scheme of literature there, it is mostly White, you know it’s White. So, it would be really interesting to include a different class, specific to African Americans. There’s a terminology I learned this week called culturally responsive instruction and I have a lot of experience with the Latino population as my major is Spanish and perhaps not African American and so I do receive [the] emails asking for if I might be interested in taking an African American studies class, or perhaps literature and if I could have I would have liked to have taken a class like that. I think that’s valuable [for] me as a teacher [to] think of the importance of having that cultural competency so that my students are better in the world. I think it begins with teaching our students; so that they can be culturally aware. So, cultural competency you know first of all it isn’t just about being aware of other cultures, having awareness, not jumping to conclusions.

Laura honestly shared her thoughts about cultural competency. She indicated:

I don’t have a full grasp of what it will [look] like, but I can definitely begin to understand consider and think and imagine the way it [could] look. So, cultural competency first of all it isn’t just about being aware of other cultures, [but about] having awareness [and] not jumping to conclusions. If I can share an example, I was talking to my friend’s roommate and he somehow infamous man Hitler came up in conversation and his roommate he asked if I knew about the swastika. And of course, you know, these things really gross me out. I don’t enjoy talking about them, and he
Laura explained:

That’s very disappointing but we have this awareness and culture. If teachers aren’t able to have culturally competency that’s going to be an issue and there are so many people like that though. I just overheard a teacher this past week on PD day like mention that another teacher would be better off in another district, because the students are all White or something.
When Laura was asked about how teacher preparation programs can assist teachers become socially aware or culturally competent, she explained:

I don’t know the answer to necessarily or how; yeah I really don’t know. I think it honestly begins with the way we cultivate our class, the community and being aware of others in the world beyond just our community [and] being honest with yourself, like if you know have thoughts like even what I just said about the swastika. That was an uncomfortable [experience] saying it.

When asked about the cultural training she gained through the teacher preparation program, she explained:

During student teaching that wasn’t necessarily emphasized in training is in terms of just like working with culturally diverse students. In storytelling, I believe we did that to a [certain] degree. I don’t know if it was specifically presented in that manner, but story telling is a really good way of getting to know students.

Along with cultural proficiency Laura believed that representation was a cultural aspect that is important to consider. She inquired:

Is there someone with a single parent family, are there photos of families with same couple parents, or you know, are there photos of students with different color skins, and even just with students with head scarfs, you know representing the Muslim population

She continued:

In terms of allowing students really to see themselves, places. How the representation is very important, so that they can see themselves definitely, and I think about that a lot with literature in terms of what students read. Now for me with
world languages, students are not necessarily reading the same kind of things that they would read in an English language arts class. So, it’s a very different approach in terms of reading just having that representation so students can see themselves in character. I think of Jermaine Dickerson, who is doing Hero Nation and the emphasis of representation in comic books.

She provided her outlook if students do not see themselves represented through lessons:

Because if you don’t see yourself represented then you’re not going to see yourself as a hero in any way, shape or form, or [think] that you could ever be something other the bad guy [or] the villain. [In] world language preparation pedagogy class whenever we made presentations for sharing with the students they were critiqued, we would all critique one another after we presented our lessons and, we definitely were made sure to make you know points of whether the content in the slide shows were culturally relevant to all students. You know are all of the people White? Generally, you do see that. So, and it’s so easy like if you google something you can go through like and the first thing that will come is White.

She continued:

We talked about a variety of cultural backgrounds and various ways to really build relationships with students and I think that part of place-based education is relational aspect also and just being able to be on a different plain with your students. Just have nice relationships.

She indicated her future career plans:
[I] will be a Spanish teacher or possibly English as a second language teacher, and so I think they all have good opportunities for place-based and community [based] education. But I definitely, definitely want my students to know that there is a Latino population in their community and how to interact and be involved and use language outside of the classrooms. It does set a standard in terms of lifelong learning that the students would see the language as something important or vital, and they would understand, like ‘hey my Spanish is relevant in my community, I should be learning it so that I can speak with these people and/or have a job in which you know Spanish is important.

She continued to explain about her experience in teacher preparation:

The teacher preparation aspect was really heavy [and] there were times it was definitely heavy content [but] I wouldn’t change that. But if I had more of an opportunity to take some other classes specific to culturally diverse backgrounds and African Americans.

Language is how to express things about themselves in another language. Laura shared about her plans upon completion of the program:

I may not teach here first, right away because I want to teach abroad first. Just to kind of practice my Spanish more so we will see how that goes. Another tough decision to make too because sure I plan to go to Spain and; they are more advantaged than the cultures in Latin America. I have been to Mexico and Puerto Rico, but the way the calendar works for the program, it’s really most feasible for me to go to Spain. But I would much rather for the beginning of my teaching years like to work in a school where I know the administration has it together, and to know that the other teachers
are still supportive and encouraging and I will have an awesome mentor and it’s not
going to be a stressful situation whatsoever. Yes there is discipline, issues here and
there maybe, but I don’t want it to be like as much of a focus if I want to learn how to
teach first. I really want to get down the skill of teaching my language. I really want
to work on the school being a teacher, and then work there, but, I guess that’s not how
it usually happens, so I don’t really know if I’ll be able to get a job in a good school
district as a student teacher. I feel like it may be difficult but I’m not sure how that
works. I almost feel like a sense of guilt when I want to do it that way. It’s also for
my own mental health, because I served as a missionary. I’ve had burn out, so I
really want to progressively get into my career. I’m like ready to be there and not
have any burnout.

David shared similar sentiments regarding his teacher education program’s
intentionality with student teacher placement and experience. He explained:

This is one of my bones of contention is that I don’t feel as if we as educators or
educations like teacher preparation programs do a great job of like, boiling it down to
specific demographics. As a mathematics teacher, we do a good job of talking about
equity like in a broad sense. But talking about these specific communities that has
historically struggled one with content or struggled with school in general and that
institution of school and how we as educators approach it. I just was at a conference
and I had speak at a panel that night. As the new teacher for me I’m comfortable to be
the one to have to say this, but I look around and like I hear the things that are said
about students, and I hear the way that we are taught about students, and how we go
into communities and we go into our classrooms already looking at students with a
deficit.

David connected cultural relevance to the learning differences of his students. He affirmed:

I have to be flexible enough [and reflective] like if I don’t understand something, I have conversations, like what does this mean? Like why? Where did it come from? And so like having those dialogs and having those conversations, I am like, Oh yeah that makes sense, I’m good, you know, and so like you know, being willing to say Ok, you, like for me, if you give me a test, I am going to rock it out. I am going to remember what you told me, I am going to be able to regurgitate exactly what you said. But I understand I had to come to that realization that not everybody learns that way. And so providing students an outlet.

He further retold a math problem which asked students to count some aspects of a mountain shelter. He shared his efforts in being culturally aware and connecting to other cultures but shared how this was lacking overall. He recalled:

We are talking about area and perimeter and so, it [the math lesson] talks a lot about things that my students have no idea of, like it talks something about like climbing shelters, like you climb a mountain and I think there’s shelters along the way, and so like this lessons are like ok. What do we need to know about the climbing shelter for? Outside of our school a little bit down the block there is like the bus shelters. And so we walk to the bus shelter. I found it interesting because some of my students have no clue. Like they drive by it every day and they don’t even realize that it’s right there. Like they don’t even know what it is and say like “I don’t know what this is”.
And then some of my students know exactly what it is; it’s part of all of their community, but some of them actually utilize it and talk about that in the realm of the content [so] that’s just one of the examples of like providing an opportunity for students to speak on their life. And so, like I don’t always get to take them out to places, but that’s just one that’s on the street, that’s around the corner. But like when we can talk about what your uncle did. When we can talk about like, all of these things are opportunities for us to learn mathematics, and learn about life.

He shared:

Again, it goes back, like it builds this identity that I am less than because these things don’t look like me. These things don’t sound like me. I can’t speak to that, and so I should listen to those that could because this is what it is like. And so just providing all my students, and again not, like I’m not talking about my Black students or my students from lower social economics like levels, I’m talking about providing opportunity for every one of my students including them.

He asserted:

We do a terrible job of going and meeting specific communities where they are and helping them and doing what we can. I think it starts in the teacher preparation programs, because teacher preparation programs teach, they teach us especially in mathematics how to instruct the kid that can get it. The kid that can get it from a textbook, so that at the end of the day if I’m not there they know the shelters on the mountain, they know what they are talking about.

He recalled the percentage in specific math courses that he was able to teach:
Last year, I taught low level eighth grade class. Like we got two levels, I got the high level and the lower level. The low level eighth grade class, and in that lower level eighth grade class; our school is about 34% students of color. The class was 87% students of color.

David stated, “If you looked in any math book, these are the examples where certain groups are never spoke on.”

David shared his outlook on how culturally prepared he felt throughout his entire program. He made reference to multicultural communities. He stated:

I don’t feel that there is a specific class that has done a good job of, like pinpointing like how do I reach and how can I meet the needs of this special, beautiful, wonderful capable community?

Jake also believed that being culturally aware enhances the ability to connect with all students:

I think you have to be aware of your students’ culture. You have to at least have an understanding or try to understand.

Jake indicated that he gives his students surveys at the beginning of the school year:

I think the surveys I do at the start of the year where I want the kids to show me who they are, where they come from, and then by trying to connect that to the learning, I think that shows at least an attempt to understand who they are and there they are coming from.

The participants all shared how there was a need for more cultural coursework in the teacher preparation program to ensure that students who graduate are prepared to teach in the communities they will be teaching in. They agreed that intentional development of cultural
proficiency was necessary. Cultural proficiency for all of the participants was something that they each recognized in different aspects of their instruction. Laura shared mostly about her own experience and interest in receiving more training in the cultural competency area, but spoke about how the blocked courses provided her the most connection to cultivating cultural proficiency. David shared about the concern of teachers being able to connect with the place of their students and with the content of their students. Jake shared about the whole notion that cultural awareness is one of the first connecting points with students. Jake shared that if, as a teacher, you don't understand, that you have to try to understand.

The participants shared that the cultural proficiency aspect starts with recognizing differences but also about really having a connection to place-based education as a model, because all of them mentioned about connecting with the place or the community needs to enhance cultural proficiency or to display cultural proficiency.

**Relationships**

Relationships display how people or entities are connected. Many of the teacher preparation students/alumni connected key aspects around how they built relationships with their students and within the teacher preparation program.

Laura explained her interaction with a student as outlined earlier on. When I asked Laura how she could reach this student and ensure teaching and learning was possible, she passionately stated: “Yeah and a brief answer to that which is [that] I had a relationship with her. I have one, you know.”

Jake indicated how knowing his students personally shaped his lesson plans and how that intentionality took additional effort. He asserted:
I got to know the kids, and understand a little bit about their culture and know where they are coming from before I actually started planning my own curriculum, and start planning all that stuff but yeah it’s a lot of work. I mean it would be really easy or it would be easy to plan if it was just me taking lessons from like a state curriculum just throwing facts at them about John Locke and philosophy and all that stuff, but obviously it doesn’t work. They are going to lose interest really quickly if you don’t try to connect it with them.

One of the keys for forming deep relationships, according to Jake, is flattening the usual hierarchy between “teacher” and “student.” Jake comes back again to the role that emotions and emotional connections play here:

I think just like being honest with them and being human with them and I mean not trying to come from a place of “I’m your teacher”, I 100% know better, but trying to connect with their emotions and trying to, as best as I can, put myself in their shoes and try to understand where their emotions are coming from and just talking it out and not just reprimanding them and telling them their emotions are bad. You can’t lash out like that. “Go in the hallway or I’m going to get the deans”. There’re going to come get you.

He continued:

But always like attempting to meet them on their level and talk to them first and you might even do that just through whenever I go and talk to the students at their desks I always try crouch down and actually like meet them on their level and try to just like see eye to eye [I] always try to avoid those situations where I am literally above them
or like looking down on them. I try to like meet them at their level as much as possible.

For Jake, relationships need to be pursued with students, even when the outcome is uncertain, or there seem to be forces at work beyond the teacher’s control. For Jake, giving up on a student is not an option. This can be challenging:

I mean, we had a number of difficult students I would say last year and could probably handle this in any number of ways. I mean, I think at first what I was just saying is like the ideal way of trying to deal with them, and that’s with the most part what I would go to, student last year who was like one of those kids I will probably like never forget. I mean he basically like threatened me at a certain point and time and he had checked out of all of his classes and this is not like ideal, but at a certain point I had to just like start ignoring his bad behavior because then if he’s doing something and I bring a light to it then he’s getting the attention that he needed I guess. But he was a very extreme case. He was definitely the most difficult student. Just constant disrespect of other students, disrespected me, disrespected other teachers, sleeping in class, [and] refusing to do work. So, at the start of the year, we found another teacher on his level and tried to talk to him about it. We had his mom in for several conferences, talking to him and her about his behaviors and how its effecting his learning. We had multiple mediations with him and other students, and we tried and we tried and by the end of the year it was just like, I don’t want to say I gave up on him, because I kept like trying to get him to get the work done, but then like he had conversations with deans [that had] been teachers and then the DOE for a decade plus, and then it’s like, we are out of ideas. I mean, you know I say he like
threatened me and I’m not sure if it was actually 100% a threat, but whatever not an appropriate thing for a student to be saying. Really anyone but especially someone who is like in that position of like respect and power and even after that he was out of my class, like was suspended for a week or something like that and when he came back he was just ignoring me and that started then, and I still continued to try to get him to like engage. I tried to engage him.

For David, student empowerment seemed to be at the center of his teaching and his relationships with students. He shared how he communicated with his students and how he aimed to create a safe and caring engaging environment through empowerment. The types of questions he asked his students would only be authentically answered if the students had a relationship with him. He explained:

One of the things that I do that is not an instructional move per say but I think it helps to create an environment where they feel comfortable to take the risks that I ask them, how many times have you been told something by an adult by a teacher, like without them actually saying it to you? I demonstrate what it looks like to make mistakes and doing those things helps loosen them up to doing the hard things that I ask them to do. But the everyday engagement is providing them worthwhile tasks meaningful, not meaningless like busy work. Providing them tasks that they find interesting that they want to explore that they want to delve into.

David shared ways he attempted to build relationships through recalling his experience teaching summer school. He explained:

The thing that like bothers me is like the summer school is all Black kids, or like in the regular school year, it is either my Black kids or kids that are poor you know, and
so kids, their astute, they pick up on it. The more we can reflect the way we are thinking about them, and we are communicating to them through our actions and through the things not what we say but what we do, will help us be better to position them into places where they can find success.

He recalled:

One of our most challenging students, is a struggle for all of us. He gets escorted to class now. And he had a new person that was escorting him. And so him and I have a really good relationship. And he got into with the person that was escorting him. They were, they were arguing in the hall today, as I was taking my class out, we're going to the library and they're arguing. And so he tried to use me as like as his exit. He was like I'm not gonna listen I'm gonna ignore this dude. And I'm going to talk to Mr. David. But like I immediately was like, No, but like, this is something you need to talk about, you need to work it out.

When I asked David to explain the first step in building a student-to-teacher relationship he was not afraid to use the word “love.” Love came up often in David’s interviews. He asserted:

With any kid it really is to let them know that I love them. You know, every kid, every day, every kid every class, they'd be like you already told us this already. And I'm going to continue. But I'm not just going to tell you like I'm going to ask you things about your life, I'm going to ask you what's going on, I'm going to tell you things about me, you know, like, we're truly going to build a connection that transcends just my mathematics, you know, I'm going to let them know, you know, when I'm having a bad day, I'm going to be real, I'm going to be authentic, I'm going
to be open. But ultimately, like, I'm going to let them know I'm here, like, we were going to do this, if you're in this with me, I'm right there with you.

Overall, the participants all agreed that one key component to learning was ensuring that relationships were fostered in order to create and sustain a learning environment. Each was relentless in their efforts and didn’t stop when they faced institutional barriers or resistance from a student who was facing particularly difficult challenges. They also believed that if relationships were cultivated, that learning spaces would be productive and engaging. Participants also displayed that they were not just interested in students getting to know them, but they were also interested in getting to know the students. They seemed to believe in supporting their students and allowing them to be open and transparent and facilitate their learnings, which transcend beyond the classroom. Laura mentioned that one of her ways of not seeing a student that many saw with a deficit view was through having a relationship with her. So, there is an importance of relationship building in education. Relationship building could be modeled throughout the place-based education approach.

