

“It's equal but it's not fair”: The Experiences of Teacher Candidates of Color
in a Teacher Preparation Program at a Predominantly White Institution

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Abstract

“It’s Equal but It’s Not Fair: The Experiences
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in a Predominantly White Institution

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This research documents the experiences of Teacher Candidates of Color (TCCs) during their K-8 teacher preparation program at a Predominantly White Institution. The study followed the TCCs in two different learning environments: their university courses and their school placement sites in order to discover in what ways, if any, their learning experiences were afforded or constrained by their racial and cultural identities. Findings suggest that school placement sites were especially beneficial for TCCs when their cultural and linguistic heritages were congruent with the students, families, and communities in which their school placement was located. At times the TCCs’ learning opportunities were constrained by their cultural and linguistic identities. These moments were more likely to occur in the university courses due to the program’s focus on culturally responsive instruction that was not consistently demonstrated in their program.

These findings have implications for how teacher preparation programs at PWIs can better focus learning experiences for TCCs. Teacher preparation programs, school districts, and communities are struggling to better meet the needs of K-12 students whose racial, cultural, and linguistic identities differ from most of their teachers. One strategy to better meet the needs of K-

12 students is to increase the number of teachers of color. By increasing the number of teachers of color in the K-12 teaching workforce, the demographic gap can be reduced with the overall goal of increasing academic outcomes for all students, particularly students of color. With that goal in mind, the teacher preparation programs at PWI's have been working to increase the number of teacher candidates of color and the findings from this study could help to both recruit and retain teacher candidates of color.

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PREFACE

The individuals who agreed to participate in my research inspired this work. They not only gave generously of their time, but also trusted me with their stories. Their journeys are amazing and will serve as a reminder of how resilient the human spirit can be, as well as how trivial the work in teacher preparation can become without the testimonial of the people who have worked tirelessly, and in many cases, against enormous odds, to become teachers. One of the participants arrived in the United States at the age of 14 years, after having spent the majority of her childhood abroad and in a refugee camp in Kenya. Three of the participants' families emigrated from Southeast Asia, Mexico and Central America to the United States in the hope of better educational opportunities and living conditions for their children, and then faced all the challenges of linguistic and cultural acclimation. The one male participant grew up in a rural area, closely connected to his culture and people in an area mostly populated by his Native American tribe. The fact that these people made it into college--and then into graduate school-- are amazing feats. Their intelligence, persistence, optimism, and resilience are humbling and motivating. I want to honor their stories and help to build upon their work by enabling more men and women, from historically underserved communities, to enter K-12 teaching.

I spent twelve years as an elementary teacher before deciding to return to graduate school and pursue a Ph.D. I worked as a teaching assistant and teacher candidate supervisor (coach) in the elementary teacher preparation program. It was through this experience that the desire to research and write about students of color in a teacher preparation program at a Predominantly White Institution was first born. Throughout the years that I worked for the teacher preparation program, we frequently found that it was students of color and English Language Learners (ELL) students who struggled the most to complete the program. While our overall retention numbers

in the program were relatively strong, what was clear was that the students who were not finishing and/or ones who had been placed on a plan of support, were overwhelmingly students of color and ELL. I knew in my heart, that this was not coincidental. I suspected that the years they had spent in schools and communities that had been neglected and underserved, as well as being first-generation college students, had impacted their ability to successfully navigate the academic demands of being in a highly ranked teacher preparation program. I began to wonder about what teacher preparation programs could do differently in order to support all teacher candidates, especially teacher candidates of color. I questioned the idea that academic knowledge is one of the important factors in becoming a successful teacher. With these types of questions in mind, I began to wonder about the experiences of teacher candidates of color and how their identities impacted their learning in the teacher preparation program.

I am humbled by the incredible strength, determination, and inspiring stories of teacher candidates of color. It is because of these amazing people that I optimistically continue to work toward the goal of reducing the demographic gap between our K-12 students and their teachers.

Chapter 1

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

“I am arguing that the historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral decisions and policies that characterize our society have created an education debt”.

Gloria Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 6

In her 2006 presidential address to the American Educational Research Association, Ladson-Billings issued a call to action regarding the disparity in academic outcomes faced by many of our students in the U.S. educational system. She urged education professionals to stop using the term, “achievement gap” and instead, approach the issue as an “education debt¹” (Ladson-Billings, 2006). If we are going to mitigate the inequitable outcomes in the K-12 U.S. educational system, and reduce the outstanding education debt, then it is imperative to examine factors that could contribute to K-12 students’ academic outcomes.

One factor that affects a student’s academic outcome is having a teacher who is competent and of high quality (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Howard, 2010; Sleeter & Milner, 2011). While the definition of a high quality teacher is complex and not necessarily uniformly agreed upon, for the purposes of this dissertation, a high quality teacher refers to one whose expertise includes critical skills and strategies for improving students’ academic outcomes. Unfortunately, having access to a high quality teacher is an elusive goal for many students who come from historically underserved communities (Cochran-Smith, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Grant & Gibson, 2011).

¹ Ladson-Billings used this term in her 2006 address to the American Educational Research Association. She stated, “ I am arguing that the historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral decisions and policies that characterize our society have created an education debt” (p.5).

In his book, *Why Race and Culture Matter in Schools*, Tyrone Howard (2010) offers compelling evidence that race is an important factor in educational outcomes, especially for African American, Latino, and Native American students. Howard (2010) states, “Data on SAT performance from the College Board (1999) reveal that middle-class African American students perform on a par with Whites from low-income backgrounds ... These research findings suggest that race is a significant factor in explaining achievement outcomes among groups” (pp. 26-27).

The possibility that a teacher’s race could have an impact upon a student’s academic outcome has begun to receive more attention. Some scholars contend that the disparity in race and ethnicity between students and their teachers is one factor that negatively affects the academic outcomes of many students of color². (Ladson-Billings, 2011; Villegas, Strom, & Lucas, 2012) In addition, having access to a teacher whose skills and expertise might include knowledge of and appreciation for their students’ racial and cultural backgrounds could have a positive impact upon student academic outcomes (Achinstein, Ogawa, Sexton, & Freitas, 2010; Cochran-Smith, 2000; Dee, 2005; Howard, 2010; M. McDonald, Bowman, M, & Brayko, K, 2013; Murrell, 2001) McDonald, Bowman, & Brayko, 2013; Murrell, 2001)

The relationship between students’ academic outcomes and their teachers depends upon a multitude of complex and meaningful factors. The question of race and ethnicity, and its impact upon teachers and students, is one that merits further exploration, hence this study. The primary goals of this study were to document the experiences of students of color in a teacher preparation

² Numerous terms have been used to designate racial groups who have been oppressed throughout history. These terms, including *minorities* and *people of color*, have been used widely and often interchangeably in social sciences research. However, no term fully captures the heterogeneity and complexities of the group, and these two terms are not without criticism (Nieto, 2012; Tyson, 2012; Wilkinson 2015). With full acknowledgement that all terms are imperfect, in this research, the terms *people of color* and *teacher candidates of color* are used mainly because they are a preferable replacement of the term “minority” (Tyson, 2012).

program at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) as a way to inform the narrative about teacher preparation, and to further our understanding of how the many aspects of the U.S. educational system, including teacher preparation, continue to underserve people of color.

Despite the growth of alternative and other non-traditional certification programs, the majority of teachers in the United States are prepared in university programs (Zeichner, 2003). Because university teacher preparation programs are a primary pipeline for supplying certified teachers, it is important to examine the role of these programs in the processes of both increasing the numbers of teachers in the profession and preparing teachers to work in culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The primary goal of this study was to document the experiences of students of color Teacher Candidates of Color (TCCs) in a teacher preparation program at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI). What follows is a brief overview of some issues in K-12 education as an entry to the larger question of how teacher preparation programs might help to increase the numbers of K-12 teachers of color. The chapter begins with a discussion of teacher shortages, in particular, the shortage of teachers of color, and how this affects the teaching profession. Next, the literature on the need to diversify the K-12 teacher workforce is presented. Finally, the chapter ends with an introduction to the study, a description of its significance, and the contribution to the literature.

Teacher Shortages

The number of people who have expressed their interest, or intention in becoming a teacher appears to be declining, and it is possible that this is one result of continual public criticism of the profession (Ingersoll & May, 2011; Zeichner, Payne, & Brayko, 2015). The ongoing negative perception of teachers is not just discouraging for those already in teaching, but

also appears to be deterring those who are considering entering the profession. A Metlife survey reported that in 2012, “Teacher satisfaction has declined to its lowest point in 25 years and has dropped five percentage points in the past year alone” (Metlife survey, 2013, p. 45). It is not difficult to imagine that such a decline in job satisfaction might lead to fewer individuals wanting to become teachers.

The decline in interest in becoming a teacher has generated some anxiety for school districts and university teacher preparation programs alike. The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) in the state in which this study takes place notes, “A recent report from ACT found that between 2010 and 2014 the percentage of high school students expressing an interest in pursuit of teaching dropped from 7% to 5%. This while the number of teaching positions is expected to grow by 14% in 2021” (PESB paper, *Addressing the recurring problem of teacher shortages*, November, 2015). Indeed, the PESB of this state has declared a teacher shortage crisis for the upcoming hiring year, 2016. In the state in which this study takes place, the shortage is not so much wide-spread and across the board, but rather occurring in several areas including STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) and Special Education teachers. (PESB paper, *Addressing the recurring problem of teacher shortages*, November, 2015).

While the causes of the teacher shortages are complex and nuanced, Ingersoll and May (2003) argue that it is not exclusively an issue of recruitment, but also one of retention, or more specifically, teacher turnover. They argue that teacher turnover leads to teacher shortages, and this turnover can also be traced to broader societal factors. Ingersoll and May (2003) state, “The data suggest that school staffing problems are rooted in the way schools are organized and the way the teaching occupation is treated” (p. 18). The lack of K-12 teachers can be connected to

challenges stemming from the negative perception of teachers, and the education profession in general (Achinstein et al., 2010; Zeichner, 2003).

Shortages of Teachers of Color

The shortages in the general teaching force have also affected the on-going shortages of teachers of color. The issues that Ingersoll and May (2003) raised with regard to larger societal attitudes and working conditions are felt even more acutely for teachers of color. (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2011) report, "...The stability of the teacher workforce in urban schools might be enhanced by increasing retention rates among teachers of color" (p. 80). As mentioned earlier, the shortage of teachers of color could also be a result of discouraging and challenging conditions that many teachers face in hard-to-staff schools, and in communities that tend to be disproportionately urban, low-income, and non-White (Gordon, 2000; Hollins, 2011; Ingersoll & May, 2011).

In addition, Madkins (2011) posits that some contributing factors to the minority, especially Black minority, teacher shortages can be traced to changes in policy and admissions of teacher preparation programs, state licensure requirements, and national standards for accrediting novice teachers. Teacher candidates must take and pass entrance exams for admittance to teacher preparation programs, in addition to having to pass another set of standardized tests prior to beginning their student teaching.³ Madkins (2011) states, "For the 2002-2005 cohort, the rate dropped to 52% and 84% passing for Black and White candidates, respectively. This was a

³ Teacher candidates who wish to enroll in the teacher preparation program from the state in which the study took place, must take and pass the (State) Educators Standardized Test of Basic Skills. In order to be eligible to begin their full-time student teaching, elementary teacher candidates must take and pass the *National Evaluation Series* that tests teacher candidates on their content knowledge and teaching methods competency for math, literacy, science, social studies, health, physical education, music, and the arts.

pronounced drop in passing rates from the rates from 1994 to 1997. 74% of Black candidates passed the test compared to 94% of White candidates” (p. 421).

The decline in the passing rates for the standardized tests means that fewer Black teacher candidates are entering teacher preparation programs.

The continued ‘overwhelming presence of Whiteness’ (Sleeter & Milner, 2011) in public teacher demographics is concerning. Public schools are suffering from a teacher shortage in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) and Special Education, and they are also suffering from an on-going shortage of K-12 teachers of color. In 2011-12, the U.S. Department of Education reported that 82.7% of teachers were White, non-Hispanic (See Table 1). The percentage of teachers of color were 7.5% Hispanic, 6.4% Black, 1.8% Asian, 1% two or more races, 0.4% American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 0.1% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

Table 1

Total Number of School Teachers and Percentage Distribution of School Teachers by Race/Ethnicity, School Type, and School Characteristics: 2011-12

School type and selected school characteristic	Total number of teachers	Percent of teachers by race/ethnicity									
		Hispanic, regardless of race	White, non-Hispanic	Black, non-Hispanic	Asian, non-Hispanic	Native Hawaiian/Islander, non-Hispanic	American Indian/Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	Two or more races, non-Hispanic	Hispanic	Hispanic	Hispanic
All private schools	464,900	5.2	88.3	3.6	1.8	†	†	†	†	†	0.8
School classification											
Catholic	143,100	6.3	87.6	3.9	1.3!	†	†	†	†	†	0.7!
Other religious	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†
Nonsectarian	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†
Community type											
City	197,300	6.0	86.5	4.4	2.3	†	†	†	†	†	0.6!
Suburban	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†
Town	27,200	†	94.1	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†
Rural	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†
School level											
Elementary	201,000	7.1	85.6	4.3	2.2	†	†	†	†	†	0.6!
Secondary	72,000	3.4!	88.8	4.4	†	†	†	†	†	†	1.0!
Combined	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†
Student enrollment											
Less than 100	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†
100-199	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†
200-499	177,800	5.6	89.6	2.7	1.7	†	†	†	†	†	0.4!
500-749	50,600	5.4!	88.5	3.6!	†	†	†	†	†	†	†
750 or more	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†

Rounds to zero.

! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 percent and 50 percent (i.e., the standard error is at least 30 percent and less than 50 percent of the estimate).

† Reporting standards not met. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is 50 percent or greater (i.e., the standard error is 50 percent or more of the estimate) or the response rate is below 50 percent.

NOTE: Black includes African American and Hispanic includes Latino. Teachers include both full-time and part-time teachers. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding and because some data are not shown.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), "Public School Teacher and Private School Teacher Data Files," 2011-12.

Source: “Characteristics of Public and Private Elementary and Secondary School Teachers in the United States: Results from the 2011-12 schools and staffing survey,” by R. Goldring, L. Gray, and A. Bitterman, 2013, *Schools and Staffing Survey*, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Copyright 2013 by the U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.. Retrieved March 25, 2016 from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>.

Based on the information found in Table 1, a large percentage of teachers identify as White non-Hispanic, 82.7%. This indicates that despite the changing demographics of the K-12 student population, the teaching workforce has not increased at the same rate. Just as the effects in the downturn of the economy have been felt unevenly by the poor and disenfranchised, so too have the effects of a teacher shortage. The on-going shortage of teachers of color affects all students, but is disproportionately felt in communities where people of color are the dominant racial and ethnic groups.

Context for Diversifying the K-12 Teacher Workforce

Historically, the United States has viewed education—specifically, public education—as a significant part of the foundation upon which a democratic society must stand (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2009; Zeichner, 2010; Goodlad, 1998). The belief that teachers are not just utilitarian robots who deliver a pre-determined curriculum that is designed to boost standardized test scores is widely supported by many in education today (Zeichner, 2009) They should be viewed as professionals who are acutely aware of who their students are, and what their academic and social needs are. Perhaps most important, teachers need to prepare

their students to become actively engaged citizens in a democracy, not solely workers in a global economy.

If public education is one of the most critical components of educating citizens to be participants in a democratic society, then the institution that educates must also be democratic, not only its beliefs, but also its composition. Achinstein and Ogawa (2010) argue that we are currently suffering from not just a demographic shortage of teachers of color, but also a democratic one. By not having a K-12 teacher workforce that is representative of the students, it follows that schools are not in composition, democratic.

Demographic imperative. The demographic imperative refers to the urgency in balancing the disproportionate percentage of White, mainstream K-12 teachers, with the percentage of students which is now, more than ever, students of color. (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2011; CARE, 2010; Cochran-Smith, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Grant & Gibson, 2011; Hollins, 2011; G Ladson-Billings, 2011; Zeichner, 2009). Despite gains in numbers of teachers of color over this time period, the increase in students of color has outpaced the gains in teachers of color for the same years (see Table 2). The percentage of students of color (minority students) in 2007-08 was 40.6%, while the percentage of teachers of color (minority teachers) was 16.5%. The percentage of minority population (total) in the U.S. in 1987-88 school year was 23.1%. By the 2007-08 school year, the percentage had increased to 34.4%. This was a 49% overall increase in minorities (people of color) over a ten-year period. During this same period, a pronounced disparity between the percentage of students of color and teachers of color remains as there are 40.6% students of color, and 16.5% teachers of color.

Table 2

Trends in the Nation's Population, K-12 Student Enrollment, and the K-12 Teaching Force, by Race/Ethnicity

	1987-88 School Year	1990-91 School Year	1993-94 School Year	1999-00 School Year	2003-04 School Year	2007-08 School Year	% Increase From 1988-2008
1.) % Minority Population of U.S.	23.1	24.3	25.6	28.1	32.1	34.4	
2.) Total Student Enrollment	45,220,953	44,777,577	46,592,207	50,629,075	52,375,110	53,644,872	19
Number White Students	32,559,086	31,213,142	31,895,394	32,700,441	32,419,640	31,864,127	-2
Number Minority Students	12,661,867	13,564,435	14,696,813	17,928,634	19,955,470	21,780,745	73
% Minority Students	28.0	30.3	31.5	35.4	38.1	40.6	
3.) Total Teaching Force	2,630,335	2,915,774	2,939,659	3,451,316	3,717,998	3,894,065	48
Number White Teachers	2,303,094	2,542,720	2,564,416	2,933,591	3,113,249	3,252,234	41
Number Minority Teachers	327,241	373,054	375,243	517,725	604,749	641,830	96
% Minority Teachers	12.4	12.8	12.8	15.0	16.3	16.5	

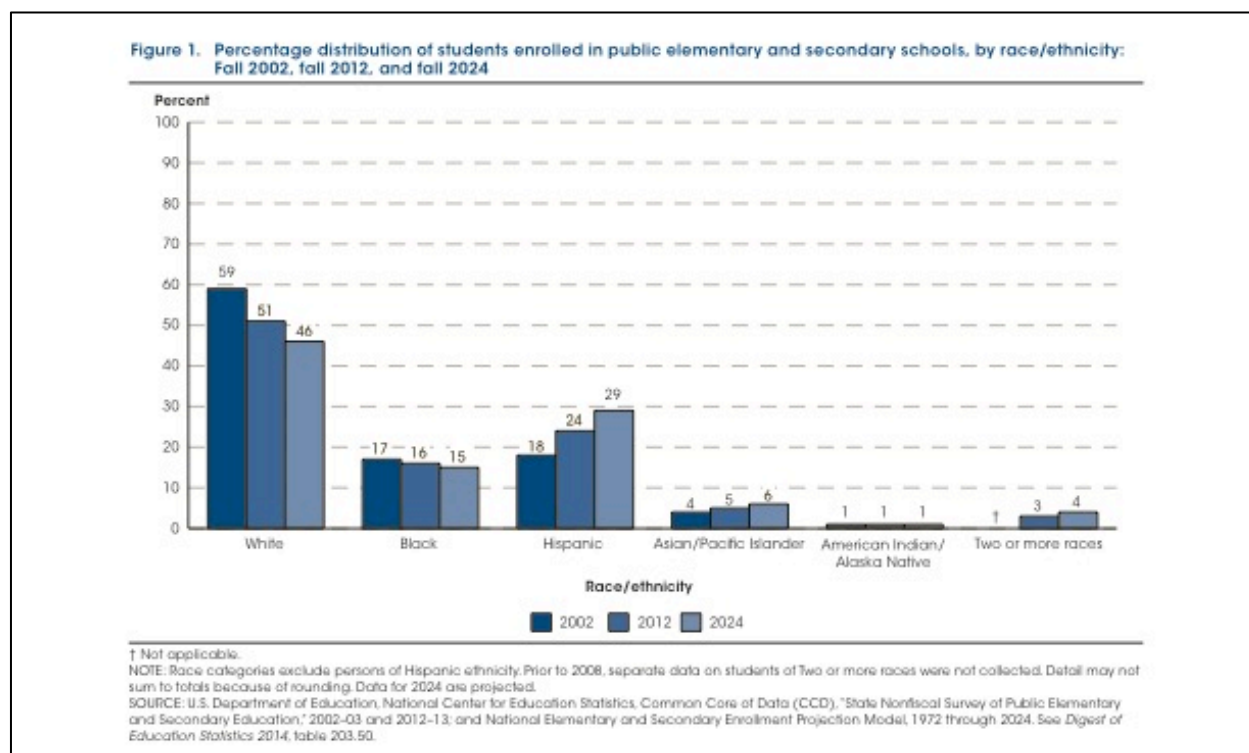
Source: "Recruitment, Retention, and the Minority Teacher Shortage," by Ingersoll and May, 2013, Consortium for Policy Research in Education, p.19.

Scholars are calling attention to the need for increasing racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity in the K-12 teacher workforce as one viable way to help reduce the opportunity gap that frequently affects academic outcomes for students of color (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2011; Cochran-Smith, 2011; Grant & Gibson, 2011; Villegas et al., 2012; Zeichner, 2003, 2009). Darling-Hammond (2010) argues that the disparity in academic achievement between students of color and their White, mainstream peers is not due to one factor but rather, "educational outcomes for students of color are much more a function of their unequal access to key educational resources, including skilled teachers." (p. 214).

The U. S. student population has changed dramatically in recent years. Since the passage of the 1965 Immigration Reform Act, the number of immigrants to the United States has continually increased not only in sheer numbers, but also in the number of countries from which immigrants are arriving. The U.S. Department of Education reports that in 2012, “White students were 51% of the total enrolled in public schools, Hispanic students were 24%, Black were 16%, Asian/Pacific Islander were 5%, two or more races were 4%, and American Indian were 1%” (Kena et al., 2015) See Table 3 for a graph of the percentage distribution of students by race and ethnicity in the years 2002, 2012, and projections for 2024. Because of the increase in the numbers of students of color, schools are striving to better meet their educational needs. Gay (2010) states, “Significant changes are needed in how African, Asian, Latino, and Native American students are taught in U.S. schools” (p. xvii).

Table 3

Percentage Distribution of Students Enrolled in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, by Race/Ethnicity: Fall 2002, Fall 2012, and Fall 2024



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S.

Department of Education, p. 80. Washington, D. C. Retrieved March 16, 2016 from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>.

The need to diversify the K-12 teacher workforce. There is important research and scholarship that focuses on the need to better prepare White, female, middle-class teachers for working in urban public schools where the majority⁴ of the students have racial, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds that differ from their teachers. However, there has been less attention

⁴ The usage of the word majority is based on the data from *Table 2: Trends in the Nation's Population, K-12 Student Enrollment, and the K-12 Teaching Force, by Race/Ethnicity*, p. 12.

to the need for increasing the diversity in the K-12 teaching workforce as a viable way to help reduce the opportunity gap that so often affects academic outcomes for students of color (Cochran-Smith, 2011; Montecinos, 2004; A. M. Villegas, K. Strom, & T. Lucas, 2012).

Currently many university-based teacher education programs address the issue of preparing teachers to work in schools with a diverse population by requiring their candidates to take courses in multicultural education, differentiated instruction, English Language Learners (ELL) pedagogy, and the history of social and cultural foundations of education.(Cochran-Smith, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2010; G. Ladson-Billings, 2006; Sleeter & Milner, 2011; Villegas & Lucas, 2004; Zeichner, 2009) While it is critical to offer this foundation for all teachers, especially given that the majority of new teachers continue to be White, female and monolingual, the issue of recruiting, preparing, and retaining teachers of color must also be included in the discussion.

Benefits of increasing the number of teachers of color. Generally scholars report three lines of thought as to why increasing the number of teachers of color in K-12 classrooms will benefit students, especially students of color, to address the disparity in academic outcomes. The three arguments for increasing teachers of color in the United States workforce have been identified as: the positive significance to the student of having a racially/ethnically relatable role model; a demonstrated correlation between teachers of color and improved learning outcomes for students (of color); and the successful communication between educators and students of color based on common cultural understandings, insights, backgrounds, or experiences.

First, researchers point to the importance of having a positive role model as being an important tool for success for students of color. The power of being able to see and identify with someone who is, 'just like me,' can be a positive influence on students of color as they work

toward success and academic achievement. (Achinstein et al., 2010; Sleeter & Milner, 2011; Zeichner, 2009). Additionally, having teachers of color as role models can help to reduce the feelings of alienation that students of color often experience in schools. However it is important to note that serving as a role model is not the only potential benefit from having students and teachers more closely aligned with regard to culture, language, religion, and socioeconomic status. While the aforementioned factors can help increase a student of color's academic performance, they do not necessarily guarantee any type of results. Racial and cultural congruence, while a potential benefit, does not mean, in any way, that a White, mainstream teacher cannot or does not positively affect a student of color's academic achievement. It also does not mean that teachers of color can automatically connect with students of color and positively affect their achievement whether or not they share students' particular linguistic, cultural and racial backgrounds.