**Place-Based Education: Teacher Preparation Program**

Place-based education (PBE) is an instructional method that offers an opportunity for experiential learning, service learning, and other forms of community outreach (Dani, 2019; Semken & Freeman, 2008).

Laura shared her desire of being an place-based educator:

Well I definitely want to be a place-based educator. I am so grateful for the fellowship opportunity I had thinking of creative ways to implement it in my classroom, just how to get out into the community.
For Laura, PBE helps to redefine what “success” is both in schools and in the broader society:

There are too many problems to consider but we need people who are going to be able to solve those problems. It’s not all about having nice shoes and driving a nice car and having the house. There’s a lot more to learn about than that boring traditional style of teaching where the teacher lectures most of the class, definitely.

Laura linked focusing on community to creating safe and caring relationships in the classroom:

I really love the idea of compassion and kindness in the classroom and think that’s really important in terms of discipline. I think often times that it’s easy to be really reactive immediately and, I think that if your environment is not conducive to creating a space where the students are able to engage and focus on the task at hand. She retold the experience in the teacher preparation program. She shared how Ethan modeled the community-building strategies that she plans to use in her own classroom:

He modeled the heck out of everything; He would model how to do things for us, even just building community in our class. Those people in our class are really important to me and me keeping in touch. And I made really good friends and I believe that we were able to have tough conversations because he built the community and how we were able to then really yes just be aware of those things and ask difficult questions. I don’t think super possible without being able to feel comfortable.

She shared further:
As you know the program is really growing and so I haven’t had the facts or depths of what it’s going to be. I know there’s steps that are being added that I will not get to witness or be part of and it’s super exciting, it’s more realistic for being a teacher. It’s going to prepare you way better than a traditional route. I believe the curriculum planning class obviously is way better than how, I mean I haven’t literally looked into anyone else’s curriculum plan that they wrote from other classes.

One of the pedagogical anchors of place-based education is student-centered inquiry (or inquiry-based instruction). For Laura, experiencing this kind of inquiry of a learner in the program had a deep impact on her perceived ability to be culturally responsive. She explained:

Teachers say CRI and we did learn a lot of the points, I means points in that, but I guess we never had it like spelled out as CRI, which is really you know, cool. I really appreciate it. And so, obviously investigating the background of the students, having surveys at the beginning, that’s something I did learn in my curriculum class, and also inquiry is part of that. That is all place-based education. We totally used inquiry in that. And what I was just talking about with the literature. Having high expectations is another one of those definitely we’ve talked a lot about having high expectations of students, and multiple ways to respond let’s see, the only other one that I have not touched is just having different resources and different ways of teaching the various things that I can reach and be accessible to all students.

She described a quality teacher being one who facilitated inquiry:

I believe that a quality teacher is really also facilitating learning in the classroom, and so seeing them be able to facilitate and guide students so that they really truly
discover and learn on their own, I believe that that really cements the learning a lot more than just say copying notes and learning something for a tests, and more so that just being really enthusiastic about your content area, you know instead of just like, “

“hey I could teach you this”

She asserted:

In my experience comparing my high school classes to what I’ve learned, I know the lesson planning is structured so much different because you start with an end goal in mind. You start without and you have backwards planning and then you have an idea of inquiry, and so maybe you begin with, you generally begin with guided inquiry and you work with the students until you can get to a looser point where their leading more and yeah, it’s much more better for them being better and realistic to the world

When asked if she would implement the place-based model into her instruction, she emphasized another anchor of PBE, connection to place. This connection, for Laura, is grounded in two key aspects of being a culturally responsive educator—understanding and having an affection for the place where one teaches, and shifting from a deficit perception of community to a strength-based one:

[It] is my desire to definitely utilize the place based education model place and community based. Just because I again, like going through that course. And being from Ypsi and just understanding the gravity of learning about your community, and how I didn’t learn about my community, and how that really affected the trajectory of my life. I feel as though there are so many good things going on in this community. But you may not know if you're not exposed to it or taught about it. And oftentimes, teachers don't necessarily live in the same community. And so maybe they don't know
about the community where they're teaching. And that's a separate topic or issue. But yeah, my desire full heartedly is to definitely teach in that manner. And that's one fear of mine with like, Oh, I don't know if I want to be a teacher, because I don't know if I'll get to teach the way I want to teach. And I don't know, sometimes environment like I really don't want to teach unless I know I'm going to be in a supportive environment to grow as a beginning teacher. And just like, again, with my bad student teaching experience, that really crushed me for a little while in terms of just my confidence in general, that as an educator, but that aside, I definitely want to teach in a place and community based manner. Where inquiry is involved student voice, all of those things.

Jake shared his outlook on place-based education. Jake’s responses also emphasized connection to place. For Jake, this connection was critical for student engagement. He explained:

I view place-based education as like a really strong way to connect kids to curriculum using their surroundings, like using where they live, using their community [and] to me at this point in time, place based education is just like, as educators we’re always trying to find a way to connect students to the curriculum, right? Like we are trying to find ways to get them involved, get them interested, and to me, place-based education is like a really broad and at the same time very narrow way of getting the kids connected because everyone lives in a place, and so using place-based education, you can connect them to the learning by connecting them with their surroundings. So you are giving them a connection that they see every day. And also, hopefully building a stronger connection with the students and their place.
He continued:

If you can’t relate to community, that the students are in, then you are not going to be able to relate to the students, and they are going to like, sense that disconnect. So, to me it’s important to like, get yourself associated with the place and with the community where you are teaching. And really place-based education taught me that.

For Jake, place-based education and his content area, social studies, were a natural fit. When Jake was asked about his outlook regarding place-based education, he shared:

So for like place-based, something that I’m struggling with myself, it’s just really kind to fill that connection to the students and their community, and trying to show them, especially in a history course, that this stuff is still playing out, and you can easily connect things that we’re learning about whether it’s Native Americans being removed from their land and comparing it to gentrification, which is happening in the neighborhood of our school, that there’s always connections and always lessons you can take from past events and connect them to what’s going on in your community right now. I think that’s to me like the key aspect of place based education and education in general, I guess. It’s just really giving the students a sense of, “you’re learning this because you have to”, instead they have to learn this if they want to pass the regions in high school they have to learn some of this stuff. But it’s also important because it builds their critical thinking about what’s going in their community. The education that is, like building that critical thinking skills, especially in Social Studies. I think that’s more than anything what I try to do is try to instill them some sense of critical thinking skills like interpreting not just what happened in history but
why it happened, why it’s important and how do we see that happening in our lives today?

Jake asserted:

I think that’s really important in a teacher prep program, to teach soon to be teachers about diversity and about accepting differences and about hoping for differences. I think that was one of the best things I got from Eastern and taking courses with Ethan it was great.

Jake recalled completing a unit plan in the place-based block course:

So we had to come up with a unit, like an actual unit plan, so we had to do a scope and sequence chart, explain our like thought process behind the unit and then come up with, I think it was like ten to twelve lessons and then we actually had to have lesson plans for I think for four of them. So we didn’t actually have to have like written out lesson plans, just like this is what the lesson is going to be. and mine was for a Freshman High School Social Studies class, and it was centered around water, because we were doing a lot of work with Cody and DIT about like this park that’s really close to Cody and, like they did like an event at the start of school year, and dealt with the river and they did like water quality testing. So, the unit was focused around American society and like the importance of fresh water to building civilizations in American society. So I’m trying to remember everything about it. I think it kind of started with the Native American. It wasn’t as much based on a certain time. It was like, around this theme I think it kind of started talking about like, Native American’s view on land and water, versus like your own view and then there is a lesson with water pollution today and how that connects to how the Native
American’s view land water use versus like the western view of land and water use. Then all the way to like, the Erie Canal and like, maybe a course in connecting that to Michigan, and how people like really move to Michigan thanks to using water transportation. That was mostly There were some other things not directly related to like water usage and like water health, but it was all about the importance fresh water plays on, like civilization in America, specifically Detroit.

When I asked David to share his beliefs regarding place-based education, he explained:

it was like, was phenomenal for me. Like there are still things today that, like I bring to my classroom every single day and I bring to my practice every day based on those experiences.

For David, place-based education was a way to zero in on students’ specific life experiences. This attention to student experience requires a shift in the role of the teacher from being at the top of a hierarchy, to meeting students where they are. He shared:

Having this experience has shown me that like there is another way; there is a better way my personal definition [of place-based education] is opening up students’ lives and allowing that to be a part of the classroom, as opposed to you know “I’m going to give you everything, I’m going to teach you everything.” Allowing those experiences and allowing just those things in our life, whether it’s the things that we carry with us to the classroom, and the things that we read in books; our life, as being part of that learning opportunity.

David mentioned how place mattered to his instruction:
The main differences that I took from this is that, again this is that, and again I told you I had lots of conversations about place based and community education and one of my struggles is the practicableness of it, based on the limitations of all of the things that we have to do. And so, what I found is that in my place-based classes there is that reality, because like you’re right there. You are right there, you know you don’t have the safety net of four walls on the campus [so] taking that opportunity as an opportunity to have dialog and having conversation. Like it talks about the reality of our students experience as well as what place-based education looks like. It’s not as cut and dry as “here take this lesson and you’re going to have these three points, and you’re going to assess this one way” and, like, you’ve got to be willing to go with wherever it takes you.

In addition to that particular experience, David shared his beliefs about what he considered place-based education. These beliefs included a culturally responsive focus on a kind of linguistic diversity. He recalled:

For me it really has to do with allowing the student to speak for me as a teacher for me coming with my concept of what is right and what is wrong and not in like a moral sense but in a content of educational sense and me being willing to put some of those things aside and allowing the student to speak their language. What I mean is like whatever [or] however they communicate, and this is a super simplistic example, but like going back to the very basis of like “I learn differently.” And so, I am going to look at a situation and I’m going to be able to pick up something that this person can’t. Coming from, whatever your experience may be, being able to speak from that
experience and starting there as opposed to me telling that person “you need to come and speak so that I understand.”

David finally shared his overall thoughts about how to implement the place-based model in his classroom. He stated:

It means that there is respect, that there is honor, there is I don’t know like…that there’s value in every experience. So that means and again, I continue to feel like I’m saying the same thing over and over again. But it means that, like those things that you bring to my room, you don’t have to; you’re not leaving them at the door.

He reminisces specifically on his experiences teaching math to students who previously thought that they could not learn math he stated:

Ok, we need to at the end of the day we going to have to talk about fractions, but I can tell you about fractions in this very critical you know text book way or we could talk about something that you know, and that you are passionate about, and you can talk to me about it forever. And so, it gets to the point where we are having that conversation, we are having that dialog and they don’t even know they’re talking about math, and at the end of the day I’m like “look what you did, you got an A”, they say I can’t do math, I’ve never been any good at it, my mom’s never been good at it, my dad’s never been good at it, but the thing is like that was me.

As David continued, he shared about students having a choice on their own learning preference. He explained:

Like I am doing a project and I’m going to assign it here in a few weeks. And I found it interesting, I will offer them a test, and there is very few of them that will want to
take tests. But I also say like “OK if you want to give me a test”, that’s like these are the things I need to know. You can, like you need to choose how you give it to me.

David continued to explain how he implemented “place” within his classroom. Again, David points to rooting instruction and assessment in students’ experiences. This is especially important in math, where teachers often use language, vocabulary, and experiences that are abstract and culturally biased. He asserted:

Some of these students that don’t participate, and again this goes back, way back to my philosophy, some of those students that aren’t engaged in the talking because they can’t even comprehend going to a mountain, or whatever, are now able to be, they are authorities, and they’re about to talk about, and they are to discuss, and they are able to lead the discussion and show they have been institutionalized to listen because they can’t grasp most of these concepts. And so now it gives them an opportunity to talk and somebody else has to listen to them, they are presented these scenarios and these situations are either super outrageous. Things like, we are going to go buy 100 watermelons. Like what? Who does that? Ok, nobody does that. Or these things, where again it goes back to my upbringing. I grew up in public housing. I grew up where our vacation was we would go to our cousin’s house. And so, for me think about well they took this family vacation across the country. Like the concept I can understand, but to speak on it, I couldn’t do.

David continued explain about an instance of bringing place into the classroom and the impact from it. For David, PBE isn’t only about the “local” but in connecting the global to local issues and students’ cultural identities. He explained:
In one of my math lessons we talked about the impacts of the wild fires and you know. We were talking about those things and so it was just like a teaser to the actual lesson. Because the lesson was on food distribution and we were talking about amounts and we were recalculating, and so what ended up happening is we were talking about you know Houston and we were talking about the wild fires, and then we began to talk about the different responses in Houston as opposed to Puerto Rico. And having the discussion about why are they so different, why is there such a difference and again it was meant to be just like a tease to pique their interest, something in the news then we can talk about, you know, measurements of food and food rescue. But it turned into this beautiful conversation about Puerto Rico and some of my Latino students, they shared their frustration, the frustration that they have heard, the frustration that they had felt, frustration and students that were directly affected it would have been easy for me, and the reason that I am thinking about this is like today one of my former students said, aren’t you going to talk to them about hurricane Florence like you did for us? Like this is a you know a little White kid.

The participants shared how they learned about place-based education through the teacher preparation program and how it is essential to bring the students’ place into the classroom and into the learning concepts. They provided some examples of doing this in their own instruction and how it benefited their students learning experience. They emphasized two anchors of PBE, connection to place and student-centered inquiry. The next section will provide additional components for effective teacher preparedness.
Additional Components for Effective Teacher Preparedness

Although in the above section cross-cutting themes were captured, this section provides additional components that were shared by participants which may also add much needed perspectives on an effective teacher preparation program. Some of the additional components are just relevant to one or two of the teacher candidate/alumni participants. I share a blocked course analysis, strength-based approach, high expectations, student voice, teacher candidate/alumni teaching philosophy, and perceptions regarding teacher education.

Blocked Course Artifacts Analysis

In 2014, David described his experience in a reflection paper that he completed for the place-based blocked course. The following excerpts are from the lessons in the field assignment that Ethan assigned to students in that course. In this project, students had to teach a lesson in the class where they were observing and apply concepts learned in class. David’s reflection offer us insight into how his experience in the blocked course may have shaped his current teaching philosophy and practice. David reflectively shared:

As I have noted multiple times [this] semester, I have trouble with being flexible in my teaching. This lesson allowed me a perfect opportunity to work on developing this skill. From the beginning, there were issues that arose. From not knowing what I should teach explicitly, there were many things that I had to work through. The biggest challenge was when the principal came in during the middle of the lesson and gave an announcement that the students schedules would be changing the next day. This riled up the class and I grew frustrated with the fact that she chose that moment to make such an announcement. I thought that this would be a perfect time to do something somewhat interactive to reconnect the students focus on the lesson. I
passed out the practice sheets and guided the students through the first few problems. I then challenged them to work through the next set of tables on their own. This led to a class debrief which I found to go better than I expected.

He continued:

I chose to do a direct lesson because during my observations I found that the students struggled to stay connected to the lesson when the lesson was cooperative. The lessons that were cooperative based were the ones where I saw that the class could grow unfocused and the majority of the disciplinary issues arose. I didn’t feel confident in my skills to handle these situations so I chose to have a direct instruction heavy lesson. Now that I have a little separation from the lesson I realized that I did this lesson more so out of fear. I think that it would have been best if I would have used a more cooperative approach for this particular lesson. It would have taken a little more planning and ingenuity on my part but I think that the learning potential would make it all worth it.

This opportunity was stressful in the moments leading up to and during the lesson, but now that I have had a chance to assess how the lesson went I have come to the realization that I learned a lot from this experience. I had many chances to hone my skills at dealing with uncertainty, while also getting real feedback from the experts, the students. I have learned that there are a plethora of things that I need to work through and work on, but I also have confidence that I am moving in the right direction and will one day get a hang of teaching in front of a group of students!

Furthermore, excerpts from another project in that blocked course, the unit plan that Jake mentioned earlier, express David’ application of key course concepts. In the syllabus
for the course, Ethan explicitly identified key concepts, many of which are a focus of David’s unit project, lesson in the field reflection, and thinking as a practicing teacher: place-based education, community, deficit- v. strength-based thinking, interconnectedness, and becoming comfortable with being uncomfortable. The course explored the essential question: What kind of education can we envision that allows us to develop human potential in an interconnected and interdependent world? The below excerpt is from the overview section of the unit plan which expounded upon David’s connection to community even within the subject of Math. He talked about community in his interview and this displays his initial thinking about community while a student. He wrote:

This unit, Geometry = Community?, is designed for students placed in seventh and eighth grade who are currently taking Geometry. This unit overviews the introduction of shapes, perimeter, area, and volume, while connecting these aspects to the construction and development of hoop houses. This unit would be placed as the last unit in geometry. The students will be expected to not only build their knowledge regarding geometry by integrating all previous units into Geometry = Community?, but will be challenged to design or build their own hoop house. The underlying question that students will be asked throughout the unit is How can geometry be used to promote sustainability into our food sources and community as a whole?? There are many purposes to this unit. First and foremost, students will understand how math can and is applied outside of the classroom. Secondly, students will be challenged on how they personally can apply their knowledge of geometry to the reconstruction of their community. Lastly, this unit will connect all other previous units together, so students can see the connections between such as parallel lines and a parallelogram.
This unit can easily be integrated into a science class since students will be analyzing food production and how the environment plays a factor into agriculture.

The final artifact reviewed was one of the first papers written in the social foundations portion of the blocked course. David shared his outlook on an evolving community:

A healthy community must begin with diversity. It is the linchpin that binds a strong, healthy community. As Daniel Quinn notes in *Ishmael*, "diversity is the strength of the community" (Quinn, 1992). The community is strengthened because diversity brings together people that have a variety of different experiences and areas of knowledge and allows them to share this with each other. This acknowledgement of the benefits of diversity raises the collective level of understanding of the community as a whole. Through this understanding, the members of the community have to put aside their individual biases, and this causes the fabric of the community to grow stronger and healthier.

He continued and shared his outlook on schools specifically:

As the hub of a community, the school plays a vital role in development of the community’s guiding principles. During class discussion, we have pinpointed that one of the main responsibilities of schools is to prepare young people to be citizens in a just democracy, and to become ethical people. With public schools being tasked with more than just simply meeting a student’s academic needs, there must be a concerted effort from every participant in the school to promote democracy and diversity in the school community.
He ended the paper and concluded:

Diversity, along with democracy, is the cornerstone for any community to achieve sustainability. For a community to survive there has to be a commitment to cultivating these principles into all of its citizens. As a hub of the community, the public schools must be at the forefront of the movement to promote the democratic principles that will sustain the community. Through making differentiation and discussions concerning diversity a norm, schools can make the move towards meeting the learning needs of every student while also building a framework for molding students into ethical people. The teacher in a school system that is tasked with cultivating the morality of its students bears a heavy burden. No longer can teachers in this system focus solely on their content, but these educators must work to develop their student’s moral compass. By connecting on personal level with their students, the educators are able to more easily guide those in their care towards a more democratic and diversified viewpoint. It is through this interdependence between the public school and the community that the community is able to grow and achieve sustainability.

The review of each artifact was to display the growth of the participant as these were assignments completed while completing coursework in the program compared to their outlook at this time. An analysis of David’s learning artifacts in the place-based block course corroborate the thematic analysis of David’s interviews and give us insights into his learning processes and how the place-based block fostered his development as a place-based educator. David reflectively shed light early on regarding his transformation and his concerns of having the confidence of teaching a group of students. He provided his own insight regarding
the importance of community and how mathematical concepts were also both inside and outside of the classroom. David has displayed growth from the start of the program to his current teaching experience. The artifacts reaffirm the educational experience that he recalled during his interview. It demonstrated the impact of the place-based model which early on he expressed his understanding of community, the importance of diversity, the purpose of school, and the need for democratic emphasis. He wrote in one of his papers that the responsibility of a teacher was not only to instruct but to ensure that students are developed morally.

Jake also shared his sentiments in the lesson in the field reflection paper in the 2015 blocked course. Jake was in the course a year after David:

This has been without a doubt one of the more transformative three-and-a-half months (or however long a semester lasts) of my life. I may not have changed my entire outlook on life or anything but I definitely feel a change within myself stronger than I have in a very long time. My time in DIT and my time in class (both CURR and SOFD) and sharpened my focus and sharpened my philosophy on life. I am not sure I have had any groundbreaking, earth or life shattering “Aha!” moments, but what I have had are a long series of, “yes that makes so much sense I’m glad to think of that that way” and other such moments.

He continued:

I knew there were institutional problems with our society and schools, but now I have a deeper understanding and a knowledge and skill set of how to attack them. I thought I knew what it took to be a good teacher, but now have an even better idea of that. I still think that I am on the right road towards becoming a successful teacher. I finally
(again, sorry) would like to thank you Ethan for your guidance along this journey. I have truly enjoyed my time in this class, getting to know you and my classmates, and truly treasure the wisdom you have shared with us. It has been a tremendously beneficial semester that I will not soon forget, and you are a large reason for that.

As Jake shared his outlook, as a teacher he has not forgotten about the institutional problems in society nor about the way he learned through the program. Jake shared he was changed as a person and as an educator. Analyzing his current outlook paralleled with his coursework displayed the impact of the PBE teacher preparation program. Jake talked repeatedly about his experience under the instruction of Ethan but more about the concepts learned under Ethan’s instruction.

In the introduction to Laura’s unit plan, she states:

This place-based unit is designed for a high school Spanish class and adaptable for grades 9 through 12 (based on language skill level). The unit will integrate social studies, history, and civics. The goal of the curriculum is for students to better understand the complexities that are involved with human migration and the necessities that all humans have.

Her written rationale for this unit plan echoes themes from her interviews, especially strength-based versus deficit thinking:

Place-based education is the best way to create a sustainable and democratic community. Being engaged in civic action while in school is a way to ensure students will continue to care for their community both socially and ecologically. When students are learning about their community through any subject it is an immediate way to make the material relatable to them. Places form identities and the students of
Ypsilanti have identities based on their connections to the community. Students can either be well connected or have a negative view of their community, which in turn will impact their own self-worth and self-esteem. From my own personal experience growing up in Ypsilanti was nothing to be proud of. In fact, I sensed that people from neighboring communities had negative views of my city and this largely affected my desire to get out of Ypsilanti.

Laura concluded:

Through this place-based experience students will gain a better sense of belonging to their community. The curriculum will give them a context that is relatable and relevant. Immigration is a highly relevant subject and in Ypsilanti there is an increasing community of not only Latino immigrants but others too and especially Syrian refugees. This unit is designed with the intention of teaching empathy for others and begins a discussion on ways in which we can better welcome our new neighbors. Compassion is a necessary component of the curriculum needed in our world today. Our country is becoming increasingly diverse and we must learn how to celebrate diversity, work towards greater unity, and create equal opportunities for all. Unfortunately, this is hard to do at times with the hierarchical society we live in but we must raise future generations to dismantle this type of thinking. This is why place-based education is crucial.

Upon the artifact analysis of the three participants, David and Jake as alumni had multiple completed assignments to review. Laura, however, as a current student had the unit plan completed for analysis. Through the artifact analysis, it is clear that David, Jake, and Laura have grown as practitioners, and it is probable that the place-based coursework they
experienced has led to their current teaching philosophies and practice. In the case of Jake and David, the strength of the program’s impact is magnified by the fact that interviews with them took place many years after the completion of the program.

**Strength-Based Approach**

A strength-based approach is focusing on positive aspects of a person or an experience. David believed it was his responsibility to empower students and use a strength-based approach to do so. David recalled:

I feel it’s my duty to disrupt some of these things. I feel like it is my responsibility to no longer be ok with having conversations about not just students but about people without doing our due diligence with seeing the strength and the capabilities that they bring to the table.

He shared about how important to view students positively:

To achieve to lessen the achievement gap and all of those things I think it starts with how I’m looking at my students, do I see them as able, do I see them as genius brilliant, as capable?

David went on to share how the outlook on his students mattered to his instruction and posed a question to consider as we think about all students. He indicated:

I think and when we say all students, one of the things that causes me to pause is that I hear it equates to most students, and what happens is the most students out there and students that are not a problem. I think that most students are fine, but like most students will be fine, no matter what. They will be fine. They’ve got a good support [system] at home, they’ve got it; like most students are fine. What can we do to meet
the needs of those students who we often overlook? What can we do, how can we meet the needs of Black and brown kids?

David also shared how many educators are looking at their students with a deficit view:

They are seeing like all of the things that these students don’t have and all the things that students can’t do, and they don’t see how much it takes for them to actually get up in the morning and make it to school and how they are way tougher than I am. They are way more capable than I am so I can tap into those things. Like maybe some of these things that you are thinking that they can’t do like, maybe I’m not doing a good job to inspire those things and tap into what they already are passionate about.

David affirmed that this view could be displayed in multiple ways even through content specific ways. He goes on to explain how he does this especially through summer school teach math with his students that already may feel defeated he shared that together they would get through learning the content. He then explained how students are looking for specific educators. According to David,

They are looking for someone to love them, and so I think like a model teacher is someone that cares deeply and passionately about their students. They care so deeply and passionately that they will fight for their students that they will be intentional about addressing inequity when it comes to their students and students in general. Someone that is willing to push their students.

He indicated:

They want someone that will care about them. Someone that loves them, someone that loves them even, and they know that they are difficult. They are not oblivious to
the fact that they are difficult. They get it, but they want someone that will love them even when it’s difficult.

High Expectations

High expectations is believing in the students ability and supporting the students ability. David gave his students choices on their learning environment and how to display what they learned. David related that he used his own life experience to set high expectations for his students. David shared:

I told them the story how I had a math teacher that told me I wasn’t good at math and I wouldn’t be good at math. I told them these stories. I’m told them about my perseverance. I told them the things that I had to do. I told them about the mistakes that I had made, and then I tell them that I expect them to make mistakes, but I expect them ‘We are going to work through them together’ because I expect them to get to calculus.

David shared his outlook on his students regarding math achievement. He shared that many students are told that they cannot achieve in math, but he communicated his expectation:

I won’t let up on you I promise you. I have high expectations of you. I think that it’s not enough to just care about and love and fight for your students, but you have to push them beyond what they even think of themselves. I love everyday of what I do, I don’t love all of every day but I do love every day… I really do love it, just because I get to be, I get to work hard and be just about a part of helping a lot of students that slip.
In addition, David makes a connection between love which he deems critical in setting high expectations. He continued:

But I think part of the processes is we love our students and we want to see success and so what we do is we say we love them so much and want them to be successful, and so I know that they can’t do this so I am going to give them something that’s easier. Which again, I teach summer school every year and I love it, because these are students that have it engrained in them that they will never be able to do math.

David provided what he expected his students to achieve. He explained:

I talked about how I expect them to achieve at these high levels that they see of their classmates that look different than them, and come from different experiences, and have different backgrounds.

David went on and shared some of the challenges that are based off the constructs of the classroom. He asserted:

it really is you know the challenging part is the fact that like I feel as that there are limitless amount of opportunities for me to open up the learning space and for me to be able to see them

David shared how important it is to consider communities that have historical inferences with mathematics:

And especially for students and especially for communities that have been underrepresented in mathematics that have this fear or this stigma. I think I have to do a better job of going and, being willing to listen and then going to offer them an opportunity to speak their experience.

Through this reflection, David also asserted:
Every day you know the expectations of me as a teacher in this age, and the things that I need for my students to know, and the things so that they can perform well in the sense that we have to give as opposed to you know really delving into things and spending a good amount of time on things that they are interested in without getting side tracked on these other things that I have to take care of. So that is my biggest tension. My biggest challenge is how I weigh [or] balance these two competing often and competing forces the things that have to get done and then the things that well I try and blend it [and] I’m not an expert at that yet.

Student Voice

Ensuring that students voice is heard and valued through education. Laura shared that voice was an important critical component in a pedagogical anchor of place-based education—informed civic engagement:

So it's, it's funny, like we have students, they graduate from high school, and they're able to do anything, but we expect them to just go into the world and be involved in this semi democratic process with, you know, voting and democracy, just everything involved in the community, but then also just on a national level. But then, why in school, is there no sense of democracy? You know, students voice doesn't typically get as much recognition when it comes to making choices. In school, whether that's just the curriculum, or I'm sure they're large array of things that create a student centric classroom or school. But just like, having students learn about the democratic process, and that their voice matters. In school, it's gonna create a bigger, I don't want to say ripple effect, but it's just going to allow them to actually graduate with the skills that they need, and to participate, and our country to participate in their
community. There's many things many issues. And people often don't know how to tackle those issues, because maybe they learned that their voice doesn't matter. It's not that they were taught directly, it's more like, indirect that they learned, because so often, in school, it's just like, you have to do this, and you're not really given a lot of choice. And here we are, as adults, we get to choose so many things. And so it's just interesting how that transition takes place. That's, I feel as though that was just a small tidbit to explaining everything about student voice.

She continued:

When you connect a student, or like when you if you feel connected to something like because it's something that you are involved in deciding to do, you're involved in that decision-making process you're going to learn, you're actually going to learn, because you have a sense of connection to it. It's something that you chose to do. It's something that you're interested in, the level of engagement is going to be higher, just all around, students are going to be more engaged and interested in what they're learning, if they're involved in the decision-making process, their voice makes a difference if it matters, and they understand that their voice really makes a difference and matters. So just in terms of education, in general, aside from graduating and being involved in the democratic process, like students are going to learn if, like, yes, students learned period, I get that, but like, they're going to learn so much better. And I'm such a deeper level and like, carry that process into their life. For many other things beyond just learning for whatever project or test are graduating high school, because oftentimes people here know, 5-10 years later, they're not going to remember what they learned about Math, or, you know, these various things not to say about
this, something you shouldn't study, I just throwing something out there, because I don't remember the story very well. But I like I loved my English class, I obviously love school, because I'm, you know, I just went to school to be a teacher, because I love school. So it wasn't difficult to motivate me, I had a lot of what is the word I'm like an intrinsic motivation. So like if students are recognized in the decision making process, and they understand the value of their own voice, the teachers understand the value of their own voice, they're going to have intrinsic motivation to do the work in class.

David explained how he enjoyed getting his students involved. He shared about a time students’ wanted to discuss the impact of a hurricane on the west coast. He gracefully shared how he includes his students voice:

Like allowing the students to have that dialog and talk about this part of their, like some of their community if I provide them in a space to speak about things that I would have never known that they had such some of the students were carrying such weight. Because of this like we are in Michigan we are not being affected by it. It’s not raining here, you know we don’t see the flood [that] they have. But they have such a weight because they felt the weight of their community. They were just allowing them the space to speak about something that is so valuable to them and so important to them.

Civic engagement and action involves understanding how to discuss issues of public concern as a community. As a place-based educator, David emphasizes that discussion must be grounded in students’ interests and experiences. David recalled:
I think learning happens in an environment like in, in community and through conversation, and dialogue; students, perspective is a big part of it, it's a big part of achievement and success. I had a student who I perceived her actions to be disrespectful. And so we sat down, and we talked and I and I told her how I perceived and her actions and how it made me feel like how I how I felt about it. Then she told me her side of the story and how she felt about things and how she felt about the situation. And it did bring me clarity about the situation. No, I didn't agree with her. But I think it strengthened our relationship.

He shared an experience with his student teacher regarding the voices of his students:

Right now, I have an actually have a student teacher and we're just having a discussion last week. And she gets to see three classes a day. And I think she notices that even though I teach the same content, same grade, every class is different. It literally is just because wherever we go, it's based on what students say, and what students bring and so that, we will end up somewhere else and like the content will get taken care of, but the way that we approach it, it's all dependent on how students see and how students connect to it. And what avenues they go down. Because I feel it's more authentic organic. Once students know that they have a chance to speak their truth, like their feelings, it allows, like, an openness that makes them to be open to being wrong. And I think that it also opens them up to a new perspective about, like, what learning is.

The additional components were important to discuss. The following themes, strength-based approach, student voice and high expectations emerged from the data, but it was not visible
amongst all three participants. I will first share each participants’ teaching philosophy and then share the additional components.

**Additional Impacts of the Place-Based Block on Teacher Candidate/Alumni Teaching Philosophy**

Jake shared his teaching philosophy:

Ethan and place-based education really played a large part in creating my philosophy, just in terms of; I think it really showed me how important it is to find those connections, and so even when I am not doing place-based, stuff which I really am focusing on this year it really leads me to try to find any way to make sure I am not just as a history teacher shouting out facts and having them copy notes down and resuscitate things and just memorize. It’s about like providing a connection to their lives that will get them interested into the material. And that’s something that I think I did a pretty good job of last year, and I think that’s my guiding principles. Making sure the kids have connections to the work outside of like the actual material.