Students today are aware of who holds power and privilege in our society. The presence of role models within the educational system can help to counteract not just inaccurate media portrayals of many people of color, but also provides incentives for young students to stay in school, graduate, and strive for higher levels of achievement, such as attaining a college degree. Scholars agree that schools transmit not just academic knowledge, but also work in less direct ways to reify power structures. (A. M. Villegas, K. Strom, & T. Lucas, 2012)(A. M. Villegas, K. Strom, & T. Lucas, 2012)(A. M. Villegas, K. Strom, & T. Lucas, 2012)(A. M. Villegas, K. Strom, & T. Lucas, 2012)(A. M. Villegas, K. Strom, & T. Lucas, 2012)(A. M. Villegas, K. Strom, & T. Lucas, 2012)Villegas et al. (2012) state, "When students fail to see minority adults in professional positions and instead see them overrepresented in the ranks of non-professional workers, they implicitly learn that white people are better suited than people of color to hold positions of authority in society" p. 285.

Another argument in favor of increasing the number of teachers of color is that researchers report that teachers of color can have a positive effect on the academic outcomes of students of color (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2011; Pang, 2009; Villegas & Lucas, 2004). Even though the link between higher academic outcomes for students of color is not easily traceable to a single factor such as a teacher's racial, ethnic, or linguistic congruence, there is some evidence to suggest that racial and cultural congruence can make a positive impact on student learning outcomes (Howard, 2010; Nieto, 1999).

The positive impact that teachers of color can make upon their students depends upon many factors, but there is growing evidence that having racial and cultural parallels is important. Murrell (2001) argues that community teachers who are aware of and highly informed about how their positionality affects the relationship and "The extent to which candidates can critically develop their own 'positionality' determines how central or peripheral a role they play in the development and academic achievement of children, youth, and families in diverse urban communities" (p. 52). Hence, the awareness of identity and positionality can be a pivotal factor in whether or not teacher candidates engage with students and their families.

Finally, researchers point to the value of having teachers of color who can provide a similar perspective, background, and affinity with their students of color. Villegas et. al. (2012) state, "Teachers who are familiar with the lives of children and youth of color are better able to build these bridges to learning for those students" (p. 287). This is not to suggest that all teachers of color share the same educational experiences as all students of color, especially given that there is a vast variation in different cultural, religious, and socio-economic histories amongst people of color. It is possible that an African American teacher may share more culturally in common with a student who is White, due to both being third or fourth generation American. Yet,

the African American teacher is more likely to have experienced racism, oppression, or marginalization in common with her Somali student who has recently arrived in the United States due to their racial identities being the same (Milner, 2006).

The home-school connection has begun to gain more attention among educators as a critical component to providing teachers with a more complete understanding of their students, especially students who come from racial, ethnic, or linguistic backgrounds different from the teacher's. (Achinstein et al., 2010; Hollins, 2011; M. McDonald, Bowman, & Brayko, 2013; Moll & Gonzalez, 2004; Nasir, 2012; A. M. Villegas et al., 2012; Zeichner et al., 2015). The establishment and creation of a strong home-school connection is an important component to students' learning. This is because learning does not occur in isolation, is highly interactive, and depends upon the active construction of knowledge that is influenced by cultural contexts (Bransford, Council, & Learning, 2000). One benefit of teacher and student cultural synchronicity is that the home-school connection is more likely to be a positive relationship. A teacher of color can be more familiar with the inequities that commonly face students of color in the public educational system. This familiarity with similar educational experiences, in turn, could lead to fewer conflicts between the teachers, students, and families.

In his book, *The Community Teacher*, Murrell (2001) discusses the importance of community placements for pre-service teachers as helping to give them a more comprehensive understanding of students' lives. As Murrell (2001) contends, "A community teacher is one who possesses contextualized knowledge of the culture, community, and identity of the children and families he or she serves and draws on this knowledge to create the core teaching practices necessary for effectiveness in diverse settings" (p. 52). For numerous teachers of color, the ability to connect with the communities from which many of their students come resonates on a

much more personal level, having, in some cases, come from similar communities themselves. For many teachers of color, the notion of being a community teacher is central to their lived experiences.

There is a greater likelihood that a teacher of color is familiar with the student's patterns of communication and understands 'insider' cultural norms if she has also grown up with a similar cultural background. Additionally, a teacher of color is uniquely positioned to potentially be accepted as someone within the community who should be respected based on first-person cultural mutual understanding. These are factors that can positively impact both a student's and her parent's ability to collaborate and support each other in ways that outsiders find challenging. This claim is not to suggest that a teacher of color will always have these advantages, or that a White person does not. However, teachers of color are often positioned well to be able to better understand the experience of students of color because it resembles their own. These common experiences, based in racial, cultural, and ethnic norms, also increase the likelihood that the student will achieve better academic outcomes (Achinstein et al., 2010; Quioco & Rios, 2000; A. M. Villegas et al., 2012).

Significance of and need for the study

In this study I seek to add to the literature on providing the highest-quality, best-prepared teachers for all K-12 students, but especially for those students of color whose academic opportunities have been historically underserved, by examining the experiences of teacher candidates of color in their teacher preparation program. Specifically, through the study's findings, educators will gain a better understanding of the learning experiences of teacher candidates of color as they prepare for their K-8 certification in a Predominately White Institution (PWI) University teacher education program. By documenting the successes and

challenges, it is my intention to add to the literature on how to best support teacher candidates of color in a PWI, and that this will inform us about more effective recruitment, preparation, and retention practices for teacher candidates of color, with the goal of increasing diversity in the K-8 teaching workforce.

Research Questions

Based on the literature review and position I have described, the following research questions guided my investigation:

- What are the experiences of teacher candidates of color in a Predominantly White university-based teacher certification program?
- How do teacher candidates of color negotiate their learning in differing contexts?
- To what extent, and in what ways did the teacher candidates' cultural identities shape their learning experiences?
- In which environments do the teacher candidates of color feel they are most competent with regard to the skills, knowledge, and attributes of pre-service teachers⁵? Least competent?
- To what do they attribute these feelings of competence or lack of competence?
- In what ways are the racial and cultural identities of teacher candidates of color afforded and constrained in their teacher preparation program?

⁵ The K-8 teacher preparation program at UVM has an end-of-quarter assessment in Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters, that is completed by the university coach, the mentor teacher, and the teacher candidate. There is also a post-observation checklist that is completed by the university supervisor and the teacher candidate post observation. These are considered by the program to be indicators of a teacher candidate's sufficient progress toward K-8 certification.

- What types of resources do teacher candidates of color employ in order to successfully matriculate?

Chapter 2

Theoretical Frameworks

This research focused on the experiences of (pre-service teachers) teacher candidates of color (TCCs) in their teacher preparation program at a predominantly White institution (PWI) that is a research-focused university in the Northwest United States. This study documented and examined the experiences of TCCs as they worked toward achieving an elementary (K-8) teaching certificate in a four-quarter graduate level teacher preparation program. The experiences of these TCCs were examined through a theoretical perspective that asked how culture and identity interacted with and shaped their learning process.

The belief that individuals do not learn in isolation, especially within the context of teaching and learning, was critical to better understanding how TCCs learn and acquire new skills, such as those needed for teaching. Moreover, it was important to gain knowledge about the teacher preparation program as a community, as a context not just for learning content, but, and some might argue, more important, as a place for developing the social and political competencies needed to successfully navigate a teacher preparation program. Nasir and Hand (2008) contend, “Clearly we as people don’t remake ourselves in every social interaction, but . . . we renegotiate it across the life span and in the multiple contexts of our lives” (p. 143). The idea that our identities are fluid and shift according to changing contexts highlights the need to be flexible in our understanding of the learning process. A sociocultural framework is the most appropriate theoretical construct for this study in order to examine learning as an integrated and collaborative activity that depends upon and influences an individual’s dynamic and changing identity.

Sociocultural Learning Theory

Vygotsky's contribution to the on-going development of sociocultural learning theories cannot be overstated. His research on how individuals' learning and development is mediated by their engagement with other people and cultural artifacts led to his concept of cultural mediation. Moll (2014) states, "... The concept of mediation of human actions (including 'acts of thought') is central to Vygotsky's theorizing, arguably its defining characteristic" (p. 30). The emphasis on social interaction and the resulting mediation of human actions plays a key role in understanding the importance of Vygotsky's explication of the nature of sociocultural learning theory.

Cultural mediation is key to understanding how people learn and acquire new skills and information. Vygotsky, according to Moll (2014), posited that there are multiple mediators that interact with, and as a result, transform individuals and their environments. The five classes of mediators are: Social mediation, tool mediation, semiotic mediation, anatomical mediation, and individual mediation. Of the five classes of mediation, social mediation, or interactions with other human beings, and individual mediation, or the person's subjectivity and agency in mediating his or her learning activities, are helpful for informing our understanding of the relationship between individuals, culture, and learning.

Vygotsky believed that these mediational tools were fluid and dynamic, just as an individual might be. As an individual appropriates and uses the mediational tools, the tools themselves have the potential to be changed by the individual. Thus, an individual is not solely influenced and changed by cultural practices and tools, such as pencils or symbol systems, the individual also has the potential to influence and change these same mediational tools. Learning in this sense is not a one-way, fill-an-empty-head-with-knowledge ideal, rather it is an exchange and interplay between an individual and mediational tools, both of which are rooted in, and heavily influenced by, culture.

Wenger's Communities of Practice: The social and cultural nature of learning.

Building upon Vygotsky's work, Etienne Wenger's work, *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity* (1998) further illuminates how individuals' relationship to—and with—a community impacts their learning. Wenger (1998) also argues that an individual's participation within a learning community affects and influences his/her learning opportunities. It is important to note that usage of the term 'community' is defined in a variety of ways. Philip, Way, Garcia, Schuler-Brown, & Navarro (2013) suggest that the word 'community' is a complex and nuanced term. The authors argue, "Recognizing and anticipating the usages of community' as 'shared conditions' and 'shared needs' are critical in facilitating learning contexts for educators who attempt to engage students in issues that are important to them and their communities" (p. 180). Hence, it is important to keep in mind that community is a collaborative space in which individuals are coming together in a defined space and sharing a common need, or goal.

Wenger (1998) defines learning as not being solely about acquiring new information or skills and states, "Learning is first and foremost the ability to negotiate new meanings: ... it is not reducible to its mechanics (information, skills, behavior), and focusing on the mechanics at the expense of meaning tends to render learning problematic" (p. 226). Some scholars argue that the focus upon mechanics at the expense of meaning can be seen in many alternative teacher certification programs (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Zeichner et al., 2015). This focus is because a teacher candidate's learning experience is typically in the classrooms with children, without what many consider to be critical foundational courses that university teacher preparation programs provide for their teacher candidates that provide needed historical and contextual information. Zeichner (2009) contends, "Majoring in a subject or passing a subject matter test, ... is no

guarantee that teachers understand the central concepts in their disciplines and have the pedagogical content knowledge needed to transform content to promote understanding by diverse learners” (p. 506). Hence, foundational courses in teacher preparation programs are critical in order for teachers to be able to best meet the needs of all of their students.

The TCCs in this study are enrolled in a graduate university teacher preparation program and throughout their time in the program, are exposed to and engage in several social, psychological, and social foundations courses that seek to expand upon the meaning of their future work. More details about their coursework throughout the program are provided in chapter four, the study design section.

The argument that we must be more expansive in our understanding of how a person learns and not focus on mechanics solely, also suggests that we must look to the negotiation of meaning and the implications of this on learning. According to (Wenger, 1998), the negotiation of meaning is an essential component of the learning process. This process is based upon patterns that have occurred in the past and is created by new interactions and situations. Wenger (1998) explains, “Meaning exists neither in us, nor in the world, but in the dynamic relation of living in the world” (p. 54). The idea that negotiation of meaning is a fluid, ever-changing process that relies upon individuals’ personal histories and collective experiences is critical to my understanding of how teacher candidates negotiate meaning, and experience learning in their teacher preparation program.

A critical aspect of Wenger’s (1998) understanding of how individuals learn new skills is that the learner engages in practice within a community, or in Wenger’s terms, a *community of practice*. Wenger (1998) explains that there are three dimensions of a community of practice: “Mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire” (p. 73). Each of these dimensions

plays an important role for individuals as they take part in a community of practice, negotiate meaning, and learn how to become teachers.

Three dimensions of a community of practice. The first dimension, mutual engagement, includes doing things together, relationships, and community maintenance. Mutual engagement is highly social, and depends upon individuals creating relationships with each other.

The dimension of joint enterprise is an important element in a community of practice as its presence suggests coherence within the community of practice. Wenger (1998) describes the importance of having a joint enterprise in a community of practice,

It is the result of a collective process of negotiation. ... It is their negotiated response to their situation and thus belongs to them in a profound sense, in spite of all the forces and influences beyond their control. ... It creates among participants relations of mutual accountability that become an integral part of the practice,” (pp. 77-78).

With this understanding in mind, the K-8 teacher preparation program at UVM, has two communities of practice - each one has a separate joint enterprise with regard to the preparation of teacher candidates. In the university courses, the joint enterprise is focused on preparing teacher candidates to become competent novice K-8 teachers. In the school based placement sites, the joint enterprise is based upon the need to provide academic and social instruction for K-8 students. These two joint enterprises are not mutually exclusive as each is focused on providing instruction for students but each has enough differentiation with regard to objectives for student learning.