David shared his teaching philosophy:

My philosophy is that every student has the capability in them to achieve and every student achievement is going to look different, and they are going to get there differently. The route that they take is going to be different, and I think it is my job as the teacher to help facilitate that path for them to help to get processed, Again, I’m going to focus on the learners of mathematics because that’s what I teach, but like on a broader scale like I really do believe that every student has the capability and it’s my job, like it is my responsibility to help them to see in themselves and help facilitate that act.
Laura shared her teaching philosophy:

I always think of how students in the past students it was thought as students come in as a blank canvas or an empty vessel. They don’t know anything. They just assume that they don’t know anything our students come [with] and have a lot to offer. They are not empty vessels for us to us to, you know [to] endow all [of] our knowledge with and so part of that is having active engagement in the classroom [and] lesson plan that are more active and having inquiry is really helpful.

David, Jake, and Laura teaching philosophy each had a segment of place-based education within. Jake made mention of ensuring students were connected to their lives and content within the classroom, David highlighted how facilitation is essential for learning, and Laura indicated how inquiry in her instruction is important for the students learning process.

**The Overall Teacher Education Program**

Laura and David discussed the overall teacher education program explicitly. This program involved both experiences in the place-based pathway and other experiences not yet included in this pathway. David and Laura had different perspectives about the program but highlighted some keen experiences which shaped their overall outlook of the program.

Laura shared about her student teaching experience:

Oh, my gosh yes, I did not have the best experience. So I mean, like, I had a great time teaching. The kids were awesome yes, so that was great. I was [student teaching] in middle school. These kids were pretty great; I had seventh grade and teaching Spanish. So you know, as a student teacher, you begin with the teachers material, most often, everyone's got a different story to tell, I'm sure. But so I taught the teachers material for a while, and then I taught my own material. And I really enjoyed
it. Like, being able to feel it out and grow more comfortable with myself in front of the classroom and teaching my own material was definitely different. I did not have the opportunity to do something place based in my student teaching, I think that is a little more rare. Because if you desire to do that, I think it's super important that you find another place-based educator.

She continued to explain her experience with student teaching within the teacher education department:

Just because it is a different style of teaching. And so I did have some issues with like my cooperating teacher, just she and I didn't really see eye to eye on certain things. But she didn't communicate things to me. And so when I got my final evaluation, I was kind of shocked. Well, I wasn't kind of I was shocked. And so I, yeah, I didn't really anticipate my evaluation.

When I asked what she believed could capture a better experience for students, she shared:

Someone who genuinely wants to have student teachers, so I was her first student teacher ever. And I hadn't anticipated that when my advisor set me up. Now, the advisor, who set me up with her, wasn't my actual advisor who oversaw my student teaching. So, I don't know if she even knew she. Like, I don't know, if she knew she had never had a student teacher. And I'm sure at some point, she discovered that, but I think someone who's in it to really better the student teacher. So knowing that is valuable. Other ways in which I have a good experience. So someone who wants to have a student teacher, I understand the student teaching, allowing someone to come into your room and, and, like, just take over is a little difficult to do to let go and
allow things to be. But especially if they're supposed to be writing lesson plans, you know, maybe that's also difficult to, but if they want a student teacher, they're going to allow them to grow. In terms of like, learning what discipline style really works for them, or, you know, kind of letting them Yes, they can do the same classroom management. But maybe if the student teacher is interested in trying something new, maybe that's acceptable. Maybe that's a conversation that need to be had, you know, and I don't know if it was like something I should have, you know, asked about, I always I generally got daily feedback, like little emails, snippets, or, you know, that verbal feedback, where with the hand raising then you know, immediately that I shouldn't have done that. But just in general. Yeah, feedback is always really great. So I think another thing that makes a good student teaching experience is having a cooperating teacher who's going to commit to meeting with you, after school to talk about the day my cooperating teacher left school every day right away.

Laura experienced the last phase of the place-based block courses or pathway. She shared:

So, during those courses, you know, we were at Ypsi High and that's my alma mater, I went to Ypsi High. And coming back from my time as an AmeriCorps, I realized that I had no sense of community or connection to Ypsi while I was in school. In high school, and I think if I had learned more about my community, I may not have moved away, right away, or Yes, for college, but maybe I wouldn't have moved away. Again, but I really see the value of including the surrounding community in the curriculum, because I've had so many conversations with people and if students don't have a sense of connection to where they're from. They often, you know, graduate and then leave.
And, you know, they'll say that like, Oh, yeah, I'm from there. But, you know, I, generally people associate and don't want to be there, necessarily. And I've had conversations with people where they've just said that, you know, not in those direct words. But it's just, it's just shocking that so many people don't really have a deep understanding of where they're from the history or anything. And I learned so much about the community while I was in Ethan's classes, there is a historian that worked with us, Matt Siegfried. And it was great, like, I learned new things about up to that I had never learned while I was in high school, middle school elementary and how that informs my practice today, like, I, you know, even researching, being a teacher. I really do enjoy working with students, I think, just in it, and I do desire to do something, place-based full heartedly.

She expressed how she learned through the curriculum course:

So I might be a little bit of a special case. But I would say it informed me for sure. And also, when I was writing my curriculum, Ethan, of course, gave examples of what the end of the curriculum project could culminate in. And because we had to have a culminating project for the students that would be presented to the community. And it could have been many different things that could have been a letter to some, like a local government official, or it could be a protest, it could be, it could be so many different things some form of civic engagement, civic action, and also, murals was an option. And me coming from my four years of serving as an AmeriCorps member, I had been painting murals for at least two of those years. And I did it with young people with high schoolers and middle schoolers. And I just think, you know, I could have been doing so much more for them with that, instead of just painting
something for the fun of it. That's, you know, pretty, I could have been doing
something way more educational with the students than just painting the wall, you
know?

She further shared about her experience in the fellowship component of the place-
based pathway that was conducted in collaboration with the Neutral Zone, a community
organization that focuses on creating “youth-driven spaces.” This part of the place-based
pathway did not exist when David and Jake were part of the program:

I believe we met twice a month. And it was for the course of a year. And we focused
on youth driven spaces and student boys. And we basically got to have some really
good discussions, conversations and experience different manners in which we can
engage our students. So oftentimes, when you're a teacher, you're taught by, like,
you're taught about something through doing it, right. So we would participate in all
of these really cool activities and have discussions. And those are really good. And
just a few things that I remember that really stick out to me are just, there is a there's a
one day one training we had at the Neutral Zone, and there was a presentation on
active learning and what that entailed. And just the idea of not assuming that students
don't know something about what you're about to teach, but beginning with what they
do know, and then going from there. And so yeah, that's just really involving them in
the process. And, and letting them be, like, again, so. So that's where their voice
really matters. They aren't just being told, like this, this, this, you know, you don't
know anything, it's not assume that they don't know anything. So instead of like a
traditional lecture, but they're really actively engaged in the learning process, maybe
trying to present what they think they may know, or discovering what they are
learning. When you discover something in the learning process, you are going to remember it better than if you were just told something, and you have to practice and memorize it. So that's where inquiry is really, really helpful. And then, something else that stood out to me was, with the SEMIS coalition, we had a special training day with them. And the Neutral Zone was there as well…But the director [of the Neutral Zone]…talked about youth adult partnership, and the idea of what it is the have a partnership with the young people we work with, as an educator, and how. So there's this visual that I will always remember and take with me. And that is like a seesaw. So as an educator, we have all these things on our side that we've already learned in our life and through experience and through school and whatnot. And then, on the other side, the young people we work with, they do not have as much as we do on a seesaw. So the seesaw is not balanced, right. And so to lift them up and bring it to, to a more well to a balanced place. It's our job to give them those things that we know and learn to create a better partnership.

David experienced the place-based block of courses, which was the social foundations course, curriculum course, and the practicum where they taught for the first time. During this first phase of program development, David did not have the opportunity to take any other courses using placed-based approaches. David, however, was extremely appreciative of his teacher education experience. When David was asked about his experience in the classes with the PBE model, he shared how the program impacted his experience:

The class that I took with Ethan like we bounded. The whole class got so incredibly close and so there was three of us that tr[jed] and get together once a month but it
doesn’t always happen that way. We are always texting, [truthfully] it is a big support, because they all teach different levels, teach different demographics. So just being able to explain and have someone that understands, that has a similar problem has a similar training and be able to have conversations with them has been good. It definitely has been a benefit to me and so I think it’s like in that aspect the program was great because it provided me those colleagues that now I lean on and so like I’m having a bad day I need for you to tell me what I need to do. Fix my problem right now you know and they either gave me good advice or they told me like, you know, it’s not that bad, you got this. Like immediately, they will go back to technical things that we learned in the classroom.

David shared passionately about his outlook on his experience in the teacher preparation program, and he retold one of the greatest moments in the program and shared sentiments regarding the program directors’ impact:

[ETHAN] he has changed the way I think about things; even myself. But just the fact that allowing space and the safety for me to be able to speak up to a room of my peers that they bring their own experiences and be able to challenge those experiences and challenge their view of these beautiful students that experience was great. It was not quite as specific like a class but like having those experiences and being exposed to these communities as a person, but also I think having that experience with a group I had it with that was, I learned a lot from my classmates through those discussions and through those frustrations you know we are grown people, sitting in a room together crying about stuff, and it’s not like it’s not out of the ordinary. Like it absolutely feels normal, and ok to have these emotions that are coming out based on the
experience that we are seeing. You know I learned so much from being in that environment and being hands-on with the students and seeing how brilliant and wonderful and fantastic and beautiful all of them are, and being able to, you know sit down and talk to their families and being able to do those things. But also have those conversations with those classmates that have never been and have never seen and all they know is what they’ve heard.

When David was asked about his teacher preparation program experience he explained his dealings with his former professor:

I think that Ethan and I are very different. We are different in the way that we see things. We are different in the way we approach things, and I was comfortable looking at life through my lens and being okay with that. But this, like the place-based and specifically Ethan’s way of approaching it caused me to no longer be comfortable with just being or having like my view. Because again for years I would go by off what I see and I’d be having these conversations with people that have similar experiences, or similar whatever, we’d be ok.

When David was asked if he would recommend this teacher preparation program to others, he responded:

Yes! I would, yes! Because again the conference that I spoke at was a conference for math teacher educators. Again, I am sitting in this room full of math ed professors that are teaching teachers how to instruct in mathematics, [and] I was the only one that looked like me.

David provided more details about the block courses and contrasted his experience there with some of the traditional teacher education classes he took. He asserted:
My general teacher preparation you know the social foundations and those classes really did a good job of opening my eyes as well as my heart and doing these things, but like content specific was severely lacking with talking about and being intentional about discussing and exploring and investigating and researching how we better meet the needs of students and communities and genders and who have historically been marginalized data has shown us we talk about the data driven instruction. We want to talk about we’re diverse, and we want to talk about how we are inclusive, but we don’t do a great job at that.

During the interview with David he was very reflective. One impact of the program on David’s practice was an emphasis on being a reflective practitioner. He indicated:

for me as the teacher, how many more opportunities am I missing because I’m not in tune so like this is just my method, I am always reflecting how I can get better, and so like that hit me today when they reminded me of this. It happened in my first hour when we had this amazing conversation which took, it was supposed to be like in two minutes [or] three minutes, just an intro to the problem and let’s get you engaged with it and it ended up being like that was the main part of the lesson and they still got the math and like they were more engaged with it. [But] how many opportunities am I now missing? I need to be more aware because this was something like one of those similar moments with them. As a student, something that they took away a year later, they still see as important and important enough that they feel like I should bring it up again and as I am driving home this was on my mind teacher preparation I mean honestly, I think even before ever going to a classroom. Helping teachers I mean we are talking about metacognition with students, helping them thinking about their
thinking [but] teachers need to do it. We’re the ones that really need to do it. Think about what we are filtering our own biases, and it’s difficult and it’s that I think central. So now like, like I feel it really should be the teacher’s responsibility. I feel a vested like interest in the success of those that have this experience and are passionate about you know, you’re going to go through all these things that you’ve got to go through and all these classes and long papers that Ethan is making you do. They don’t go through all these things like that’s my passion I want you to be successful. I’m going to do what I can.

David reflected on his sentiments regarding the teacher preparation program blocked courses. He explained:

It has made me a better human, like beyond of being a better teacher. Like it’s made me more compassionate and a more empathetic human. It’s made me, it’s made me more patient. It has made me more observant. It has made me more like; my passion level has ramped up.

Through David’s own place-based education experience in the program, he developed a core component of being a culturally responsive educator—being aware of one’s own biases in relation to student experience:

Now even to this day, like I am constantly checking myself about the, like the filter and what I’m filtering this information, what they’re saying this student group, because I’m filtering it through my bias and my experience and my privileges where I need to be better about saying.

He continued to explain the benefits from his experience:
I think the benefit of the teacher preparation program that I went through is that even though in my math ed courses and even in my minor which is communications was severely lacking. The place-based ed and some of those specific classes hit it hard and it did not allow you to leave the class, saying “I was not exposed to this”. There were plenty of them [fellow classmates] that were like, “it’s not for me, I won’t talk about it, like whatever”. But they could not say that these doors weren’t open to me. Like [they cannot say] I was not exposed to this. At that point, they were making a conscious willful decision to not engage. We were really grounded in that block, it was three classes in one so that network has been great.

One powerful moment David shared was during a field experience in one of his blocked courses and how he and his classmates were walking around in a neighborhood and they were approached by those who lived in the community. David recalled that moment with his classmates:

I remember we were taking a tour, it’s all like our nice little group in there little preppy clothes, you know. And then, like we’re out and we are touring this neighborhood, and this group of guys came and they try to talk like they didn’t surround us but they kind of came like in the middle of our group. And so, “what do you do? forget that opportunity, that experience of going out there and taking this walk down the streets and then having the conversation because immediately in our minds we are, oh, no, what’s going to happen, are we safe? And like they were just wanted to have a conversation, like “what are you guys doing, why are you over here?”

He recalled:
We were standing in front of a garden and they’re telling us about how the garden got started and what was going on and who contributed. And just having that dialog and being really immersed and so, for me, it opened my eyes to what teaching and learning is really like. It’s not as clean and clear cut as you hear in your non-place-based classes. You know you hear in the non-place-based classes, well you need to teach four lessons and they you need to assess this way and it’s not that, it doesn’t flow that way.

David explained what place-based education was through the experiences in an urban school leading the knowledge obtained. He recalled:

I had some other experiences through the teacher preparation program that were also things that I like look back on and have like definitely impacted my teaching philosophy. So, I have had some opportunities where I taught in [the Detroit] school [we were partnered with in the place-based block] and it was phenomenal, because I was in a school that didn’t have a lot of resources, and so we were trying some innovative things that the students really enjoyed that previously were disengaged in; especially when it was with math so I found that to be interesting and something that I could relate with.

When David was asked to share about his experience and readiness to teach all students, his response indicated that he has become a strong anti-racist educator and advocate in his district. He, himself, has learned how to be civically engaged and express his voice:

How can we meet the needs of mathematics? How can we meet the needs and help support all students? I mean for me those are my passions and so number one is being honest, being honest and open and having these hard conversations and not being
afraid of having them. I think that there is a fear of being labeled as, especially amongst my White colleagues, to be called a racist because they have ignorance, and so instead of having conversations and trying to overcome and these entities having like facilitating conversations, whether it be at school or in the districts or whatever we just allow the status quo. Without having these differences and so being intentional and so, again no one can leave and say that we were not exposed to this. They could have left the class and said that “I’ve chose to ignore it”. And so, I think that it is vital that every student, not just the students that are not just the teachers that are purposely joining into these programs, but every teacher should be exposed to these difficult conversations and being exposed to thinking about the way they think [examining] their own thinking patterns, and being honest and truthful, and being pushed to be honest and truthful about, and it’s difficult and it’s painful and it’s frustrating. That is how we become better. But often times, we don’t do it because we have never been taught to do it, we have never been put in an environment where we have had to do it.