The third important aspect of communities of practice is that a community of practice has a shared repertoire that includes, “routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions, or concepts that the community has produced or adopted in the course

of its existence, and which have become part of its practice” (Wenger, 1998, p. 83). The shared repertoire aspect emphasizes the sociocultural focus on individuals’ learning being shaped not only by the cultural elements in their world, but also by creating new cultural artifacts and/or mediation tools.

It is through participation in communities of practice that an individual negotiates new meanings, or learns. In other words, individuals are not empty buckets that get filled with new facts. Rather, the negotiation of new meanings is contingent upon multiple mediating factors that are also being acted upon. Wenger (1998) states, “Because learning transforms who we are and what we can do, it is an experience of identity. It is not just an accumulation of skills and information, it is a process of becoming ...” (p. 215). The idea that identity is interconnected with learning is a critical aspect of this study.

The idea that learning is not simply an accumulation of skills and information also brings the importance of identity and culture to the foreground. One goal of this study was to discover more about how TCCs’ racial and cultural identities were connected with their learning through participation in a community of practice. In this sense, identification with a community of practice was not enough for an individual to make meaning of information. An individual must also have felt a part of shaping the meaning, and I explored the possibility that TCCs might have felt marginalized or undermined, in a predominately White teacher preparation program.

Three interrelated modes of belonging. Wenger (1998) posits that belonging has three interrelated modes (engagement, imagination, and alignment) see Figure 1, and that each has an important and distinct influence on an individual’s sense of belonging in a community of practice. Wenger’s (1998) explication of modes of *belonging* offers more insight into how TCCs

experienced initiation into and participation in a community of practice that was their teacher preparation program.

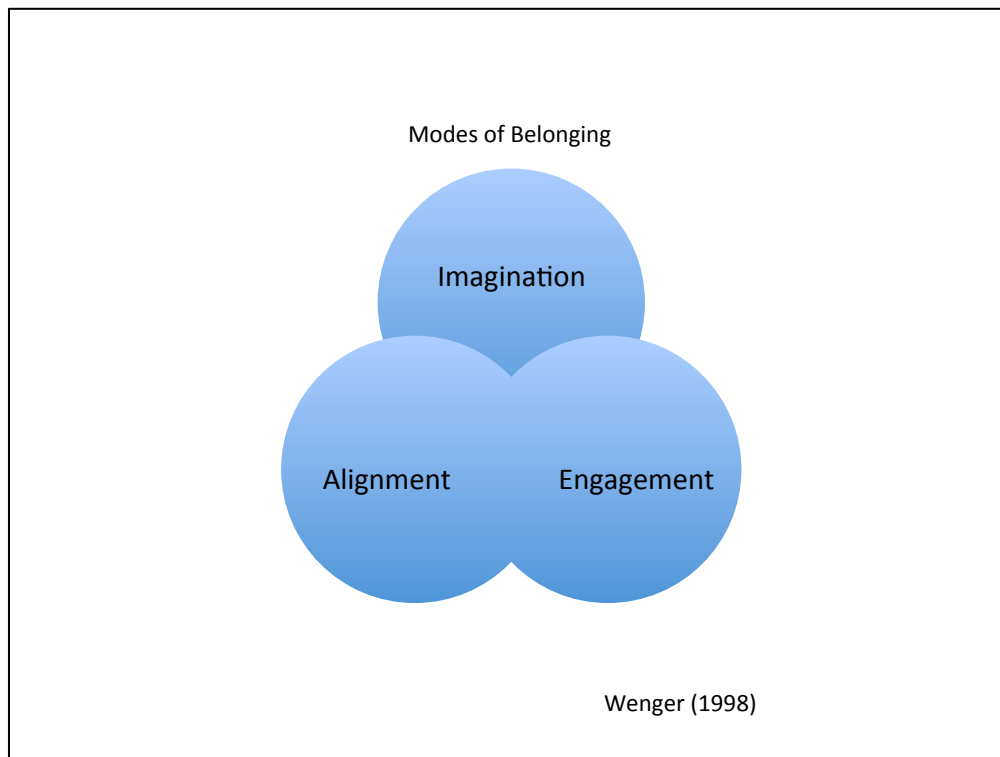
The first mode, imagination, is extremely relevant due to its implication for students of color who may have had more difficulty envisioning themselves in the ‘teacher world’ than their White, mainstream peers. Students of color may not easily see themselves as teachers for multiple reasons. One of these reasons could be a lack of mentors and role models in the field. Wenger (1998) states, “My use of the concept of imagination refers to a process of expanding our self by transcending time and space and creating new images of the world and ourselves” (p. 176). As mentioned in Chapter 1, another example of how imagination for teacher candidates of color (TCCs) in many university teacher preparation programs can be difficult, is the often-expressed feeling of marginalization due to the absence of “others like me.” Not having culturally and linguistically diverse peers may influence the TCCs’ ability to envision themselves within the White mainstream teacher world because of the absence of others who are racially and culturally similar to them. Wenger (1998) argues that newcomers to a community of practice must be able to see themselves in this new image in order to envision themselves as members of the community.

Moreover, Wenger (1998) emphasizes the importance of *engagement* as being critical to a learner’s ability to become a member in a community of practice, such as in this study, in two environments that are focused on preparing teacher candidates. Wenger (1998) states, “As a context for learning, engagement is not just a matter of activity, but of community building, inventiveness, social energy, and emergent knowledgeability” (p. 237). A sense of engagement, as Wenger (1998) describes, is another component that can aid in a learner’s success with a community of practice. If the TCCs’ participation by way of engagement in two contexts of their

teacher preparation program was not supported, then their opportunities for learning would also have been constrained.

Wenger (1998) calls our attention to the mode of alignment that is a critical aspect of a person's ability to feel as if s/he is a member of that community of practice. The mode of alignment refers to "Coordinating our energy and activities in order to fit within broader structures and contribute to broader enterprises" (p. 174). The mode of alignment gives members of a community of practice the sense that they are a part of something bigger. Their actions are working toward a sense of greater good. If individuals feel common alignment with their community of practice, they might feel empowered by knowing that their actions are more effective and worthy because they are amplified beyond a single person. This sense of alignment is an important aspect to teacher candidates as they work toward becoming competent novice teachers in two environments: university coursework and school placement sites.

Figure 1: Wenger's modes of belonging



Holland et al.'s Identity Development. As discussed earlier, Wenger's (1998) contention that individuals learn through their participation in communities of practice, gives us an important understanding of the relationship between the learner and the complicated nature of their learning experience. However, this theoretical construct does not adequately address the importance of identity development for individuals, and especially those whose identity does not align with White, mainstream cultural, racial, or linguistic individuals. A more complete understanding of identity development in a community of practice is needed in order to better understand how TCCs' racial and cultural identity affects their learning.

In their book, *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds*, Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain (1998) address the importance of identity development through participation in culturally

constructed worlds or, *figured worlds*. According to Holland et al., (1998), “By ‘figured world,’ then, we mean a socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others” (p. 52). Figured worlds, as socially and culturally constructed spaces, are enormously influential in individuals’ identity development. Moreover, figured worlds are created and formed by individuals who may either reinforce the cultural norms, struggle to adhere to cultural norms, or even work to subvert the cultural norms. Thus, a figured world is not solely influencing an individual’s identity development, it is also being acted upon and changed by the very same individual.

The interconnectivity of identity development and social worlds is described by Holland et al. (1998) as identity in practice. Identity in practice is “a process of personal formation that occurs via cultural resources enacted in a social context” (p. 282). The development of identity is a complex and interrelated experience that is influenced by a multitude of cultural, historical, and social factors. Identity in practice assumes that an individual is forming an identity in relation to his/her “social and intimate landscapes” (p. 285). These landscapes were an important aspect to the study in the examination of TCCs’ experiences in different learning environments: the more academic world of a university-based courses, and the more practical, field-based experiences such as in their school placement sites. The different worlds in which teacher candidates had to survive and succeed had very distinct expectations and cultural norms. The cultural norms informed TCCs’ identity development, and at the same time, were altered by the TCCs participation and engagement in these worlds.

Horn et al.'s Negotiation of identities in two different worlds. In addition to Holland et al.'s (1998) work on figured worlds, (Horn, Nolen, Ward, & Campbell, 2008) examined teacher candidates' identity development throughout their university teacher preparation program. (Horn et al., 2008), state, "We conceptualize individual agents as operating within their various figured worlds by asserting and receiving different identities" (p. 62). The authors examined the relationship between teacher candidate identity development and their learning. The figured worlds in which the teacher candidates operated in the study were the academic courses in a university teacher preparation program, called "TEPworld" and their school-based placements that the authors called, "FieldWorld". The authors found that an individual's identity was flexible with regard to how they either took up or rejected teaching practices that were being taught in TEPworld or being observed in FieldWorld.

At times the teacher candidates' identities oriented them differently from the teaching practices that were set forth as learning goals in the tepworld. The differing orientations occurred when a teacher candidate's view of 'good teaching' and identity did not coincide with what s/he felt the classroom instructors were asking them to be or to do. Furthermore, the teacher candidates' identities and beliefs about teaching were not static and often were altered or revised during their time in tepworld and fieldworld. (Horn et al., 2008) note, "We found that these modifications reflected interns' identity shifts as they learned about practice" (p. 66). Thus, the teacher candidates began their teacher preparation program with identities and beliefs about teaching that at times were in conflict with what they were learning in TEPworld and FieldWorld.

The authors described two processes that helped illuminate the changes in both the teacher candidates' identities and learning: identification and negotiation. Identification occurred when there was alignment of the candidates' identity with the figured worlds of TEPworld and

FieldWorld. Negotiation occurred when there was a need for modification of the candidates' identities based on perceived inconsistencies between tepworld and fieldworld and their own orientation. Through the interns' process of identification and negotiation with their figured worlds, they, in turn, altered and shifted their identities affecting their learning agendas.

The authors contend that the presence or absence of alignment with teacher candidates' identities and their figured worlds of TEPworld and FieldWorld, either afforded or constrained the teacher candidates' learning in a variety of ways. (Horn et al., 2008) state, "Through identification, interns trust in the value of practices that may not be immediately seen as consonant with their emergent teaching identities. ... With negotiation, interns modify their teaching identities to incorporate new images of good teaching practice ... in TEPworld," (p. 71). When teacher candidates' images of good teaching conflicted with what they were observing in FieldWorld, they needed to adjust their self-images or their teaching practices to be consistent with each other. This description of how negotiation occurs when faced with conflicting ideas about identity has implications for teacher candidates as they attempt to navigate the two worlds of university courses and school placement sites.

The discussion of identity and how it affects an individual's learning process also has implications for teacher candidates of color. This study builds upon Horn et al.'s (2008) work by including the racial and cultural identity of learners as important components of identity that affect teacher candidate learning.

Nasir's The impact of racial and cultural identity of teacher candidates. Wenger's (1998) work on communities of practice as being environments in which learning, or "negotiation of meaning," occurs gives us a broad understanding of the importance of the relationship between the learning and the environment in which it occurs. In this study the

community of practice is the K-8 teacher preparation program at University of Mountain View. The teacher program, as in Horn et al.'s (2008) study, has two different worlds: university classes and the school placement sites. As mentioned earlier, communities of practice as a theoretical construct does not adequately address the importance of identity development for individuals, especially those whose identity does not align with White, mainstream cultural, racial, or linguistic individuals. For this study's purposes, identity development, especially as it applies to students, requires a better understanding of how different environments affect a person of color's opportunities for learning.

Na'ilah Nasir's *Racialized Identities: Race and Achievement among African American youth* (2012) documented students of color's experiences in different learning environments in a fashion similar to Horn et al.'s (2008) discussion of alignment with teacher candidates' identities and their learning in different figured worlds. Nasir (2012) looked for the presence or absence of cultural congruency between African American high school students and their learning environments, inside and outside of a formal school⁶environment.

Nasir's (2012) work was mainly with high school students who were navigating in the different worlds of academic classroom learning and outside-of-school environments such as basketball coaching/practice or a dominoes playing club and her attention to how these environments, or figured worlds, aligned with students' identities, and how their identities either afforded or constrained their learning experiences, has a direct connection to this study. Nasir's concept of cultural congruency helps us to better understand the learning experiences for a person of color within a predominantly White university's teacher education program. That is to

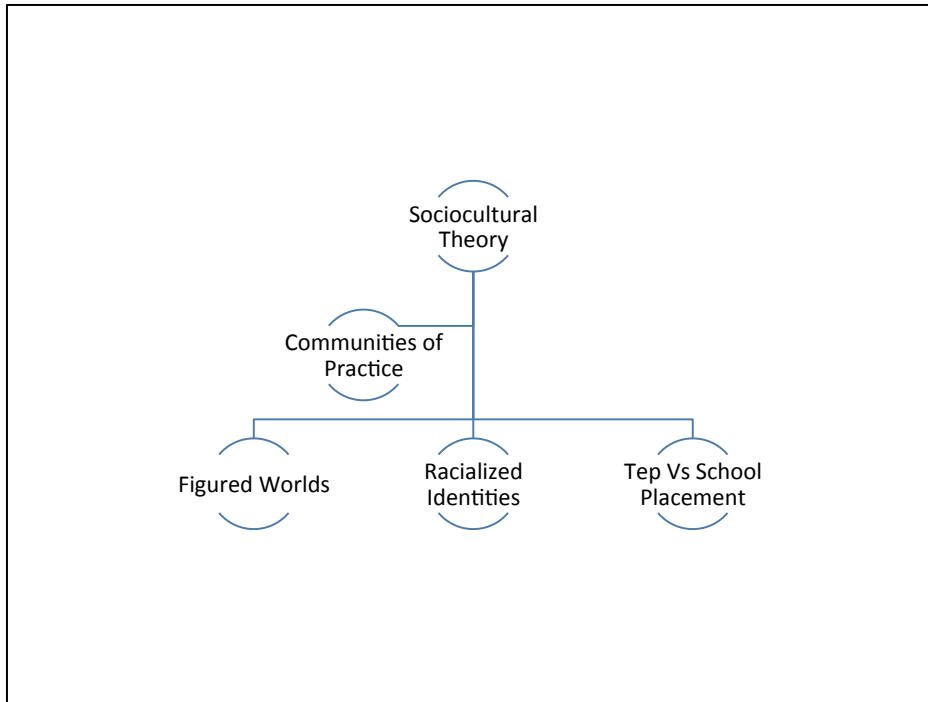
⁶ Formal learning environments in this study refer to academically oriented ones such as classrooms. The informal learning environments included after-school dominoes clubs and track and field team practices.

say that when teacher candidates of color do not experience cultural congruency within their teacher education program (which includes both the university courses and the school-based field experiences), it is likely that their opportunities for learning might be constrained.

Nasir (2012) asserts that cultural congruence between learning and students' identities in her study afforded learning in two ways: "(1) the social organization of the practice and roles available within it, and (2) the opportunity of participants to have themselves taken up and valued" (p. 35). The more a student's identity was viewed as an asset and in alignment with the goals and social organization of the learning environment, the more success the student had within that environment. An important distinction in Nasir's study is that these observations were carried out in two different types of environments, or figured worlds. These two worlds, similar to Horn et al.'s (2008) study, were different from each other in that one world was purely academic (formal) and the others were out-of-school practices (informal - basketball, track, and domino playing), yet both of these worlds afforded and constrained the learning opportunities for students, based on cultural factors.

Teacher candidates of color learning experiences. Below, in Figure 2 is a graphic representation of the relationship between the sociocultural theories that guide my analysis of the data in this study. There are three lenses that help to illuminate the learning experiences of these candidates in their teacher preparation program: teacher candidate identity as found in Horn et al.,(2008); identity in practice (Wenger, 1998; Holland et al., 1998); and racial and cultural identity (Nasir, 2012). The rich interconnectedness of these lenses will help to identify affordances and constraints with regard to their learning environments for the TCCs in the University of Mountain View's K-8 teacher preparation program.

Figure 2: Relationship between sociocultural learning theories



In order to better understand the experiences of TCCs in their K-8 teacher preparation program, it is critical that their opportunities for learning be studied through a theoretical lens which takes into account the complex relationship between identity development and the environments in which individuals are learning. Sociocultural learning theory provides the foundation upon which we can examine and interpret the participants' experiences in University of Mountain View's K-8 teacher preparation program.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

What follows is a review of the literature on the recruitment, preparation, and retention of teacher candidates of color in teacher preparation programs at Predominantly White Institutions (PWI) in the United States. The focus of this study is on the experiences of teacher candidates of color at a PWI and thus the literature reviewed in this chapter will also focus on Predominantly White Institutions. The intention of this review is not to address all literature that relates to teacher preparation programs. The goal in this review is to examine literature that will shed light on the research questions that were put forth in Chapter 1, necessitating a focus on literature that explicitly addresses teacher preparation programs and the experiences of teacher candidates of color. This review of the literature draws from three main areas: (1) Shortage of teacher candidates of color in colleges and universities, (2) Strategies for increasing the number of teacher candidates of color in teacher preparation programs, and (3) Experiences of teacher candidates of color as it pertains to retention.

Lack of teacher candidates of color

Many scholars believe that the lack of people of color in teacher preparation programs is rooted in some of the same issues that contribute to the academic and opportunity gap found in K-12 public schools (Achinstein et al., 2010; Cochran-Smith, 2011; Gordon, 2000; Quijano & Rios, 2000; A. M. Villegas et al., 2012). Furthermore, access to most university-based teacher preparation programs, is based upon successful completion of high school and in some cases, undergraduate degrees. As such, some students of color who wish to enter K-8 teaching find

themselves battling the same barriers of entry that are found post-high school. These barriers include lower academic achievement due to the lack of access to college-readiness academic programs in high school and lower results on standardized tests. (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Flynn et al., 2015; Grant & Gibson, 2011; Lau, Dandy, & Hoffman, 2007). Additionally, financial constraints make attending a certification program full-time a difficult challenge for many people who desire to enter teaching, but especially people of color who have historically been financially marginalized (Jackson & Kohli, 2016; G Ladson-Billings, 2011; Sleeter & Milner, 2011; A. M. Villegas et al., 2012; Zeichner, 2009). The aforementioned challenges are directed mostly at university- based teacher preparation programs. There is a growing body of literature that addresses the successes and challenges of alternative certification programs, as well as programs that reside at Historically Black Universities (HBUs), but that is beyond the scope of this literature review.

College and university can be a unique experience for many students of color, and, by extension, also for their families. The struggles of first-generation college students are well documented, reporting considerable barriers to access that go beyond financial constraints (Brown, 2014; Burnett, 2015; Ellis & Epstein, 2015; Villagómez, Easton-Brooks, Gomez, Lubbes, & Johnson, 2016). Moreover, the privileging of academic experiences over life-experiences such as standardized tests, (e.g. SAT or ACT) as cut-off points for the first round of acceptance into four-year colleges and universities often punishes students of color disproportionately due to historically lower scores on such tests. Zeichner (2003) states “Although not denying the importance of academic performance and content knowledge, the practice of ignoring some of the additional strengths that diverse candidates bring to teacher

education programs has worked against the goal of recruiting more diverse teacher education cohorts ...” (p. 501).

Moreover, the financial cost of completing a university-based teacher preparation program can be a substantial impediment for many individuals, including people of color, who are considering a college or university-based teacher preparation program (Achinstein et al., 2010; Villegas & Lucas, 2004). Whether the cost is incurred as an undergraduate or post-graduate, the time and financial implications of completing a college or university teacher education program are considerable. Unlike some other professions that require licensure such as the legal or medical professions, the post-graduation salary is not typically considered to be an enticement to the profession (Flynn et al., 2015; Lau et al., 2007). These negative factors associated with teaching are felt unequally for many people of color whose financial status has historically lagged behind their White counterparts. With the financial burden in mind, it is becoming increasingly more common for teacher candidates to look to alternative routes to certification (Ellis & Epstein, 2015; Nadler & Peterson, 2009). While a complete review of alternative certification teacher preparation programs is beyond the scope of this study, a discussion regarding these types of programs will be briefly discussed later in this chapter.

Strategies for increasing the number of teacher candidates of color

There are several strategies that have been employed or increasing the number of people of color in teacher preparation programs, including: targeting promising pre-college students; partnering with 2-year and technical colleges; facilitating a more direct path to teaching for paraprofessionals; expanding alternative certification programs; and increasing the financial incentives and aid for students of color (Grant & Gibson, 2011; Izarry, 2007; G Ladson-Billings,

2011; Lau et al., 2007; Sleeter & Milner, 2011; Ukpokodu, 2015; A. M. Villegas et al., 2012; Villegas & Lucas, 2004; Zeichner, 2009).

Despite the academic impediments faced by many minority teacher candidates, there are some promising strategies for recruiting minorities into teacher preparation programs. One strategy is to view potential academic challenges within a larger context that includes giving applicants credit for having extensive experience working or living in culturally and linguistically diverse communities (Zeichner, 2003). This strategy emphasizes the importance of identifying and highlighting teacher candidates' cultural funds of knowledge. In addition, there are non-traditional pipelines for recruiting teacher candidates of color, for example, partnering with 2-year colleges and technical schools to facilitate admission into a teacher preparation program (Achinstein et al., 2010; Brown, 2014; Cochran-Smith, 2000)

Another promising pipeline for recruiting teacher candidates of color is based on partnerships between teacher preparation programs and local school districts. These two entities identify paraprofessionals and individuals who are not typical university students and admit them to teacher preparation programs. In these programs teacher candidates are able to continue in their jobs and complete their academic credentialing classwork in the evenings and weekend days (Flores, Clark, Claeys, & Villarreal, 2007; Grant & Gibson, 2011; Lau et al., 2007; A. M. Villegas et al., 2012; Zeichner, 2003).

Moreover, there is some evidence to suggest that recruiting minority teacher candidates into teacher certification programs that focus on urban, high-needs schools has been successful in not just recruiting teachers of color, but also retaining them (Achinstein et al., 2010; Cochran-Smith, 2011; Ingersoll & May, 2011). Achinstein and Ogawa (2011) assert in their book, *Change(d) Agents: New Teachers of Color in Urban Schools*, that teacher candidates of color are

more apt to graduate and enter into teaching when their programs are social justice oriented and “build on the cultural resources of candidates of color to enact culturally responsive and socially just practices” (p. 22). These researchers suggest that programs are more likely to retain teacher candidates of color when their mission and goals are based on supporting and preparing teacher candidates to work in culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Preparation and Retention of teacher candidates of color

Further compounding the need diversify the K-12 workforce is the issue of the retention of teacher candidates of color. Having been admitted into a teacher preparation program is not the only hurdle that many teacher candidates of color must overcome. Researchers note that in most traditional teacher preparation programs, there is an *overwhelming presence of whiteness* that tends to marginalize the life-experiences and cultural capital of teacher candidates of color (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2011). By focusing on identity formation for White, mainstream students, teacher preparation programs implicitly state that “other ways of being and doing are less desirable,” Hollins, 2011, p. 113. The focus on the experiences of White, mainstream teacher candidates found in many university- based teacher preparation programs can serve to further alienate minority teacher candidates and reinforce the sense that they don’t belong. (Brown, 2014) notes, “Teacher candidates of color report high levels of alienation, a disconnection from the larger program community and a sense of not ‘seeing themselves’ in their programs,” (p. 334). Many teacher preparation programs in predominantly White institutions are often heavily dominated by White, mainstream students and faculty, that may instantiate and reproduce power paradigms that are weighted in favor of the White, mainstream population (Montecinos, 2004).

Moreover, many teacher candidates of color express a profound disappointment in the curriculum of most teacher preparation programs in predominately White institutions that

increases their feelings of marginalization and isolation. (Neal, Sleeter, & Kumashiro, 2015) note that teacher preparation programs often subject teacher candidates of color to practices and attitudes that privilege White, mainstream students, that the same time, create barriers for students of color. They state, “Norms within the institution that privilege White students and instructors, Eurocentric curriculum and assessments, inadequate connections to local communities and schools, and lack of role models and mentors are just some of the elements of the educational experience of becoming a teacher that ... push them out after they arrive,” (p. 8). Furthermore, as (Nguyen, 2008), contends, there is a need to strengthen teacher preparation curricula to “question inclusive institutional practices, as well as exclusive ones that might have contributed to the underrepresentation of ethnic minority teachers,” (p. 133). The literature suggests that many teacher preparation programs express a desire to diversify their teacher candidates. However, as the previous literature has revealed, these goals are often hampered by the inability to implement and sustain changes that would both increase the number of teacher candidates who apply to such programs, and support them so that they successfully matriculate.

Teacher Candidates of Color in Teacher Education Programs. In one study of Asian American teacher candidates by Sheets and Chew (2002), the experiences of Cantonese/English Chinese American credential candidate (CACC) were reported in a 5-year bilingual project at San Francisco State University (SFSU). The study found that generally the CACCs felt disrespected, ignored, and frustrated by the content in their pre-service diversity courses. The study focused on the experiences of the CACCs in their diversity courses because the content was intended to prepare all teacher credential candidates, for working with culturally and linguistically diverse populations. The CACCs expressed feelings of invisibility and that the life experiences as people of color were ignored. Further, the CACCs noted that there was pressure

on them to help the White candidates understand Asian culture. Overall, they felt a lack of acknowledgement and desire to meet their needs as minority students. As this study suggests, the low numbers of people of color in teacher preparation programs, combined with the previously mentioned shortcomings of such programs, could be impediments to completing a teacher certification program, and possibly negatively influence future teacher candidates of color decisions as to whether to enroll in such programs.