David finally shared how he is still connected to Ethan. For example, Ethan invites David back to share his experiences with his current students. He explained the message he now shares with current students to offer support:

And so now I come back and I like I have to go back and speak to his class, and I tell them, every single one of them, like now that I’m standing before you; I’m a resource. I’m here. I’m checking up on you. I want you to be successful, because I feel that it is so important because I didn’t have anybody that did that for me.
These experiences described above displayed the need for teacher preparation programs which utilize the place-based educational approach. The research questions that guided this study were (a) How does a place-and-community based teacher preparation program inform teacher candidates’ preparation for teaching Black students? David in particular shared about how the class he was in under the instruction of Ethan was extremely close and supportive. (b) How do instructors within the program describe their approach for preparing teacher candidates to teach Black students? This was displayed when, through the blocked courses, they took the students to two different types of high schools and allowed teacher candidates to explain their perception of the visible and structural differences. (c) How do teacher candidates (or alumni) describe their preparation for teaching Black students? Laura in particular shared about a term she learned the week that we had her interview; the term was culturally responsive instruction. She also shared that she received several emails providing her opportunities to take an African-American-studies-type course from the department, but it was not mandatory that she took that particular course. The themes display the intersection of CRP and PBE. David shared about how the three blocked courses made him, most importantly, a more empathetic human, more patient, and more observant, and it has made him reflect more to monitor his biases. All of these characteristics display the intersection between CRP and PBE.

Figure 6.1 displays how CRP focuses on diversity, cultural assets, intentionality of educators, challenging the status quo, and assessing academic performance without tests and grades solely. PBE focuses on connection to place, inquiry-based instruction and informed civic engagement. Both CRP and PBE include components of community and care. For example, challenging the status quo means the conventional reform is not enough. Informed
civic engagement emphasizes students cannot learn about community without being actively involved in civic actions of that community. This displays community and care. Both CRP and PBE include components of student voice, cultural proficiency, and relationship. For example, acknowledgement of culture as an asset is an area that educators should be intentional with students. This displays cultural proficiency. Furthermore, culture is linked to inquiry-based instruction and connection to place, which intertwines interpersonal relationships and ultimately empowers students. This displays relationships and value in students voice. Finally, both CRP and PBE include components of high expectations and strength-based approach. For example, having high expectations of students and a strength-based approach are components of CRP. PBE aims to immerse students in learning opportunities within the context of their own communities. This further displays both high expectations and a strength-based approach. Please see Figure 6.1 for a visual display of these intersections.
Figure 6.1. CRP and PBE intersection.
Chapter 7: Discussion, Implications, and Conclusion

As I am nearing the end of this research study, I am reminded of Siddle Walker’s (1996) statement: “Good teachers could help launch a child into a life that would otherwise not have been possible.” (p. 150) When I think about my own experience as a child, I can now vividly recall moments in which community-based schooling experiences were the center of my life in school. Growing up, we literally valued the grounds of the school and community members therein. I remember several of my classmates’ parents coming into the school and assisting with different educational tasks. My own father actually came in every Friday and taught the computer class for my grade level and several other grade levels. I even recall us as students going to our principal’s house for a school-wide field day. This experience was vastly different from the experience that I shared in the introduction of this dissertation and the other school.

In the interviews of six participants, I observed five major themes: community, care, cultural proficiency, relationships, and PBE. The first four themes answered my first research question: “How does a place- and community-based teacher preparation program inform teacher candidates' preparation for teaching Black students?” First, my participants found success when they were inclusive of students’ cultural backgrounds and cultural experiences (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2014). They also described building and cultivating meaningful relationships as central to their teaching philosophy and practice. Each participant shared how they respected and cared for their students while sustaining a respectful classroom community. The last theme answered the research question: “How do teacher candidates describe their preparation for teaching Black students?” The participants discussed how they made explicit connections to the student’s previous knowledge, cultural
assets, and community life and allowed students to facilitate learning opportunities. These five themes will become the basis of my discussion in this seventh chapter along with the cross-cutting themes amongst the program developers, and teacher candidate/alumni participants.

It is imperative that teacher preparation programs prepare teachers that are qualified, caring, relationship-driven, and culturally proficient. The findings of my exploratory study inform research on using place-based education as a model for developing culturally proficient teachers in two important ways: providing rich descriptions of the influence of a teacher preparation program attempting to use PBE as its core approach and providing a research-based hypothesis for the kinds of characteristics that developers and instructors who seek to use a place-based education model as a foundational approach should include if they aim to foster culturally proficiency in their teacher candidates. In the following sections, I will discuss each of these areas. In the last section, I will discuss the implications for future action in the areas of teacher preparation programs, recommendations for additional research, and challenges.

**An Analysis of the Influence of a Place-Based Teacher Preparation Program on the Perceptions of Teacher Candidates’ Culturally Proficient Teaching Philosophy and Practice**

My findings supported some key elements of existing research on place-based education and effective teacher preparation programs (Carter Andrews, et al., 2019; Gay, 2010a; Haddix, 2015; Lowenstein & Erkaeva, 2016). All of the teacher candidate/alumni participants had positive memories of the place-based education program. Laura, Jake and David all shared how they received most of their training of culturally proficiency when
exploring the place-based education approach through the blocked courses offered; the social foundations course, curriculum, and the practicum course. When reflecting on her experience in the teacher preparation program generally, Laura recalled that there was not a specific course that she took that was solely geared towards teaching Black students but would have loved to take that course if offered.

Many teacher preparation programs only require one or two courses that focus on multicultural education or diversity. Those courses alone are not sufficient because they often end up teaching within a deficit view framework and reinforce stereotypes of students (Sleeter, 2008). For example, Assaf, Garza and Battle (2010) state:

Many teacher preparation programs attempt to infuse multicultural perspectives by simply adding one or two courses in multicultural education and/or requiring teacher candidates to complete assignments that explore surface level differences in culture and language such as sampling different ‘cultural’ foods or learning to say hello in several languages. Such practices can be superficial and partial rather than infused into a coherent multicultural curriculum (Irvine, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Zeichner & Hoeft, 1996). (p. 116)

One finding of my study is that an intensive block of courses grounded in a place-based approach can influence teacher candidates understanding of culturally proficient teaching. In the place-based blocked curriculum and secondary methods course, two objectives for that course were (a) explore your own assumptions about curriculum, assessment, teaching, and learning so that you may engage in intentional and thoughtful educational decision-making and (b) analyze, confront, and make sense of the current cultural and ecological crisis as it relates to preparing students intellectually, emotionally,
ethically, spiritually, and physically, to thrive in the world in which they live and will live. There were a total of 16 objectives, but those two spoke directly to teaching and learning along with cultural emphasis. Key course concepts were: place-based education, community, deficit versus strength-based thinking, interconnectedness, and becoming comfortable with being uncomfortable. Additionally, in the blocked courses, several topics that were included in the reading and assignment schedule were introduction to PBE, instructional strategies, teachers professional dispositions, and mindsets, introduction to ecojustice, introduction to differentiation and community mapping, restorative practices, learning and inquiry-based instruction, and trauma-informed teaching practices. This is not the full list of topics covered but reflects the content covered using the PBE framework. The participants’ success seemed to reflect the objectives that Ladson-Billings (1995) describes as necessary to establish cultural responsive instruction. Ladson-Billings (1995) presented the three objectives, with no one having more weight over another. Because of Ladson-Billing’s impact on subsequent research in the field, it is worth using her theoretical framework as an analytical lens to interpret the findings of this exploratory study.

Positive Impact Students’ Academic Performance

In her research, Ladson-Billings (1995) underscored how much attention was given to the failure of Black students in particular and indicated how the cultural mismatch between home and school impacted Black students’ learning. In order for CRP to be effective and meaningful, the participants had to be open to trying new things with their students based on questions that were grounded in their own life experiences. For example, when David shared that he allowed his students to discuss their concerns about hurricane Irma, he demonstrated his willingness to allow the students to lead their learning. He also
demonstrated his awareness that Latinx students in his class might be especially concerned about the impact of the hurricane in Puerto Rico. This employs the core pedagogical anchors within PBE which is connection to place (Lowenstein et al., 2018). PBE, for example, provides an opportunity for youth to shape their learning experience as they cultivate their ability to be community leaders (Lowenstein et al., 2018). During the research, this was displayed through Jake when he provided his students to bring in local concerns as well as with David regarding hurricane Irma. Another way that participants in this study report impacting students’ academic performance is through having high expectations. David, for example, mentions that he has high expectations of his students and believes they are capable to learn math.

**Cultivate Cultural Competence**

Ladson-Billings (2001) defines cultural competency as the ability to understand and respect other cultures and one’s own culture. Laura demonstrated this when she discussed her experience with a student in her classroom who was labeled as “difficult”, but she made an attempt to understand the student and view her from a strength-based approach. Jake also shared about his desire to learn about his students that he has in his classroom by providing them with survey to gain information about their life. Both teachers were aware of their racial and cultural positioning as white, the failures of “traditional” teachers to effectively teach students of color, and their own responsibility to go beyond traditional teaching practices in order to gain an understanding of where their students were coming from and how to effectively teach them (Villegas, Strom, & Lucas, 2012). This is connected to PBE and inquiry-based instruction, a core pedagogical anchor (Lowenstein et al., 2018). For example, key components of inquiry-based instruction include: “reflection, respecting multiple
perspectives, democratic dialogue, and situating complex issues of social ecological justice within a cultural, historical, and community context” (Lowenstein et al., 2018, p. 39). Respecting multiple perspectives and exploring complex issues within a cultural and community context was vividly displayed through Jake’s example above.

**Grow Critical Consciousness**

Ladson-Billings (2009) describes critical consciousness as the facilitation of students’ understanding and critique of inequities within educational institutions and social organizations. To me, David displayed this when he asked his students if they felt their teachers’ perception of them without their teachers actually verbally sharing it. David strongly encouraged his students and put a lot of effort into convincing them that they could and would understand math. David also allowed students to discuss the impact of food scarcity and tied that to a math problem which still presented the opportunity for these students to challenge the status quo. Although David did not report that his students took actual action, he did involve them in civic discourse rooted in the context of local issues. This is connected to the PBE core pedagogical anchor of informed civic engagement (Lowenstein et al., 2018).

The above analysis, although exploratory, and based on a small number of study participants, establishes the probability that PBE might be one powerful method that could be used to reach the core objectives of CRP—objectives that other approaches to teacher preparation have historically had a difficulty reaching.

**Characteristics of a Place-Based Education Model That Advances CRP**

One aim of this research study was descriptive—I wanted to be able to paint a picture of the philosophy and practices that undergirded a program design that was based on place-
based teaching and learning principles. The themes that emerged from my interviews with program developers and instructors and my artifact analysis have important implications for the field.

My findings indicate that programs should intertwine Banks’ (1991) five dimensions of multicultural education, which are (a) content integration, (b) knowledge construction, (c) prejudicial discrimination, (d) equity pedagogy, and (e) empowering school culture and social structure, the three core pedagogical anchors of place-based education (Lowenstein et al., 2018) which are (a) connection to place, (b) informed civic engagement, and (c) inquiry-based learning, and Ladson-Billings’ (1995) three objectives of culturally responsive pedagogy, which are (a) impact academic performance, (b) cultural competency, and (c) critical consciousness. James Banks’ five dimensions were visible throughout this study. For example, when David, Jake, and Laura shared how they included their students’ interests in their lesson plans, they displayed content integration, knowledge construction and empowering school and social structures. Jake shared about his student population and his intent to monitor prejudices and support equity through social justice, which intersects two of Banks (1991) multicultural dimensions. Furthermore, Laura displayed the fifth dimension when she described the story of the student who was labeled negatively. These intersections were displayed throughout the dissertation, especially through culturally competency and cultural proficiency, because multicultural education is one of the foundations of CRP. This section further displayed the alignment of the five dimensions to offer a deeper analysis.

One foundational idea for the program developers and instructors in this was that the development of cultural proficiency is a “long-term and developmental process.” This was one of the initial rationales for blocking and integrating three courses together to create a
more integrated and intensive experience for teacher candidates. This finding aligns well with prior research by Sleeter (2001), who found that preservice teachers who took more than one course geared towards multicultural education were more likely to use culturally relevant pedagogy in their instruction. One implication for teacher education practitioners is that it should be a requirement that all students in a teacher preparation should have sufficient coursework on cultural responsive pedagogy and place-based education (Gay, 2000; Putnam, 2018; Smith & Sobel, 2010). Another implication, is that additional coursework may be a partial answer to developing strong culturally responsive teaching programs. This study indicates that blocking and co-teaching multiple courses, and using a place-based approach to teacher those courses can be a powerful lever for student learning transformation.

Teachers should also have courses centered around place-based education throughout their entire program. Furthermore, teacher preparation programs should require extensive cross-cultural student teaching experience. Wendy shared that ensuring teacher education students teach in other areas other than their own was not the focal point because many students move back home to accomplish this task. Ethan also shared that it is important that teacher candidates be immersed in multicultural teaching environments. Exposure or awareness is not enough. For White teachers who are used to being in the majority, such immersion experiences are critical for fostering empathy and cross-cultural understanding. The selection of the cooperating teacher is therefore also important since they must have experience with cultural proficiency. As Laura shared, if the cooperating teacher is not modeling culturally proficient teaching practices, this experience could hinder the necessary learning experience. One question that this study raises for program developers is how systems can be created where both the cooperating teacher and the student teacher can work
together in planning using the place-based education approach to incorporate culturally
relevant pedagogy. One important feature of the program and blocked course in this study,
was that it placed students in schools that were part of the Southeast Michigan Stewardship
Coalition (SEMIS Coalition), a program at the university that helped practicing teachers
develop a place-based approach. Given this feature, policy makers and foundation funders
might do well to encourage dedicating resources to developing and supporting place-based
programs that integrate preservice and in-service teacher education.

Although place-based education has recently developed attention nationally, place-
based education, as an approach, is not a new phenomenon and has historically provided
educators with a holistic learning approach (Smith, 2002). Additionally, teacher preparation
programs for decades have explored how to integrate education for social justice (see, for
example, Cochran-Smith, Villegas, Abrams, Chávez-Moreno, Mills, & Stern, 2013.;
Cochran-Smith, 2015; Zeichner, 1993; Ziechner & Hoeft, 1996; Ziechner & Melnick, 1996;
Ziechner & Schuttle, 2001), and academic-service learning into their coursework (see, for
example, Wade, 1995). In addition to Eastern Michigan University, colleges and universities
that have or are developing a place-based teacher preparation program include: Antioch
University (see https://www.antioch.edu/new-england/resources/centers-institutes/center-
place-based-education/), Bank Street College (Vascellaro, 2011) University of Michigan-
Flint (see, for example, https://sites.google.com/umich.edu/um-flintcep/september-2019), and
Grand Valley State University (see, for example, https://www.gvsu.edu/place-based-
education/). It is no coincidence that many of the recent efforts to create place-based teacher
preparation programs are connected to hubs of the Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative
(GLSI), the largest statewide network in the country to support PBE.
Place-based education offers an abundance of pedagogical possibilities in teacher education. For example, PBE can be connected to cultural studies that could be centered around oral histories and journalism, nature studies that explores a natural phenomenon, and real-world problem solving that encourages students to identify a school or community-based issue that they would like to investigate or address (Smith, 2002). A comprehensive approach to PBE, according to Greg Smith, must also involve students being decision-makers in the process of their own community (Smith, 2002). For example, ensuring that students have internships in within their community assists with sustaining the community (Smith, 2002), and place-based teacher preparation programs can systematically create such opportunities for community-embedded work and civic action for teacher candidates. Applying a place-based approach in teacher preparation would require that teacher candidates serve as resources and partners to address pivotal community needs (Smith, 2002) while still in their teacher preparation programs.

Although teacher preparation programs cannot attempt to uncover all of the life experiences of their students, they can do much more in terms of place-based education in efforts to better prepare preservice teachers to become culturally proficient. In the next section, I will discuss how cultural proficiency could be sustained.

**Sustaining Cultural Proficient Instruction**

The findings of this study align with the previous research about culturally proficient instruction and makes a contribution to that literature by providing a description of a teacher preparation program that appears to be effective in influencing its students’ teaching philosophies and perceived practices (Banks, 1988, 1994, 2004). My three major findings were that using a place-based education model (a) helped preservice teachers build positive
relationships with their students, (b) assisted preservice teachers build community, and (c) made explicit connections to the importance of facilitation and inquiry. Gloria Ladson-Billings’ (1994) study examined teachers who established positive relationships with their students, sustained and cultivated community, and expressed that they wanted high expectations of students academically. David—a Black teacher, expressed how he expected all of his students to learn math and succeed in school. Laura and Jake—both White, one preservice teacher and one teacher—also alluded to the importance of getting to know their students while pushing them academically.