Similar experiences of Chinese American teacher candidates as previously discussed by Sheets and Chew (2002) were also reported by Nguyen (2008) in her study of Vietnamese American teacher candidates at a state university in California. She followed five, first-generation women who had entered the teacher preparation program at her institution. Nguyen (2008) noted that the teacher candidates in her study also felt that their home cultures and languages put them in opposition with the notion of what is considered an “American teacher.” She stated, “Their distinct cultural and physical characteristics did not fit those of a traditionally defined American teacher ... In addition, their perceived accented speech influenced how others perceived them as fitting the image of an ‘American’ teacher,” (p. 127). For many teacher candidates of color, it appears there is a tension of both being invisible while at the same time, being made to feel like outsiders (Montecinos, 2004).

A further aspect of alienation for many teacher candidates of color is that their lived experiences, and wealth of social and cultural knowledge, are not adequately acknowledged or honored in teacher preparation programs at Predominantly White Institutions (PWI). In a review of literature focusing on the experiences of students of color in teacher preparation programs throughout the United States, (Brown, 2014) notes that “The perspective that preservice teachers of color encounter teacher preparation programs that are marginalizing, isolating and not

culturally affirming was strongly supported,” (p. 334). As Brown’s literature review revealed, the environments found in many teacher preparation programs are unsupportive and, at times, unaware of the needs of teacher candidates of color

The continued focus in most teacher preparation programs at PWIs on preparing White teacher candidates to teach in culturally and linguistically diverse schools, while ignoring the cultural assets of teacher candidates of color is further evidence of having one’s lived experiences ignored, or disrespected (Achinstein et al., 2010; Dee, 2005; Flynn et al., 2015; Sheets, 2002). Moreover, Montecinos (2008) states, “If teacher education students are being told the K-12 students’ ethnic identities matter, what are the justifications for claiming that teacher candidates’ ethnic identities do not matter?” (p. 174). Additionally, the lack of attention being given to teacher candidates of color cultural and linguistic assets further reinforces the sense that their presence goes unnoticed. Brown (2014) notes, “These challenges (in teacher preparation programs) include encountering programs mired in a normalized, White culture that fails to align with, include or support the experiential knowledge teachers of color bring with them,” (p. 340). For many teacher candidates of color, the combination of invisibility and objectification in their teacher preparation programs at PWIs gives them the sense that cultural identities are unimportant and inferior.

Alternative pathways. There is some evidence to suggest that some alternative certification programs are having success with both recruiting and retaining teacher candidates of color, especially when such programs are focused on the recruitment, preparation and retention of teacher candidates of color. For instance, (Nadler & Peterson, 2009) claim, “In Mississippi, for example, the disparities are massive: 60 percent of the more than 800 teachers who were alternatively certified in 2004-05 were of minority background” (p. 58). There is a growing body

of alternative certification programs, and substantial variation in how each program recruits and retains teacher candidates (Zeichner, 2003). It is inaccurate to suggest that all alternative certification programs are alike, but a more thorough analysis is beyond the scope of this literature review.

However, literature that documents the experiences of teacher candidates of color who have completed certification through alternative track programs is relatively limited. (Rogers-Aard & Mayfield Lynch, 2015) described the lessons learned from an alternative certification program in Oakland, CA, Teach Tomorrow in Oakland, “After several years of doing this work, we have learned four valuable lessons: 1) Target recruitment for specific audiences; 2) Partnerships with universities are beneficial; 3) Support for candidates navigating the educational system is crucial; 4) Retention requires many layers,” (p. 4). Although this was a study that focused on one alternative certification track program, the knowledge that was gleaned appears to be consistent with what other studies have also posited (Grant & Gibson, 2011; Izarry, 2007; Quioco & Rios, 2000).

The majority of the existing literature suggests that the focus in teacher preparation programs is devoted to better understanding how White mainstream students respond to a multicultural curriculum, and not how teacher candidates of color feel marginalized or included in their programs. (Montecinos, 2004) notes that there are far too few studies on the experiences of teacher candidates of color, and in particular their experiences with the issue of diversity. She contends, “Given this imbalance, what we currently understand about the preparation of teachers for diversity is based on the needs and concerns of White teachers,” (p. 171). There continues to be a need for more research and explication of the experiences of teacher candidates of color in their teacher preparation programs.

Yet despite such discouraging issues, many teacher candidates of color not only remain in their teacher preparation programs long enough to graduate, but they are more likely to work in urban, high-needs schools (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2011; Dee, 2005; Madkins, 2011). Further, for many teacher candidates of color, their reasons for entering K-12 teaching are motivated by what Achinstein & Ogawa (2011) call, “humanistic concerns” (p. 19). For many teacher candidates of color, there is a desire to give back to the communities from which they came and to help mitigate some of the social inequities found within these communities. Being motivated by humanistic concerns is certainly not confined to only teacher candidates of color, but a deep sense of commitment and pride in being personally connected to the people and families in the urban, high-needs schools was a compelling factor for many teacher candidates of color (Achinstein et al., 2010; Sleeter & Milner, 2011).

In conclusion, the research and literature on the recruitment, preparation, and retention of teacher candidates of color in a PWI discusses the benefits of increasing the numbers of teachers of color in the K-12 teaching workforce. If the goal is to increase the numbers of teachers of color in teaching, then one line of thought is to look at the pipeline through which we can increase the number of teachers of color entering into the profession. Studies devoted to the goal of increasing the number of people of color in teaching suggest that to increase the number of teacher candidates of color, teacher preparation programs should expand efforts to include identifying promising pre-college students, partnering with two-year colleges for early identification of teacher candidates, and increasing financial incentives for teacher candidates of color to offset the cost of obtaining teacher certification.

With regard to the benefits and limitations of retaining teacher candidates of color, the main issue discussed in this review focuses on the difficulty for teacher candidates of color in a

PWI who must navigate a White, mainstream environment successfully. A major benefit of retaining teacher candidates of color is that once they have attained their teaching credentials, they are far more likely to both teach and remain in urban, high-needs schools. The retention of teacher candidates of color is an area where more research is needed. The existing literature points to the need for more scholarship on the experiences of teacher candidates of color in their teacher preparation programs.

The research study described here seeks to add to the literature on the importance of providing the highest-quality, best-prepared teachers for all K-12 students, and especially for those students of color whose academic opportunities have been historically underserved. Specifically, this study will gain a better understanding of the learning experiences of teacher candidates of color as they prepare for their K-12 certification in a PWI. This study will add to the knowledge base about how to recruit, prepare, and retain teacher candidates of color with the goal of increasing diversity in the K-12 teaching workforce.

Chapter 4:

Research Design and Rationale

Given that the focus of the study was on individuals, and that they both interacted with and were acted upon within different learning environments, a qualitative comparative case study was the best method by which to gather this type information. Qualitative research affords us the opportunity to gain insight into the experiences of teacher candidates of color. Patton (1990) highlights a critical aspect of qualitative research for this study, “greater attention can be given to nuance, setting, interdependence, complexities and context,” (p. 51). A comparative case study allowed me to examine the experiences of teacher candidates of color (TCCs) as they navigated their teacher preparation program.

Due to the goal of collecting information about the experiences of TCCs, it was essential to implement a comparative case study. A comparative case study allowed for depth in both data collection and analyses, which was necessary because individuals were studied within their learning environments for affordances and constraints. Through the use of comparative case studies, some of the essential characteristics of the experiences of teacher candidates of color, such as their ethnic and cultural identities, their identities as teacher candidates and related beliefs, and the interactions within these environments that afford or constrain their learning were explored.

Setting

The setting in which this study took place was a teacher preparation program at a public university in the Northwest, called the University of Mountain View (a pseudonym). The intention was to focus on people of color and highlight their experiences within education, specifically teacher education/preparation. This university’s students of color and the greater

community's teachers of color demographic gap were similar to the national statistics that were discussed in the previous chapter(s). The demographic data for one of the largest Educational School Districts in the state of Evergreen (a pseudonym), in which University of Mountain View is located, for the 2012-13 school year has been compiled and is found in Table 4. There are over 400,000 students and more than 21,000 classroom teachers, and of those teachers 12% are minorities while 47% of the students are minorities.

Table 4:

K-12 ESD 12 demographics for Evergreen state 2013

	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Asian	African Ameri- can	Hispanic/ Latino of any race	Native Hawaiian	2 or more races
K-12 teachers	1%	4%	2%	3%	0%	2%
K- 12 students	1%	9	13%	15%	2	7%
Diff	0%	(-5)%	(-11)%	(-12)%	(-2)%	(-5)%

Source: Classroom Teacher and Student Demographics in Evergreen (pseudonym) State: An analysis of changes over time, 2014, p. 12).

The student demographics for K-12 teacher preparation programs (elementary, secondary, and the local residency program⁷) at the College of Education at University of Mountain View

⁷ The local residency program is a residency program that is funded by a partnership between the UVM, local school district, the local teacher's union, and a non-profit organization. The residency program places teacher candidates in school placements, full-time, for the entire program and offers its residents a stipend for the year, as well as guaranteed employment

are found in Table 5.

Table 5:

Teacher Candidate Demographics of K-12 Teacher Preparation Programs at University of Mountain View

Ethnicity	2014 enrolled % of students	2013 enrolled % of students	2012 % of enrolled students
African American	6%	1.6%	3%
Native American	2%	4%	<1%
Asian American	15%	19%	13%
Pacific Islander	0%	<1%	<1%
Latino	8%	11%	9%
Other/not included	<1%	<1%	<1%
Total URM:	16%	18%	15%
Caucasian	68%	62%	71%

Source: University of Mountain View (pseudonym) College of Education for the academic years 2012-2014.

The demographics of the faculty (tenure-line) in the K-12 teacher preparation programs at UMV are shown in Table 6. There are four programs from which these numbers are gathered.

The programs are: Elementary Teacher Preparation (K-8), Secondary Teacher Preparation (6-12),

contingent upon successful completion of the year. The residents must commit to teaching in the school district for a minimum of five years.

and the local Teacher Residency. The faculty in the K-8 teacher preparation program are included in the totals. These numbers do not show demographics for instructors, adjunct professors, or coaches in the program.

Table 6:

Tenure-line Faculty Demographics of the K-12 Teacher Preparation Programs at University of Mountain View

Year	Total Faculty	% People of Color
2014	38	14%
2013	31	10%

Source: University of Mountain View (pseudonym) College of Education for the academic years 2013-2014.

Description of the K-8 teacher preparation program

The teacher preparation program at the University of Mountain View (UVM) is a master's degree level program. It is four-quarters long and like most university preparation programs, it has foundational courses, methods courses, and a substantial amount of time spent in school placements. The amount of time in courses and in the school placement changes as the teacher candidates move through the program. In the first few quarters, teacher candidates spend the majority of their time in university coursework with the balance shifting in the third and fourth quarters to spending the majority of time in school placements. This program is particularly demanding as the teacher candidates are required to take all classes in a sequence

that has no room for differentiation. The teacher candidates begin the program in the summer with seven graduate level academic courses.

In the fall and winter quarters, the time that the teacher candidates spend in their school placements increases, and the academic load decreases slightly from seven courses to five in the winter quarter. However, the time that teacher candidates spend in their school placements increases dramatically in fall and winter quarters. It is important to note that there are a total of 62 graduate credits in this program. Other teacher preparation programs, Stanford University's Masters in Teaching, for example, is 45 credits (Stanford University programmatic material, 2016). This is an indication of the intensity of the program and the demands that teacher candidates must successfully juggle in order to complete the program. See Figure 3 for the entire scope and sequence of the program.

Figure 3

Elementary Teacher Preparation Program Annual Schedule 2014-2015

ELTEP Annual Program Schedule, 2014-15			
Quarter 1 Summer	Quarter 2 Autumn	Quarter 3 Winter	Quarter 4 Spring
EDTEP 501 Field Work (1)	EDTEP 502 Field Work (2) School Placement & Field Seminar and community experience linked to the Dilemmas course.	EDTEP 503 Fieldwork (4) (3 full days in school) includes Working In Schools	EDTEP 601 Field work Student Teaching (8)
EDTEP 511 School & Society (3) Includes a community component.		EDTEP 533: Teaching & learning in Literacy III (3)	EDSPE 503: Classroom Management for Elementary School Educators (1)
EDTEP 531 Teaching & Learning in Literacy (3)	EDTEP 544 Differentiated Instruction (SPED) (3)	EDTEP 522: Teaching & Learning in Numeracy II (3)	EDTEP 505 Capstone (2)
EDTEP 543 Teaching & Learning in Social Studies and Arts (4)	EDTEP 541 Dilemmas of Teaching & Learning in Elementary School (3)	EDTEP 523 Teaching & Learning in Science (3)	
EDTEP 544: Differentiated Instruction –CLD Foundations (1)	EDTEP 532 Teaching & Learning in Literacy II (4) (in schools)	EDTEP 544 CLD + Multicultural Methods (4)	
EDC&I 494: Issues of Abuse (1)	EDTEP 521 Teaching & Learning in Numeracy I (4) (in schools)	EDSPE 503 Classroom Management for Elementary School Educators (1)	
EDSPE 503 Classroom Management for Elementary School Educators (1)	EDSPE 503 Classroom Management for Elementary School Educators (1)	EDSPE 503 Classroom Management for Elementary School Educators (1)	
EDC&I 324 Physical Education and Health in Schools (2)	EDC&I 505 Technology (1)	(Student teaching begins during finals week of Winter Quarter)	Total Q4 Credits: 11 Approximately 440 hours (full time) in the field
Q1 total credits 16 Approx 75 hours in the field	Q2 Total Credits 18 Approx 75 hours in the field	Total Q3 Credits 18 Approximately 215 hours in the field	

TOTAL CREDITS 62

8/27/2014

Source: University of Mountain View, Elementary Teacher Preparation Program, Programmatic Materials, 2014.

Data Collection Strategy and Procedures

Two different learning environments. Courses in which the TCCs were engaged during the time when the study took place included several methods courses, and courses in social foundations, learning sciences, differentiated instruction, classroom management, and culturally

and linguistically responsive teaching. This study followed the TCCs mainly during the third quarter of their program (January 2015 through March 2015) and in their fourth quarter of the program (April 2015 through early June 2015). The second learning environment in which the TCCs were observed was at their school placement sites. See Table 7 for more information regarding the data collection process. In addition, see Appendix E for evidence of themes in data collection chart.

Table 7

Data Collection

Types of Data	Description	Quarter	What Data Provides to the Researcher
Semi-structured Interviews	1-2 hours of semi-structured interview with each participant after observations in academic and non-academic environments; 3 observations	Winter and Spring	Participant reflected on his/her role as a learner; his/her identity within the context of a learning environment (academic and non-academic).
Methods classroom observations (dependent on participant)	Observation focused on a math or literacy methods; 2 observations.	Winter	Provided information about the participant's interactions within a formal learning environment
Field based observation	Observation in non-academic environment such as school placement site; 1 observation	Spring	Provided information about participant's interactions in a non-academic learning environment.

School Placement sites. The second learning environment in which TCCs were observed and interviewed was at each of their school placement sites. This observation and interview took place during a debriefing session (after the coach had observed the TCC teaching a lesson) between the TCCs and their coaches. This type of teaching and learning, where the teacher candidate was taking responsibility for the planning, instruction, and assessment of students,

occurs in the third and fourth quarters. The observation in the TCCs classrooms and follow-up sessions with their coaches lasted anywhere from one to two hours.

In all cases, the TCCs' placements were at schools where the majority of the students were students of color, English Language Learners (ELL), and/or bilingual. Furthermore, each school had a high percentage of students who qualified for free or reduced priced meals. See Table 8 for detailed information. 2014-15 school year, Evergreen (pseudonym) State Office of the Superintendent of Instruction. The demographics of the TCCs' placement were significant in that they were placed in schools where their cultures, languages, and ethnicities were represented within the families, students, and communities.

Table 8

Teacher Candidate School Placements

TC name & Location	% Minority students	% Transitional Bilingual students	% Free/reduced-price meals
Julia Lexington International	80	46.5%	81.7%
Andrew Northlake K-8	89.2	22.2	63.7
Lisa and Sarah Knoxhill Elementary	77.5	36.8	79.2
Tina Greenville Elementary	88.9	43.5	84.2

In preparation for the observation, I was given access to the TCC's lesson plans. In addition, I visited the TCCs on a day when their university supervisors (coaches) were also observing them teach. After observing the lesson, the TCCs were also observed while debriefing the lesson that had just been taught in the classroom with their coach. At the completion of the debriefing, the TCCs were interviewed about the lesson and the subsequent debriefing session with their coaches. These interviews lasted approximately one-hour.

Individual interviews with teacher candidates of color were critical to the study. This enabled me to gain access to the TCCs' inner-thinking and feelings about what was observed in the university classes and their school placement sites. Furthermore, the interviews allowed for a clearer understanding of how the TCCs viewed themselves in relation to their racial/ethnic heritage, teacher identities and the interplay between these aspects of their learning experiences. The interviews were audio recorded which allowed for the interviewer to focus on guiding the questions, note taking, and detailed transcription of the interviews.

For these observations, I used field notes and documents to record data. The field notes documented the physical setting of the learning environment, activities that occurred throughout the observation, instruction of lessons, interactions amongst the TCCs and their students, and informal and formal conversations. My field notes also documented the debriefing session between the TCCs and their coaches.

University methods courses. In the UVM teacher preparation program, the math and literacy methods courses are designed by a tenured faculty member. There are two sections of each course with 30 teacher candidates in each section. The tenured faculty teaches one section and an adjunct professor or doctoral student teaches the other. The planning for the courses is done together with both the tenured faculty member and instructor (a graduate student or

adjunct) working to design the content and assignments so that they are identical for both sections. The methods courses taught at UVM are embedded in an elementary school classroom for one quarter in the program where the university faculty and K-5 classroom teacher collaborate to plan activities that engage the teacher candidates in working directly the students.

Overall, the literacy, math and science methods courses in the program are heavily enactment-based, meaning that most of the content, assignments, and assessments are based upon teacher developing candidates' competency with both learning how to teach either literacy or math, and their ability to demonstrate that they are able to enact the teaching practices emphasized in the course.

I observed the TCC's in their literacy and math methods courses during the winter quarter. This was the third quarter of their program. Each class was two and a half hours long. The third quarter was a crucial point in time for the TCCs as it pertained to this study because the candidates were equally engaged in academic coursework and their school placement. For the methods courses, four of the TCCs were in the same section and the fifth TCC was in the other section. Thus there was heavier representation of some courses than others due to the larger number of TCCs in one section. For the purposes of this study, it was necessary to observe the TCCs at a time when they were spending equal time in the two environments.

The observations of the methods courses were non-participant observations and recorded the events, activities, and interactions of the participants. I used field notes and documents to record data. The field notes documented the physical setting of the learning environment, activities that occurred throughout the observation, interactions amongst peers, informal and formal conversations, and instruction wherever appropriate. Some of the field notes documented conversations that occurred during the teacher candidates' methods classes as much of their time

is spent working in small groups and/or pairs. Other field notes referred to inflections, non-verbal cues, and non-verbal interactions.

Upon completion of each observation, a follow-up interview was conducted with the TCCs in order to gain a sense of what they were experiencing in each university class. The interviews typically lasted forty-five minutes to one hour. In these interviews, information was sought about how the TCCs engaged with both the academic material of the course, and about the relationships amongst peers and instructors of the courses. Some of the types of questions that were asked during this phase were, “Can you describe the course to me as if I don’t know anything about [it]? How do you think the things you’re learning are relevant for your teaching career? Can you describe some of the peer relationships to me? What kinds of considerations, if any, of race, culture or language do you think are either supported or challenged in your literacy class?” See Appendix 1 for a detailed list of questions.

Participant sampling, selecting, and recruitment. I engaged in *purposeful sampling strategy* as described by (Merriam, 2009) because it was necessary in order to select those individuals who possessed the necessary attributes of the population that I wanted to study. Because the study focused on a very specific population, teacher candidates who self-identify as people of color, it was essential that the participants “reflect the purpose of the study and could offer me guidance in the identification of information-rich cases” (Merriam, 2009, p. 78). To identify appropriate participants, the networking sampling was used as described by Merriam (2009). This involved emailing all teacher candidates in the elementary teacher preparation program, requesting participation of those teacher candidates who identified as people of color

The participants were teacher candidates who were part of a cohort-based 4-quarter, 63-credit, graduate program that offers a Master’s Degree in Teaching. During the 2014-15

academic year, there were 52 teacher candidates (TCs) enrolled in the UVM teacher preparation program. The percentage of the Elementary Teacher Education Program (ELTEP) students of color in this cohort was 40% (TEP, 2015). The teacher preparation program is historically predominantly White and middle-class. In recent years, the program has seen an increase in enrollment with regard to students of color, with the primary ethnicity being Asian American.

Participants. The participants in this study self-identified as students of color, and three of their families had emigrated from non-English speaking countries. One participant immigrated to the United States when she was 14 years old. The other participant, although multiethnic, identifies primarily with his mother's heritage that is Native American. Four of the five participants were the first-generation in their family to attend college. All of the participants were in their early-20s and came from lower to middle-class economic backgrounds. Four of the participants' home language was not English. See Table 9 for more information regarding TCCs' ethnic identities and home languages

Participant's ethnic and linguistic heritages. Andrew was the only male in the study. He identified as multicultural as his mother was Native American and his father was Latino. Andrew was born in California and moved to the Northwest after his parents divorced. He shared that he had originally been exposed to Spanish as a home language, but when he and his mother moved to the Northwest, he was no longer exposed to the language and he lost his fluency. Andrew was the only participant in the study whose parents had attended college. His mother and a few of his aunts were alumni of the same university, University of Mountain View. In addition, Andrew said that the middle school in his community was named after some of his family members. He went directly from his undergraduate program to the graduate teacher preparation program at

UVM. Andrew was a recipient of a generous scholarship from a non-profit organization whose mission was to bring more individuals of color into K-12 public schools teaching..

Julia was born in California and lived there until she was eight years old at which time her parents moved the family to a small-town in Oregon. Julia went to college in Oregon and enrolled at University of Mountain View because her fiancée had moved to the northwest and she wanted to stay close to him. Her parents emigrated from Mexico before she was born and her home language was Spanish. She was a first-generation college student and she was also able to attend UVM because of a generous scholarship from the same non-profit organization that funded Andrew.

Lisa was born in California and lived in the Los Angeles area until her family moved to the northwest. Lisa's parents emigrated from El Salvador, and her home language was Spanish. She identified herself as being, "Salvadorian-American." Lisa is a first-generation college student and attended the University of Mountain View as an undergraduate student. She decided to attend the UMV because she felt more comfortable enrolling in a university where she already knew 'the ropes' and didn't have to start over in a new place. Lisa was the only participant who was married at the time the study took place.

Tina was born in California and lived there with her family up until the start of the teacher preparation program, at which time she moved to the northwest. Tina's parents had come to the United States before she was born, and her home language was Vietnamese. She spoke about the dilemma of being a hyphenated American and how this created some tensions for her with her parents. While her home language and culture was Vietnamese, she felt that she had become more "Americanized," and thus the reason she called herself, hyphenated. Tina attended college in California and chose the UMV because of its reputation for an emphasis on social

justice and preparing teacher candidates for working in culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Sarah was born in an East African country and was the only participant who did not have an American educational experience as a young child. She was fourteen years old when her family arrived in the United States after having spent the majority of her early childhood in a refugee camp in East Africa. She considered herself to be multicultural and multilingual although her home language was the language spoken in East Africa. Sarah was the first East African teacher candidate in the UVM K-8 teacher preparation program. Her presence, in many ways, challenged the status quo and made demands on a system that were often met with a stated desire to accommodate, but which in reality often lacked implementation. She was also one of two African American teacher candidates in her cohort. Sarah was also a recipient of a scholarship from the non-profit organization that is dedicated to increasing the diversity in K-12 public school teachers. She attended the UVM as an undergraduate student. Table 9 is a summary of each participant's ethnic identity, gender, and home language.

Table 9

Participants ethnic identity, gender, and home language

Participants			
Name	Ethnic Identity	Gender	Home Language
Andrew	Native American	M	English
Lisa	Salvadoran-American	F	Spanish
Julia	Mexican-American	F	Spanish
Sarah	East African-American	F	East African
Tina	Vietnamese-American	F	Vietnamese

Researcher's Positionality

It is important to note that I have had a long affiliation with the University of Mountain View's Teacher Preparation Program. I graduated from the program in 1998 and returned as a doctoral student in 2010. In 2010, I also took on a role as a teacher candidate supervisor for the field-based practicum, as well as providing assistance with instruction in multiple classes taught throughout the teacher preparation program. I also was the facilitator of a students of color group, intended to create a safe space for teacher candidates of color to come together and support each other academically, socially, and emotionally. For the teacher candidates in this study, I engaged in the roles of teaching assistant for one of their courses in the first quarter of the program, and then as the facilitator of the students of color group. I had no supervisory or grading responsibilities with the participants, but I was an insider in the program.