The program developers, Wendy, Ethan, and Iman, had cross-cutting themes which I observed. From interviewing the program developers, seven themes emerged, which were community, othermothering, sense of belonging, cultural identity, cultural proficiency, place-based education, and relationships. Wendy shared how school community is based off a larger connection or a common good. Ethan extended this notion that cultural competence or social awareness is anchored in community building. He shared how he and Iman aimed for collective growth for their students. All three developers shared ways that they displayed othermothering through the teacher preparation program (Carter Andrews et al., 2019). Iman specifically was described by Ethan as nurturing and firm. Wendy shared about how the program was creating a campus-wide community for students, faculty, and staff to feel like they are a part. Both cultural identity and cultural proficiency (social awareness) were discussed by all three to argue that all students come into their classrooms as cultural beings and members of a community already. Understanding how that identity impacts learning and teaching is the ability to be culturally proficient. Wendy shared how the department had plans to use a new product to keep track of their field experiences in order to do a better job
of tracking student experiences and making sure students were placed in culturally diverse contexts. Place-based education was discussed on a department level supporting school projects to connect to community, and Ethan agreed by suggesting that in order to cultivate learning environments that are safe and inclusive, a place-based approach is necessary. The formation of deep, sustained, and long-term partnerships is a core practice that PBE emphasizes, and this focus on such partnerships seems to be a cornerstone practice of the program (Lowenstein et al., 2018). The developers all agreed that in efforts to use the place-based approach, relationships and partnerships must be established. Wendy shared how those in her department care about what the students are actually doing. Ethan honed in on partnerships, and Iman shared about a student who she had a relationship with and her ability to meet that students’ needs because of the supportive community and partnerships the program had in place.

Through the teacher candidate/alumni interviews of Laura, Jake, and David, five themes emerged: community, care, cultural proficiency, relationships and place-based education. The themes that emerged from the data were reflected in their discussions of teacher preparation or preparedness, their descriptions of instruction and the qualities of student-to-teacher interactions that they found to be the most critical. Their interviews captured how the place-based education teacher preparation model facilitated the process of becoming culturally competent. Laura and Jake agreed that there is a need to include the students’ community in the classroom (The Glossary of Education Reform 2014). David shared his reasoning for going into the teaching profession. His reasoning was similar to what Achinstein and Ogawa (2011) discuss in their study of the challenges that teachers of color face once they enter the teaching force:
...their commitments to working as change agents, who transform schools to improve educational opportunities for low-income students of color, were shaped by family, community, and professional influences. Thus, they were attracted to working in schools that served these communities. (p. 139)

David is what I would identify as a change agent as he recalled his own educational experience, such as growing up in public housing along with sentiments shared from his teachers, which impacted how he viewed education and learning for his students. It is interesting to note that, unlike the teachers in Achinstein and Ogawa’s study, however, David has sustained his commitment to teaching for social justice and equity. David’s focus on his classroom community and his ability to create a community of both high expectations and lessons that have a high degree of relevance to students’ lives appears to have been a result of his teacher preparation and the powerful ways in which the PBE program modeled these approaches. David’s ability to sustain his approach to PBE and CRP appears to be, at least partly due to the networks of supportive personal and collegial relationships that he formed in the place-based program.

**Care.** Care was shared across all three participants as a component within instruction. Siddle Walker (1996) acknowledges the importance of community and care within the predominately Black community. She shared,

> The other point—worthy of discussion of its own—was in the way the teachers and principal proved to them they were genuinely interested in their children. This was through their “caring” (p. 91).

Care was deeply important to all of the teacher candidates and alumni, and they reported and gave examples of care-based teaching practices. David, Laura, and Jake shared how teachers
who are committed to their students and dedicated to ensuring their success, have an open-door policy for their students and go the extra mile in addressing their needs. Laura shared about how it is essential for teachers to want to be in the schools they are teaching in. Jake shared that this type of effort requires a huge amount of psychological energy. Jake also alluded to how care has subcomponents of patience and compassion, which grounds the approach teachers’ can have. David shared how students are actually looking for someone to love them and care about them. They agreed on the importance of teachers caring while supporting students with a safe environment.

**Community.** The teacher candidates and alumni witnessed the importance of supportive community spaces (Haddix, 2015). They concluded that they valued community and shared how having a healthy and thriving community enhances the academic performance of students. These teacher candidates and alumni really grounded the notion of community and linked that to the complex issues faced on a local, national, and global level (Lowenstein et al., 2018). This ranged from food security, global warming, and immigration. David consistently made reference to his efforts to ensure that community was brought into the classroom and used to support instruction. Laura also shared that learning could actually take place using the community as the space to learn (Haddix, 2015). She described how students may see something that they want to change within their respective communities and education should be flexible enough to accommodate that. She also shared how she desired to give back to her own community, which was developed only when she learned the historical aspects of where she came from through the place-based education approach that her professors modeled and immersed her in.
**Cultural proficiency.** Cultural proficiency was seen as understanding how cultural identity impact students learning (Banks, 1988; Corwin, 2012). According to the teacher candidate and alumni, they had an awareness of their own cultural identity, and they were aware of the preferred learning styles of their students (Harmon & Stokes Jones, 2005; Milner, 2012). The teacher candidates and alumni taught from an “inclusive, humanistic, relational, and worldview” approach (Lindsey, Karns, & Myatt, 2010, p. 86). As they shared about how they all incorporated their students’ interests, concerns, and community within their instruction, it indicated that they saw being culturally competent as critically important to address the cultural learning needs of their students along with successful relationship building.

Through the blocked courses, David, Jake, and Laura learned ways to be culturally proficient. Laura shared that cultural proficiency was not emphasized through student teaching but rather garnered through the place-based educational focus. David shared that the misalignment between what he was learning in the place-based program and the rest of his teacher preparation courses was one of his bones of contention regarding the notion to ensure that all teachers were culturally proficient. When asked about how the place-based courses had impacted his teaching, post-graduation, he gave the example of a math problem he was teaching that had involved a mountain shelter. Realizing what his students’ experiences were, and seeking to connect the concept he was discussing to the students’ cultural context, David took his students out of their school down the street in their place and discussed the bus shelter instead. It was the same problem made more relatable for all students.

**Relationships.** The teacher candidate and alumni witnessed the development of positive, supportive relationships between teachers and students within the teacher
preparation program. They concluded that teachers should embrace students’ differences and help sustain positive and reaffirming relationships with them because it enhances the educational setting (Rey, Smith, Yoon, Somers, & Barnett, 2007). In their own teaching, through developing positive relationships with their students, they report beginning to provide their students a sense of belonging, which lends support to academic goals, exploring content, and mastering concepts (Rey et al., 2007). The teacher candidates and alumni discussed their skills and knowledge which allowed them to cultivate a “personal, and not simply professional, relationship with their students that cares for their social, psychological, cultural, and academic well-being, both in school and society” (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 1997 p. 2). They nurtured their students’ emotional and mental health which assisted with supporting their academic performance.

The theme of relationships was prominent through the interviews of Laura, Jake, and David. All alluded to how on the front end they collected information from the students, which helped with lesson planning. Building relationships strengthened the teacher candidate/alumni’s ability to use the place-based education approach: “If you could see the circumstances out of which children have come, you would understand better how to teach them” (Siddle Walker, 1996, p. 87). To be able to enrich the learning environment, relationships, and partnerships is important along with ensuring that they know each of their students.

**Place-based education.** According to the teacher candidate and alumni they believed that PBE had a culturally responsive focus. They concluded that the teacher preparation with the PBE framework was essential to support their own students in their educational environment. When students see themselves or their community in an educational setting that
strengthens learning and instruction, it offers a connection point between instructional materials and the student. Making that connection strengthens the learning environment. The two anchors that they discussed were connection to place and inquiry-based instruction, which centers students learning interests at the core. When students are connected to their place, it provides multiple learning opportunities and removes barriers that Black students and other students of color typically encounter in their learning. More specifically, this addresses the anti-Blackness phenomenon which, is a tool that places Black culture at the bottom of the spectrum instead of seeing Black culture as an asset (Dumas, 2016; Kohn, 1996; Nighaoui, 2017; Roediger, 1994). The connection to place also helps to support diverse backgrounds where cultural beliefs, multiple learning styles, and multiple languages are taken into consideration (Bowers, 2006; Lowenstein & Erkaeva, 2016; Lupinacci & Happel-Parkins, 2016; Martusewicz et al., 2015).

Although teacher candidate and alumni perceptions of their teacher preparation were mostly positives, they did discuss areas for program growth. These include: student teacher placement, student teaching cooperating teacher selection, lack of focus on special education, post-graduate readiness, tracking of where students are teaching post graduation, the need for greater diversity within the teacher preparation program, the need to offer and cultivate a community-centered space on campus, and specific courses on preparing teachings to teach Black students. The table below (Table 7.1) displays how the teacher candidate or alumni described both PBE and CRP in their practice. The first column shows the PBE anchor, the second column displays the CRP component that the teacher candidate or alumni used and the third column is the outcome.
Table 7.1

**PBE & CRP Teacher Preparation Effectiveness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PBE</th>
<th>CRP</th>
<th>Effective TPP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place → Cultural Asset →</td>
<td>Connecting Place and Culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry → Intentional →</td>
<td>Being intentional about students’ learning needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Engagement → Conventional Reform →</td>
<td>Cultivating the space for students to challenge the status quo</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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**Implications for Teacher Preparation Programs**

This study shows that teacher candidates who have experienced the PBE approach are able to relate to students differently through creating community, making connections to the students’ lives and to the instructional materials. Results from this study can be used to help teacher preparation programs, K-12 educators, school district, school boards, universities, and members of respective communities reframe the infrastructure as it relates to teaching Black students. The voices of the participants provided detailed accounts of their perception of their program, and how those experiences prompted their readiness as a culturally aware educator.

Ladson Billings (1994) contends, “We must also look for more innovative and nontraditional ways to bring the right people into teaching” (p. 131). One implication for program developers who seek to start experimenting with a place-based approach to CRP, is that small but creative changes can have a big impact. It is notable that even without an aligned student-teaching component, course instructors in this study were able to immerse students and model place-based approaches with enough power to impact teaching philosophies and culturally relevant practice and that these impacts were sustained even years after teachers had graduated from the program. This shows that even creative tweaks to
existing structures like combining courses into whole-day blocks of time that instructors can use flexibly to model experiential learning, community building, and inquiry-based practices can have an impact.

This study also has implications for those who hire new teachers. If principals, curriculum directors, and superintendents are familiar with PBE, they can hire the best teachers who are familiar with this approach and willingly use this approach in their own instruction. This study suggests that multiple areas of the educational system need to be changed at once. For example, administrators themselves should learn and experience place-based education in educational leadership programs. Otherwise, they may not know how to support place-based teachers in their schools and districts. In this study, the fact that the Southeast Michigan Stewardship Coalition was able to form long-term and trusting relationships with schools, districts, and practicing teachers and foster the development of place-based practices within these spaces, allowed for the PBE undergraduate program to situate its blocked courses in field sites that provided powerful opportunities for candidates to become more culturally proficient. Policymakers and funders should support multi-pronged approaches to supporting PBE.

One strong theme with implications for teacher preparation program developers is the need to align coursework with cross-cultural student teaching placements within the program. As Wendy alluded to, there can sometimes be a disconnect between student teaching structures and coursework. Wendy indicated that this was an aspiration of the program but not yet a common practice with program structures to support it. Laura shared that even without a cross-cultural student teaching placement, her experiences within the blocked courses were powerful enough to shift her views of students from a deficit to a strength-
based view. Ethan emphasized how it is important for White teacher candidates to experience not being the majority, which helps with navigating the learning process. Jake made mention of the importance of getting to know the students’ community or it’ll be a disconnect in the classroom. Laura also made mention of the importance of noticing what happens when immersed in certain environments or when discussing certain topics.

This study reinforces the current research which is centered on building connections between the classroom content and also the students’ lives or community. The Ladson-Billings (1994) seminal study presents a great example of this. She captured how a teacher discussed Nelson Mandela’s release from prison and why others should care about him in relation to those students. Triangulation with learning artifacts from the blocked courses indicate that Laura, Jake, and David learned how to connect to community through place-based learning processes in the blocked class. Their unit plan and their reflection papers showed a concern and regard for community.

Overall, the most important implication of this exploratory study is that place-based teacher preparation can have a positive influence on teacher candidate’s philosophy and culturally relevant teaching practice. A place-based approach to culturally responsive pedagogy, not only has the potential to impact teachers’ ability to teach Black students but all students since PBE focuses on the development of meaningful relationships, engaged learning, and student empowerment.

Recommendations for teacher preparation programs are to focus on incorporating the PBE model, emphasize cultural competence through training and course offering, and develop programs and opportunities to learn about community.
Implications for Research

Although this study yielded important findings, it was exploratory in nature. There is a need for additional research opportunities for other scholars wishing to study teacher preparation programs. This study was limited to investigating one teacher preparation program at a predominantly White institution (PWI). Data from this research indicated that preservice teachers in this teacher preparation program experienced a lack of cultural training through in their overall teacher preparation program. They did, however, feel supported through the place-based education blocked courses offered. It may be helpful to replicate this study with multiple programs in the Midwest to garner a better understanding of the overall preparedness of teacher candidates who may teach Black students. It may also be helpful to examine the full program.

Because this dissertation methodology was qualitative, the number of research participants in this study was small. One suggestion is to study a larger group or cohort of a teacher preparation program to see if the results align with the same themes that emerged with this study. Quantitative or mixed-method research approaches could provide a different analysis. In addition to examining multiple programs, another consideration for future research is a more longitudinal study to capture a deeper analysis of the impact of place-based teacher preparation programs. The data can be gathered for multiple years from the time students enter the teacher preparation program and also the first couple years of being in the classroom (Sleeter & Milner, 2011). In-class observations and student impact data could be used to study whether what teachers describe is happening in the classroom matches what is actually happening. Additional research on the students who have PBE teachers could capture a broader array of student voices regarding their own educational experience. There
also may be additional models which could be explored that could be helpful in preparing teacher candidates’ to be culturally diverse (Sutton & Knuth, 2017).

Research on all students of color in addition to all types of learners is needed. This would inform teacher preparation programs as to what kinds of curriculum, methods, and practicum experiences are needed. It would also inform principals, school districts, school boards and community partners about powerful ways to provide the best learning environment for students of color. Overall, it is essential to provide curriculum and instruction for all students.

Currently, there is limited research regarding place-based education and its connection to culturally responsive teaching (Gay 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2001). These findings indicate that a teacher preparation program with a place-based approach affects culturally responsive teaching. In David’s interview, he shared a wonderful experience about going out to the community and learning about a garden by individuals who resided in community. Laura shared through her unit plan how interconnecting the community through place-based education was essential for establishing relationships with her students. Jake shared the importance of knowing where students come from as the foundation on understanding who they were and what to teach them. All of these experiences are grounded in place-based education but seamlessly connect to culturally responsive teaching as a pedagogical approach. Although I have begun to develop a teacher preparation framework that integrates PBE and CRP, this study is just the start of a larger research platform and I am looking forward to seeing others build on and/or challenge the PBE and CRP teacher preparation program model that this study introduces.
Researcher Reflection

On a personal level, this research has been empowering and after each of the interviews I felt my hope ignited again. All the interview participants shared that the research experience helped them to reflect on their own practice and growth and I had similar feelings. I thought about my teachers in the 1990’s and early 2000’s and wondered how my experiences would have changed if I had educators that were intentionally trained to teach me. For example, I described in the first chapter that I experienced a racial instance and that this instance contributed to my initial interest in teacher education. I did have a teacher in elementary school who introduced me to place-based education in my science class. I remember questioning as a child if I was really learning because we were not in the classroom with a book. We went to a creek near by my school and did a couple activities on the school grounds. At the time, I did not know it was considered place-based education. That teacher taught at the school where I had some rich community-based learning experiences, including my father teaching my class and my principal hosting us at her home for a field day. While a doctoral student in 2013, I actually saw this teacher at a conference which was exploring place-based education. At that time, she then told me that I was in her first class and she shared that she taught in that manner. Her name was Ms. S at the time that she taught me. She was innovative, and I never forgot those activities because I was in my community. I recall that now as an adult and especially now as a researcher.

Challenges

This mini case study focused on the experiences of past and present students of a teacher preparation program along with the department head and program developers and instructors. Because this study was a mini case study design the results and conclusions do
not offer general implications (Glense, 2006). The reason the conclusions of this mini case study are not intended to be generalizable is because this research sought to achieve an in-depth understanding of the case within the real-world context (Bromley, 1986, p. 1). Finally, in efforts to decrease any issues with the findings of this study, there are some challenges to highlight. The information gathered from this study is limited by the characteristics of the sole Midwestern predominantly White institution studied. This study is limited by the data collection of only two past teacher preparation program students. This study is limited by the data collection of only one current teacher preparation program. All participants were recommended by one of the program developers. The program developer himself was my dissertation advisor, and though I have taken steps in my research process, such as member checking and third-party review of my transcripts and analysis with a critical friends writing group, the reader should be aware of potential bias in the dissertation. The program has undergone several changes and phases, so each teacher candidate/alumni participant experienced a different phase. Because data was collected several years ago, the program has since grown and added components that are not reflected in the study. Additionally, the study had three teacher candidates or alumni participants, and I requested that they recall their experience in the program, which may have had a time span of five to six years since they were in the program. That particular challenge could also been seen as an advantage as well since it is rare for teachers to recall the kinds of details that they did about a program so long after graduation. Lastly, the absence of observations may have influenced the stories reflected through interviews and also meant that I did not triangulate what teachers were saying about their practice with third party observations of the teacher-student relationship or student impact data. Viewing the teachers in their classrooms at EMU along with in their
classroom as a teacher would have allowed for what Patton (2002) refers to providing “translucent windows into cultural and social meaning” (p. 116).

Creswell (2003) asserts that qualitative researchers “conduct the inquiry in a subjective, biased manner” (p.39). This study was vulnerable to researcher bias due to the fact that I am a doctoral candidate attending a predominately White institution, and the research site is capturing the stories of students who attend a predominately White institution focused on best practices to teach Black students. One way I aimed to reduce the possible effects of research bias was using the member checking process by sending all participants their transcribed interviews to ensure I captured their perspectives and experiences accurately. If requested, I sent the final draft of this work to participants. I also used a critical friend group to garner the feedback on verbatim of the participants and my interpretation and also my interview memos.

Conclusion

This study provided insight on how teachers are being prepared to teach Black students. It described how teachers in the place-based education teacher preparation program approached their pedagogy. These experiences were clearly depicted in Chapter 6 for each teacher candidate/alumni. It was the power of the three blocked courses that allowed students a culturally reflective experience. It also appears that one reason why the design of these blocked courses was so effective, was because the program developers and instructors had a shared theoretical framework. There is a need for the full establishment of the teacher preparation program. According to hooks (1994), “Professors who embrace the challenge of self-actualization will be better able to create pedagogical practices that engage students,
providing them with ways of knowing that enhance their capacity to live fully and deeply” (p. 22).

This research study sought to gain an understanding of what takes place in a teacher preparation program that has a PBE framework. I stated in Chapter 1 that this research is extremely personal to me because of my own experience as a child who did not initially feel a connection in school. This research has introduced an analysis and framework that has the potential to help restructure teacher preparation programs more broadly. As a higher education practitioner, I will use the place-based education model in my classroom and department. I am extremely humbled that I had the opportunity to learn from the wonderful participants in my study. Their practices to reach all of their students through the place-based education approach while sustaining culturally relevant pedagogy is hugely important to the state of education and also students’ lives. I hope that other preservice teachers and teacher preparation programs can learn from them as well. This research study can be summed up with a quote by Toni Morrison that states, “There is nothing of any consequence in education, in the economy, in city planning, in social policy that does not concern black people.”
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APPENDICIES
Appendix A: Consent Forms

Letter of Introduction for Teacher Education Candidates/Teacher Educators

Brief Information
My name is Shondra Marshall and I am a doctoral student in the Educational Studies Doctoral Program at Eastern Michigan University. My dissertation is an interview-based qualitative research study in which I examine methods used in undergraduate teacher education to help teacher candidates meet the needs of African American students. The research will examine a teacher preparation program that is attempting to use a place-based approach to culturally responsive teaching. This research will specifically focus on the teaching strategies utilized in teacher education to instruct African American students. This research study intends to provide teacher education programs, teacher educators, and policy makers with valuable perspectives on teacher development and promising approaches for how to assist teachers in increasing student engagement and the academic performance of African American students.

If you agree to take part in this research, your participation will consist of completing a demographic survey and two audio-taped interviews of approximately one hour and with your agreement, I may request to meet with you for a follow-up interview for further clarification. Participation in the study is completely voluntary and we will do everything we can to protect your confidentiality if you choose to participate.

Benefits of the Project
This dissertation study will provide me with valuable information about teachers’ perspectives and opportunities to further develop research in the field of education. Your participation in this research study will be greatly appreciated, as the responses that you provide will be an addition to the already existing knowledge of educating those who will teach African American students.

There are no direct benefits to you; however as a participant this may be an opportunity to reflect on your own perceptions about teacher development and culturally responsive pedagogical practices. There are no foreseeable risks to participating in the project.

Dissemination of Results
Findings from the research project will be shared with my dissertation committee at Eastern Michigan University, as part of the requirements in partial fulfillment of my doctorate degree; the study findings will be disseminated in a final dissertation, which will be available through the University’s system. In addition, the findings may be shared in publications and conference presentations. Your identity will be protected and we will do everything we can to protect your confidentiality if you choose to participate.

I look forward to having you as a participant in this research study. If you have any questions regarding the study, I can be contacted at (734) 276-2976 or at smarsha1@emich.edu. You may also contact the faculty sponsor/committee chair, Dr. Ethan Lowenstein at (734) 487-3260 or at ethan.lowenstein@emich.edu.
If you would like to participate in the research study, please read and sign the consent form on the following page:

Educationally Yours,
Shondra L. Marshall, Doctoral Candidate
College of Teacher Education
Eastern Michigan University
Informed Consent Form
Project Title: Can Place-Based Teacher Preparation Be Culturally Responsive? An Exploration of One Promising Program
Principal Investigator: Shondra L. Marshall, Eastern Michigan University
Faculty Advisor: Ethan Lowenstein, Eastern Michigan University

Invitation to participate in research
You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be a graduate of the teacher education program, a current student, or a professor/program overseer of the teacher preparation program. Participation in research is voluntary. Please ask any questions you have about participation in this study.

Important information about this study

- The purpose of the study is to examine methods used to train teacher education professionals on teaching African American students.
- Participation in this study involves examining a teacher preparation program. This research will specifically focus on the teaching strategies utilized in teacher education to instruct African American students. Therefore, the curriculum and program requirements that are used within the teacher education program will provide a comprehensive understanding of how they are prepared as teachers and how African American students are impacted.
- There is no unforeseen risk associated with this research study. To minimize risks to the study participants, their identifiers will be anonymous by assigning a pseudonym for names, work location, city, and state to ensure anonymity.
- The investigator will protect your confidentiality by ensuring that every attempt to confirm safety, privacy, and discretion will be implemented. The consent forms will be filed in a locked cabinet that only the researcher will have the ability to access. Artifacts and documents that are retrieved from the participants to develop the research will also be securely locked away. Work locations and names will be assigned pseudonym in order to ensure anonymity. Documents or identifying information that is stored on any electronic devices (computers, tablets, smartphones, recording (audio/video) devices, USB jump drives, file backup programs) will be password protected.
- Participation in this research is voluntary. You do not have to participate, and if you decide to participate, you can stop at any time.

What is this study about?
The purpose of the study is to provide more teacher education programs with various instructional approaches/strategies, which may be utilized to increase student engagement and academic performance of African American students.

What will happen if I participate in this study?
Participation in this study involves
● completing a demographic survey
● Two (2) interviews
We would like to audio record you for this study. If you are audio recorded, it will be possible to identify you through your voice. If you do not agree to be audio recorded, you may not be eligible to participate in this study.

What types of data will be collected?
We will collect data including racial or ethnic origin and your sexual orientation.

What are the expected risks for participation?
There are no expected physical or psychological risks to participation.
The primary risk of participation in this study is a potential loss of confidentiality.

Some of the survey/interview questions are personal and may make you feel uncomfortable. You do not have to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable or that you do not want to answer. If you are upset, please inform the investigator immediately.

Are there any benefits to participating?
You will not directly benefit from participating in this research.

The benefit of this study will provide research that is necessary to improve urban education teacher education programs. This will ultimately assist in increasing the academic performance of African American students specifically. The participants in this research will have potential to influence the educational realm and political decisions surrounding education, teacher quality, teacher education program quality and the professional development of aspiring teachers.

How will my information be kept confidential?
I plan to publish the results of this study. We will not publish any information that can identify you. Findings from the research project will be shared with my dissertation committee at Eastern Michigan University, as part of the requirements in partial fulfillment of my doctorate degree; the study findings will be disseminated in a final dissertation, which will be available through the University’s system. In addition, the findings may be shared in publications and conference presentations. Your identity will be protected and we will do everything we can to protect your confidentiality if you choose to participate.

We will keep your information confidential by ensuring that every attempt to confirm safety, privacy, and discretion will be implemented. The consent forms will be filed in a locked cabinet that only the researcher will have the ability to access. Artifacts and documents that are retrieved from the participants to develop the research will also be securely locked away. Work locations and names will be assigned pseudonym in order to ensure anonymity. Documents or identifying information that is stored on any electronic devices (computers, tablets, smartphones, recording (audio/video) devices, USB jump drives, file backup
programs) will be password protected. We will store your information for at least three years after this project ends, but we may store your information indefinitely.

We will make every effort to keep your information confidential, however, we cannot guarantee confidentiality. The principal investigator and the research team will have access to the information you provide for research purposes only. Other groups may have access to your research information for quality control or safety purposes. These groups include the University Human Subjects Review Committee, the Office of Research Development, the sponsor of the research, or federal and state agencies that oversee the review of research, including the Office for Human Research Protections and the Food and Drug Administration. The University Human Subjects Review Committee reviews research for the safety and protection of people who participate in research studies.

Storing study information for future use
We may or may not store your information to study in the future. Your information will be labeled with a code and not your name. Your information will be stored in a password-protected or locked file and will be stored indefinitely.

We may share your information with other researchers without asking for your permission, but the shared information will never contain information that could identify you. We will send your de-identified information by email and only upon request.

What are the alternatives to participation?
The alternative is not to participate.

Are there any costs to participation?
Participation will not cost you anything.

Will I be paid for participation?
You will not be paid to participate in this research study.

Study contact information

If you have any questions about the research, you can contact the Principal Investigator Shondra L. Marshall, at smarsha1@emich.edu or by phone at 734-276-2976. You can also contact Dr. Ethan Lowenstein adviser, at ethan.lowenstein@emich.edu or by phone at 734-487-3260.

For questions about your rights as a research subject, contact the Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee at human.subjects@emich.edu or by phone at 734-487-3090.

Voluntary participation

Participation in this research study is your choice. You may refuse to participate at any time, even after signing this form, without repercussion. You may choose to leave the study at any
time without repercussion. If you leave the study, the information you provided will be kept confidential. You may request, in writing, that your identifiable information be destroyed. However, we cannot destroy any information that has already been published.

**Statement of Consent**

I have read this form. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and am satisfied with the answers I received. I give my consent to participate in this research study.

**Signatures**

__________________________
Name of Subject

__________________________  ______________________
Signature of Subject  Date

I have read this form. I have an opportunity to ask questions and I am satisfied with the answers I received. I also give my consent to be audio recorded in this research study.

**Signatures**

__________________________
Name of Subject

__________________________  ______________________
Signature of Subject  Date

I have explained the research to the subject and answered all his/her questions. I will give a copy of the signed consent form to the subject.

__________________________
Name of Person Obtaining Consent

__________________________  ______________________
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent  Date
Letter of Introduction for Program Director/Program Overseer/Professor

Brief Information
My name is Shondra Marshall and I am a doctoral student in the Educational Studies Doctoral Program at Eastern Michigan University. My dissertation is an interview-based qualitative research study in which I examine methods used in undergraduate teacher education to help teacher candidates meet the needs of African American students. The research will examine a teacher preparation program that is attempting to use a place-based approach to culturally responsive teaching. This research will specifically focus on the teaching strategies utilized in teacher education to instruct African American students. This research study intends to provide teacher education programs, teacher educators, and policy makers with valuable perspectives on teacher development and promising approaches for how to assist teachers in increasing student engagement and the academic performance of African American students.

If you agree to take part in this research, your participation will consist of completing a demographic survey and one audio-taped interviews of approximately one hour and with your agreement, I may request to meet with you for a follow-up interview for further clarification. Participation in the study is completely voluntary and we will do everything we can to protect your confidentiality if you choose to participate.

Benefits of the Project
This dissertation study will provide me with valuable information about teachers’ perspectives and opportunities to further develop research in the field of education. Your participation in this research study will be greatly appreciated, as the responses that you provide will be an addition to the already existing knowledge of educating those who will teach African American students.

There are no direct benefits to you; however as a participant this may be an opportunity to reflect on your own perceptions about teacher development and culturally responsive pedagogical practices. There are no foreseeable risks to participating in the project.

Dissemination of Results
Findings from the research project will be shared with my dissertation committee at Eastern Michigan University, as part of the requirements in partial fulfillment of my doctorate degree; the study findings will be disseminated in a final dissertation, which will be available through the University’s system. In addition, the findings may be shared in publications and conference presentations. Your identity will be protected and we will do everything we can to protect your confidentiality if you choose to participate.

I look forward to having you as a participant in this research study. If you have any questions regarding the study, I can be contacted at (734) 276-2976 or at smarsha1@emich.edu. You may also contact the faculty sponsor/committee chair, Dr. Ethan Lowenstein at (734) 487-3260 or at ethan.lowenstein@emich.edu.

If you would like to participate in the research study, please read and sign the consent form on the following page:

Educationally Yours,
Shondra L. Marshall, Doctoral Candidate
College of Teacher Education
Eastern Michigan University
Consent Form
Demographic Survey

Project Title: Can Place-Based Teacher Preparation Be Culturally Responsive? An Exploration of One Promising Program
Principal Investigator: Shondra L. Marshall, Eastern Michigan University
Faculty Advisor: Ethan Lowenstein, Eastern Michigan University

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to provide more teacher education programs with various instructional approaches/strategies, which may be utilized to increase student engagement and academic performance of African American students.

Study Procedures: Participation in this study involves completing an online survey. It should take between 20 and 35 minutes to complete the survey.

Types of Data Collected: We will ask questions about your experience in the teacher preparation program. We will also ask for information about your ethnic origin and gender.

Risks: The primary risk of participation in this study is a potential loss of confidentiality. Some of the survey questions are personal in nature and may make you feel uncomfortable. You do not have to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable or that you do not want to answer.

Benefits: This dissertation study will provide me with valuable information about teachers’ perspectives and opportunities to further develop research in the field of education. Your participation in this research study will be greatly appreciated, as the responses that you provide will be an addition to the already existing knowledge of educating those who will teach African American students. There are no direct benefits to you; however, as a participant this may be an opportunity to reflect on your own perceptions about teacher development and culturally responsive pedagogical practices.

Confidentiality: We will keep your information confidential by using a code to identify your information. The code will be linked to your name using a separate key. Your information will be stored in a password-protected computer file. We will store your information for at least three years after the project ends, but we may store your information indefinitely so that we can use your information for future studies.

The principal investigator and the research team will have access to the information you provide for research purposes only. We may share your information with other researchers outside of Eastern Michigan University. If we share your information, we will remove any and all identifiable information so that you cannot reasonably be identified. De-identified information will be transferred by email.
The results of this research may be published or used for teaching. Identifiable information will not be used for these purposes.

**Compensation:** There is no compensation to participate in this study.

**Contact Information:** If you have any questions about the research, you can contact the Principal Investigator, Shondra L. Marshall at smarsha1@emich.edu or by phone at 734-276-2976. You can also contact Shondra’s adviser, Dr. Ethan Lowenstein, at ethan.lowenstein@emich.edu or by phone at 734-487-3260.