Data Analysis

The data was collected through observations and semi-structured interviews with the purpose of finding patterns or trends in order to better understand how the TCCs' identities learning experiences were afforded or constrained by their racial and cultural identities. This study sought to gather data on the TCCs' feelings, interpretations of activities and events, and past events. Merriam (2009) contends that interviews are the most appropriate method for gathering this type of data and states, "Interviewing is also the best technique to use when conducting intensive case studies of a few selected individuals," (p. 88). For these reasons, the use of interviews in this multiple case study is most appropriate for data gathering.

In order to gain a clear understanding of emerging patterns and trends, it was necessary to continually examine and interpret the data. Analytic memos were written after each observation and interview, allowing for necessary adjustments in preparation for the next

observations and interviews. Merriam (2009) states, “Without ongoing analysis, the data can be unfocused, repetitious, and overwhelming” (p. 171). Continually examining the data and adjusting future observations and interviews was necessary in order to build on prior information obtained from earlier data collection activities.

The initial data analysis entailed listening to the recorded audio interviews while taking some orienting categories into consideration. The orienting categories used in the analysis were: the participant’s ethnic/racial identity, discussion of the school placement, discussion of the university-based classes, description of work with coaches (school placement supervisors who work for the university and are graduate students), and anytime that a participant’s cultural/ethnic identity was mentioned as an asset. After organizing the data into the aforementioned categories, other, more specific patterns began to emerge.

The patterns that arose were then examined using the *Grounded Theory* approach to analyzing data. (Strauss & Corbin, 1994) state “As researchers we are required to learn what we can of their perspectives and interpretations. Beyond that, grounded theory requires, because it mandates the development of theory, that those interpretations and perspectives become incorporated into our own interpretations (conceptualizations),” (p.280). The coding strategy that was used was based upon Seidel and Kelle (1995, pp. 55-56), summarized by Coffey and Atkinson (1996), which includes: (a) noticing relevant phenomena, (b) collecting examples of that phenomena, and (c) analyzing those phenomena in order to find commonalities, differences, patterns, and structures. After several iterations of examining the data for patterns, it was then input into a web-based software program called *Dedoose* that was designed to help with the organization and analysis of qualitative data.

Ethical Considerations

As is the case with any university-based study, the study did not begin until the researcher had full approval from Human Subjects. All subjects gave the researcher consent to audio-record their observations and interviews. The participants in this study are individuals who identify themselves as being from an ethnic minority group. Extra steps were taken to ensure that 1) The participants felt that their participation would in no way jeopardize their good-standing within their teacher preparation programs, 2) Their identities would remain anonymous and 3) The information gathered would not be used for any other purpose than to inform the research. There was an added layer of vulnerability for the participants because they self-identify as members of racial and ethnic groups who have historically been marginalized. There is a long tradition of researchers who have taken advantage of vulnerable populations in order to further their own research agendas, sometimes at the expense of the participants (Bledsoe & Hopson, 2009; Milner IV, 2007; Stake & Rivzi, 2009; Zinn, 1979) I was fully aware of these potential dangers and employed two strategies to help avoid such pitfalls.

The first strategy was that a member check was utilized after each observation and interview. Merriam (2009) states, "... participants should be able to recognize their experience in your interpretation, or suggest some fine-tuning to better capture their perspectives" (p. 217). This step is also critical for ensuring internal validity of the study.

The second strategy that was used to ensure both ethical practices and the internal validity of the study was to be transparent and forthcoming about my positionality as a researcher. Merriam (2009) refers to this as *researcher's position or reflexivity* and emphasizes that, "Investigators need to explain their biases, dispositions, and assumptions regarding the research to be undertaken" (p. 219). Also, I am a person of color who has also been a student in a

teacher preparation program, as well as an instructor and mentor to teacher candidates. I was fully aware of the possible biases that may have been present due to prior my experiences with the program.

Trustworthiness

The previous section describes some of the first steps that were used to ensure the reliability of the study. Both member checks and a researcher's explicit discussion of his or her positionality are important to establishing a sense confidence that the research undertaken is trustworthy.

In addition, I utilized peer group discussions with colleagues. These discussions were a venue in which I was able to share ideas, insights, questions, and dilemmas. Merriam (2009) encourages researchers to employ peer examination groups as a way to gain feedback about the research in progress, especially with regard to plausibility.

Limitations and contributions

One possible limitation of this study is that it involved a relatively small sample. However, while it focused on the experiences of a small number of teacher candidates, it could also be useful for those who have similar questions about teacher preparation programs in predominantly White institutions, and how students of color experience these programs. Stake (2010) reminds us that studying the particular is a necessary step toward doing research that results in larger generalizations. Hence the particular study of teacher candidates at one university, can be of assistance to other similar universities that are also interested in knowing more about the learning experiences of their teacher candidates of color.

Some other limitations are focused on the participants and their demographic profiles. For example, four of the five participants are first-generation college students and English is not

their home language. The study might have rendered different findings if there were more participants from more varied socio-economic backgrounds. Also, the intersectionality of the participants' identities is not addressed. While recognizing that one's multiple identities (i.e. race, religion, sexual orientation, gender) interact continuously and almost never operate in isolation, this issue was beyond the scope of this study. However these are all important considerations when thinking about the findings. There is also very little variation in the ages of the TCCs as all five of them are in their mid to late-twenties.

Finally, although in this study it was not a limitation, all the participants were placed at schools that serve culturally and linguistically diverse communities where the majority of students qualified for free or reduced-priced meals. This does not necessarily help to inform the experiences of teacher candidates of color who may be placed at school sites that are not reflective of their cultural and linguistic diversity.

However despite these limitations, this study provides information about the learning experiences of teacher candidates of color in a teacher preparation program at a predominantly White institution with the goal of identifying potential challenges and barriers to increasing the number of people of color in teacher preparation programs. With more knowledge about teacher candidates of colors' experiences, we can hope to adjust and change our teacher preparation programs with the goal of increasing the number of teacher candidates of color who then go on to become teachers of color in K-12 schools.

Chapter 5: Findings

Description of the affordances and constraints experienced by Teacher Candidates of Color in their teacher preparation program in a Predominantly White Institution

This chapter reports data about (TCCs') experiences in school placement sites and university classes. As first mentioned in the previous chapter, the data was gathered over two quarters (six months), during the third and fourth quarters of the program. The findings are based upon my observations of the TCCs in their methods courses, the interviews, and the field notes that were created based on my observations of their teaching and their post- lesson interactions with their coaches. The research questions are restated below as they guided the findings and helped to reveal emerging patterns:

- What is the experience of teacher candidates of color in a pre-dominantly White university based teacher certification program?
- How do teacher candidates of color negotiate their learning in differing contexts?
- To what extent, and in what ways did the teacher candidates' racial and cultural identities shape their learning experiences?
- In what ways are the racial and cultural identities of teacher candidates of color afforded and constrained in their teacher preparation program?

Affordances experienced by the Teacher Candidates of Color in their learning environments

Engagement with learning communities. Wenger (1998) contends, "It [engagement] requires the ability to take part in meaningful activities and interactions, in the production of

sharable artifacts, in community-building conversations, and in the negotiation of new situations,” (p. 184). What follows is description of how the TCCs experienced engagement in their two learning environments: the school placement sites and the university courses. The school placement sites created multiple opportunities during which the TCCs experienced engagement with students, families, their mentor teachers, and other faculty and staff at their school placement sites. In the university courses, the TCCs shared times when they experienced engagement during their courses with professors and their peers. The chapter ends with a brief summary of the findings.

The school placement sites. This section reports the activities, relationships, and interactions between the TCCs and their students, the students’ families, mentor teachers, coaches (University supervisors/mentors), and UMV peers who were at the same school placement site.

All of the participants spoke at length about the affinity that they experienced with students and families because they were placed in schools where their cultures and languages were present. For example, Julia was placed at a dual-language immersion school where the two languages of instruction are English and Spanish. In addition, Lisa and Sarah were placed at schools in which there were significant populations of both Spanish speaking families and East African families, mirroring the racial and cultural identity of these candidates. Furthermore, Tina’s school placement had a large population of Southeast Asian Americans that reflected her cultural identity and heritage. For Andrew, his placement was within a very culturally diverse school, which is how he defined himself since he has several cultural and linguistic family heritages. All of the TCCs noted that there was a positive impact on their students and families due to cultural and linguistic congruence, as well as serving to empower their students with

linguistic and cultural knowledge that cannot be found in a textbook, but only through lived experiences.

Another pattern to emerge from the data is that all of the TCCs shared a common history and educational trajectory with many of their students at the school sites. For all of the TCCs in this study, the school placement sites were in communities in which their home languages were present in the schools. Andrew was the only TCC who identified English as his home language, and he was also comfortable speaking both Spanish and a Native American language. The sense of a common history of shared experiences, development of rich, meaningful relationships, and the site-specific application of knowledge and procedures created strong feelings of engagement at the school sites. Julia stated,

I always tell them (parents) not to be scared to talk to me. I know how I went through a similar situation and my parents couldn't communicate with my teachers. ... 'Let me know if you have any questions' ... talking to them about what we're doing in the classroom, and trying to engage them and seeing if they're going to come to events.

Moreover, four of the TCCs reported that families and students often spoke with them in their home languages. The TCCs reported that being able to communicate with families in their home languages gave them a sense of mutual engagement, shared experiences, and meaningful relationships with students and families. Lisa shared her pride in being able to help empower students and families by communicating in their own language. She said, "I think sometimes we can just get stuck translating, but that culturally, just being able to really give them that power. ... Sometimes language is a barrier ... but really hearing it in your language, I think that's even more powerful." As Lisa noted, a common shared language with the students and families at their school sites had implications beyond being able to converse easily. It was noted in several

observations that the TCCs conversed in Spanish with students and families. Referring to field notes, two of the TCCs greeted and spoke casually with adults, assumed to be parents, at both Lexington International School and Knoxhill elementary schools. Even more than the language interpretation, the TCCs who connected with students and their families noted that culturally, making these connections was important to the families from a social justice perspective.

The benefit of having a common language and culture helped all of the TCCs' forge relationships with parents. Julia stated, "... Knowing the same language as the families is really helpful because I know in other situations you just can't communicate with parents. ... I think my language and my culture are connected to a lot of their (the students') parents." In addition, Lisa, also spoke about the importance of having a mutual language with the parents in her classroom, and that sometimes this connection extended beyond her classroom into other classrooms, as well as with other families at the school. She commented, "I see parents even not in my classroom. One came in and she wanted to talk to me because she could find no one that speaks Spanish." Due to having the same home language as parents in their schools, the TCCs were able to form strong relationships with families at their school sites.

Adding to the TCCs' ability to converse with families in their home languages, three of the TCCs shared that they often took on a role that could be described as being a cultural interpreter. For instance, Sarah described a situation with a new East African student in the classroom who was being disruptive. Sarah's mentor teacher wanted to reach out to the girl's family and involve the family to help the student's transition to the classroom. Sarah, being from the same culture as the family, was able to understand how the parent would feel upon hearing that her child was misbehaving and knew that the parent was likely to react negatively. She was able to help put it in context for the parent. Sarah shared:

I did have to translate last week when, a new student [came] in our classroom. ... I know that in [East African] culture if a teacher says something about your child not behaving, it's a really big deal. I didn't feel like the outcome of me talking to her [the mom] really warranted with her [the student's] behavior, but I still ended up doing it. Her mom kept saying how embarrassed she was. ... [I told her] Even though I'm talking to you, it's really not like a huge issue. We just want to stop it before it gets worse.

In this example, Sarah was able to help the parent to see that her child's behavior, while inappropriate, was being mentioned not because the student was 'in trouble', but because the teacher wanted the parent to help intercede before the behavior worsened and became a larger problem. Here was a simple, yet important interaction with a parent that turned a potentially negative and punitive situation into a more neutral interaction. Because Sarah was intimately familiar with the culture as well as the language, she was able to intercede and reduce the possibility of alienation, embarrassment, or possible anger by acting as both a language and cultural interpreter.

Building on the idea that having a language and culture in common was a benefit to both the TCCs and their students, four of the TCCs mentioned that their students responded differently when they spoke with students in their home language. The ability to communicate in students' home languages also helped to build positive relationships with students and was an added benefit with regard to classroom management skills. Lisa noted:

If you speak their native language, it makes the kids [take notice], 'oh, you're speaking my mom's language, it's serious!' ... I can think of one situation when one little girl wasn't listening to me. She knows English really well. Then I just brought out my

Spanish card, and I talked to her. She just looked at me seriously and she knew I meant business.

It is possible that an unrecognized benefit of students being spoken to in their home languages could result in more positive classroom behavior. A change in students' behavior, when being spoken to in their home languages, also suggests that cultural and linguistic commonalities could help to prevent potential barriers between teachers and their students.

While all of the TCCs benefited primarily from working with their mentor teachers, they also spoke about the importance and relevance of seeking out other teachers and support staff in the schools in order to enrich their learning. Julia shared that she learned a lot from speaking with other teachers and staff at