For questions about your rights as a research subject, you can contact the Eastern Michigan University Office of Research Compliance at human.subjects@emich.edu or by phone at 734-487-3090.

**Voluntary participation**
Participation in this research study is your choice. You may refuse to participate at any time, even after signing this form, with no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may choose to leave the study at any time with no loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you leave the study, the information you provided will be kept confidential. You can withdraw your consent by emailing the Principal Investigator listed above. You may request, in writing, that your identifiable information be destroyed. However, we cannot destroy any information that has already been published.

**Statement of Consent**
I have read this form. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and am satisfied with the answers I received. I click “continue” below to indicate my consent to participate in this research study.
Appendix B: Tentative Sample Interview Questions (Protocol)

Teacher Education Program Course Instructor Interview

1. How long have you been teaching within this teaching education department?

2. What courses have you taught within this place-based teacher preparation program?

3. How would you define place-based education?

4. What is your personal teaching philosophy and how has place-based education influenced your philosophy?

5. What is the main objective for the courses that you teach?

6. What instructional methods do you use that you see as critical to being a place-based educator?

7. How do you prepare the teacher candidates in your classes and program to teach African American students?

Program Director/Administrator/Coordinators Interview (Researcher)

1. What is your vision for your program?

2. What are your hopes for all your student teachers enrolled in the place-based teacher preparation program?

3. How are topics of race, culture, and power integrated into the courses in the program?

4. What are the courses in the program of study and how are they sequenced? Why have you organized the courses in this way?

5. Who teaches the courses that have topics of race, culture and power within the course program? How diverse is the teaching staff in your department?

6. What life experiences do you think help or hinder instructors’ abilities to teach these topics?

7. Tell me about your experience with placing students in diverse settings?
Appendix C: Teacher Education Program Graduate Interview Guide

Teacher Education Program

1. What type of courses did you take in your teacher preparation program to facilitate learning for culturally diverse students, specifically African American students?

2. How might you have felt better prepared by your teacher preparation program? How could they have better prepared you to reach/teach culturally diverse students?

3. Please define this in your own words, what is place and community-based education? What did you learn in your program about place-based education and how has this influenced your teaching?

4. How were the courses that you took in your program that focused on place-based content different than any other courses you took and how did they impact you?

5. If you could change anything about your experience in the teacher preparation program to prepare educators to engage African American students to foster their social, emotional, academic growth and develop a positive self-concept, what would you change?

6. Is there anything else you would like to share about your teacher preparation experience?

Supplemental questions:

1. In your teacher preparation program, tell me what you learned about culturally relevant pedagogy? (this can probably be answered in #1)
2. Would you recommend the program to others? Why? Why not?
3. How well do you think the program prepared you to teach all students and specifically teach African American students? (similar to question 2)

Teaching Experience

1. Tell me about your teaching experience and philosophy of teaching. Have you started your teaching assignment? If so, where? When did you start? What district? What grade?

2. What did you learn from your mentor teacher through your student teaching placement?

3. What are the characteristics that make a quality teacher?

4. What does cultural competency mean to you and how is it displayed in your teaching?
5. What do you do in terms of instructional/teaching strategies to ensure your students are engaged in the learning process and how do you facilitate diverse learning experiences?

Supplemental questions:
1. What has been challenging for you?
2. Tell me about the working relationships you have with other EMU teacher candidates, with your mentor teacher and with other teachers, support staff, and administrators in the school where you are teaching.
3. Describe your school and classroom setting.
Appendix D: Demographic Survey

Assigned pseudonym: __________________________

Directions: The following questions ask about your background and experience. Please answer questions to the best of your knowledge. All responses will be anonymous, as they will be assigned a pseudonym.

Gender: Age: _______ (on your last birthday)
☐ Male
☐ Female
☐ Non-binary/third gender
☐ Prefer to self-describe ______________
☐ Choose not to disclose

Race: (Please select the race that you identify with)
☐ African-American/Black
☐ Hispanic
☐ Alaska Native/Native American
☐ Arab
☐ Asian
☐ Caucasian/White
☐ Other ______________________________

Higher Education Experience

Where did you attend high school (school name, city)?

____________________________________________________________________________

Intended Degree (check the degree obtained):
☐ Bachelor
☐ Master
☐ Specialist Certificate
☐ Doctorate
☐ Other ______________________________

Degree Specialty: What area (major) is your degree(s) you are pursuing?
Bachelor: _____________________________________________________________
Master: _____________________________________________________________
Specialist Certificate: _________________________________________________
Doctorate: ___________________________________________________________
Other ______________________________

_________________________________
Teaching Experience

Total Year(s) in teaching: ________

Teaching Experience (includes practicums and student teaching assignments)

Year: ________
Grade: _____________________________________________________________
District: __________________________________________________________________________

Year: ________
Grade: ________
Subject: _____________________________________________________________
District: __________________________________________________________________________
Appendix E: Teacher Education Graduate Student Recruitment Letter/Email

Dear Teacher Education Student,

Hello! I am Shondra L. Marshall, a doctoral candidate at Eastern Michigan University in the College of Teacher Education. I am conducting a qualitative research study entitled, *Can Place-Based Teacher Preparation Be Culturally Responsive? An Exploration of One Promising Program*, to complete the requirements for the dissertation completion.

The purpose of this qualitative research study is to examine methods used to train teacher education professionals on teaching African American students. The research will examine a teacher preparation program. This research will specifically focus on the teaching strategies utilized in teacher education to instruct African American students. Therefore, the curriculum and program requirements that are used within the teacher education program will provide a comprehensive understanding of how they are prepared as teachers and how African American students are impacted. This research study intends to provide more teacher education programs with various instructional approaches/strategies, which may be utilized to increase student engagement and academic performance of African American students.

If you agree to take part in this research, your participation will consist of:

- completing a demographic survey
- one (1) interview
- a follow-up interview (if needed)

Your participation in this research study will be greatly appreciated, as the responses that you provide will be an addition to the already existing knowledge of educating those who will teach African American students. Due to this study being voluntary, at any time during the study, you may refuse to participate or withdraw without consequence to which you are entitled. Every attempt to confirm safety, privacy, and discretion will be implemented. Work locations and names will be assigned pseudonym to ensure anonymity. All documents will be locked away or password protected and those documents of participants who withdraw will be destroyed.

I look forward to having you as a participant in this research study and if you have any questions regarding the study, I can be contacted at (734) 276-2976 or at smarsha1@emich.edu. You may also contact the faculty sponsor/committee chair, Dr. Ethan Lowenstein at (734) 487-3260 or at ethan.lowenstein@emich.edu.

Educationally Yours,

Shondra L. Marshall, Doctoral Candidate
College of Teacher Education
Eastern Michigan University
Appendix F: Teacher Candidate/Alumni Consent Form

Eastern Michigan University

College of Education: Educational Studies/Urban Education

Teacher Education Student/Graduate Consent to Participate in Research Study

Title of Study: Can Place-Based Teacher Preparation Be Culturally Responsive? An Exploration of One Promising Program

Purpose of Study:

The purpose of this qualitative research study is to examine methods used to train teacher education professionals on teaching African American students. The research will examine a teacher preparation program. This research will specifically focus on the teaching strategies utilized in teacher education to instruct African American students. Therefore, the curriculum and program requirements that are used within the teacher education program will provide a comprehensive understanding of how they are prepared as teachers and how African American students are impacted. This research study intends to provide more teacher education programs with various instructional approaches/strategies, which may be utilized to increase student engagement and academic performance of African American students.

Contribution: Participating in this research study will include:

- completing a demographic survey
- one (1) interview
- a follow-up interview (if needed)

Risks: There is no unforeseen risk associated with this research study. To minimize risks to the study participants, their identifiers will be anonymous by assigning a pseudonym for names, work location, city, and state to ensure anonymity.

Research Benefits: The benefit of this study will provide research that is necessary to improve urban education teacher education programs. This will ultimately assist in increasing the academic performance of African American students specifically. The participants in this research will have potential to influence the educational realm and political decisions surrounding education, teacher quality, teacher education program quality and the professional development of aspiring teachers.

Confidentiality: Every attempt to confirm safety, privacy, and discretion will be implemented. The consent forms will be filed in a locked cabinet that only the researcher will have the ability to access. Artifacts and documents that are retrieved from the participants to develop the research will also be securely locked away. Work locations and names will be assigned pseudonym to ensure anonymity. Documents or identifying information that is stored on any electronic devices (computers, tablets, smartphones, recording (audio/video) devices, USB jump drives, file backup programs) will be password protected.
**Right to Refuse or Withdraw:** Participation in this study is voluntary and at any time during the study a refusal to participate will be granted without consequence to which each participant is entitled.

I have read the above information and I voluntarily give consent to take part in this research study.

Participant’s Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________

Participant’s Name (printed): __________________________________________

**In addition to agreeing to participate, I also consent to having the interview(s) tape-recorded and/or videoed.**

Participants’ Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________

Researcher’s Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________

Researcher’s Name: ___________________________ Date: __________

*The researcher will keep this consent form for at least three years beyond the end of the study.*

**Any additional questions or concerns, please contact:**
Shondra L. Marshall, Doctoral Candidate in Educational Studies
Eastern Michigan University, College of Education
1509 E. Bellows
Unit #A
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858
734-276-2976
smarsha1@emich.edu

Faculty Sponsor/Committee Chair:
Dr. Ethan Lowenstein, Professor
Eastern Michigan University, College of Education
Teacher Education
313 Porter
Ypsilanti, MI 48197
734.487.3260
ethan.lowenstein@emich.edu

For information about your rights as a participant in research, you can contact the Eastern Michigan University Office of Research Compliance at (734) 487-3090 or human.subjects@emich.edu
Appendix G: Program Director/Program Overseer/Professor Recruitment Letter/Email

Dear Program Director/Program Overseer/Professor,

Hello! I am Shondra L. Marshall, a doctoral candidate at Eastern Michigan University in the College of Teacher Education. I am conducting a qualitative research study entitled, *Can Place-Based Teacher Preparation Be Culturally Responsive? An Exploration of One Promising Program*, to complete the requirements for dissertation.

The purpose of this qualitative research study is to examine methods used to train teacher education professionals on teaching African American students. The research will examine a teacher preparation program. This research will specifically focus on the teaching strategies utilized in teacher education to instruct African American students. Therefore, the curriculum and program requirements that are used within the teacher education program will provide a comprehensive understanding of how they are prepared as teachers and how African American students are impacted. This research study intends to provide more teacher education programs with various instructional approaches/strategies, which may be utilized to increase student engagement and academic performance of African American students.

If you agree to take part in this research, your participation will consist of:

- completing one (1) interview

Your participation in this research study will be greatly appreciated, as the comprehensive information that you share will provide additional knowledge to the already existing research on teacher preparation and especially teachers who teach African American students. Due to this study being voluntary, at any times, you may refuse to answer any questions on the teacher inventory survey to which you are entitled. Every attempt to confirm safety, privacy, and discretion will be implemented. Work locations and names will be assigned pseudonym to ensure anonymity. All documents will be locked away or password protected.

I look forward to having you as a participant in this research study and if you have any questions regarding the study, I can be contacted at (734) 276-2976 or at smarsha1@emich.edu. You may also contact the faculty sponsor/committee chair, Dr. Ethan Lowenstein at (734) 487-3260 or at ethan.lowenstein@emich.edu.

Educationally Yours,

Shondra L. Marshall, Doctoral Candidate
College of Teacher Education
Eastern Michigan University
### Appendix H: Matrix of Interview Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Why do I need to know this? (Goals)</th>
<th>What Kind of Data will answer the questions? (methods)</th>
<th>Analysis Methods</th>
<th>Potential Conclusions</th>
<th>Alternative Explanations (Validity/Threats)</th>
<th>Methods to Investigate Alternative Explanations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How does a place- and community-based teacher preparation program inform teacher candidates' preparation for teaching Black students?</td>
<td>To understand how place and community based teacher prep program prepares teacher candidates for teaching Black students. To inform further inquiry of teacher preparation.</td>
<td>Interview: Structured and open-ended</td>
<td>Single Case: Coding Cross – case analysis</td>
<td>Community Relationships Representation</td>
<td>Researcher bias that could influence the data collection and analysis of data Participants feeling obligated to speak positively regarding their program</td>
<td>Follow-Up clarifying questions Use critical friend circle to review my interpretation based of verbatim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>how do instructors within the program describe their approach for preparing teacher candidates to teach Black students?</td>
<td>To understand what is happening in the classroom.</td>
<td>Interview: Structured and open-ended Artifact review</td>
<td>Single Case: Coding Cross – case analysis</td>
<td>Intentional Informative Community centered Exposure Partnerships</td>
<td>Participants may not focus on preparing their teacher candidates to teach Black students.</td>
<td>Use syllabi, mission, vision of program and other departmental documents. Participant transcription review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do teacher candidates describe their preparation for teaching Black students?</td>
<td>To understand how prepared teacher candidates, feel to reach all students including Black students in K-12 environments. To inform the discussion regarding the widening achievement gap</td>
<td>Interview: Structured and open-ended Artifact review</td>
<td>Single Case: Coding Cross – case analysis</td>
<td>Prepared from experiences in the block courses Well prepared Not prepared</td>
<td></td>
<td>Use critical friend circle to review my interpretation based of verbatim. Use syllabi, mission, vision of program and other departmental documents.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix I: Matrix of Research and Interview Questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How does a place- and community-based teacher preparation program inform teacher candidates' preparation for teaching Black students?</th>
<th>How do instructors within the program describe their approach for preparing teacher candidates to teach Black students?</th>
<th>How do teacher candidate and alumni describe their preparation for teaching Black students?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What courses have you taught within this place-based teacher preparation program? How do you prepare the teacher candidates in your classes and program to teach African American students?</td>
<td>How are topics of race, culture, and power integrated into the courses in the program?</td>
<td>How might you have felt better prepared by your teacher preparation program? How could they have better prepared you to reach/teach culturally diverse students?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are your hopes for all your student teachers enrolled in the place-based teacher preparation program?</td>
<td>What is your personal teaching philosophy and how has place-based education influenced your philosophy?</td>
<td>How would you have felt better prepared by your teacher preparation program? How could they have better prepared you to reach/teach culturally diverse students?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the courses in the program of study and how are they sequenced? Why have you organized the courses in this way?</td>
<td>Who teaches the courses that have topics of race, culture and power within the course program? How diverse is the teaching staff in your department?</td>
<td>Would you recommend the program to others? Why? Why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell me about your experience with placing students in diverse settings?</td>
<td>What life experiences do you think help or hinder instructors’ abilities to teach these topics?</td>
<td>How well do you think the program prepared you to teach all students and specifically teach African American students?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What type of courses did you take in your teacher preparation program to facilitate learning for culturally diverse students?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tell me about your teaching experience and philosophy of teaching. Have you started your teaching assignment? If so,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
students, specifically African American students?

Please define this in your own words, what is place and community-based education? What did you learn in your program about place-based education and how has this influenced your teaching?

How were the courses that you took in your program that focused on place-based content different than any other courses you took and how did they impact you?

what does cultural competency mean to you and how is it displayed in your teaching?

What do you do in terms of instructional/teaching strategies to ensure your students are engaged in the learning process and how do you facilitate diverse learning experiences?

In your teacher preparation program, tell me what you learned about culturally relevant pedagogy?
Appendix J: IRB Approval

Jul 9, 2018 1:06 PM EDT

Shondra Marshall
Eastern Michigan University, Teacher Education

Re: Exempt - Initial - UHSRC-FY17-18-210 An Exploration of a Place Based Teacher Preparation Program: Integrated with Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Dear Shondra Marshall:

The Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee has rendered the decision below for An Exploration of a Place Based Teacher Preparation Program: Integrated with Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. You may begin your research.

Decision: Exempt
Selected Category: Category 1. Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods. Category 2. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.
Renewals: Exempt studies do not need to be renewed. When the project is completed, please contact human.subjects@emich.edu.

Modifications: Any plan to alter the study design or any study documents must be reviewed to determine if the Exempt decision changes. You must submit a modification request application in Cayuse IRB and await a decision prior to implementation.

Problems: Any deviations from the study protocol, unanticipated problems, adverse events, subject complaints, or other problems that may affect the risk to human subjects must be reported to the UHSRC. Complete an incident report in Cayuse IRB.

Follow-up: Please contact the UHSRC when your project is complete.

Please contact human.subjects@emich.edu with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee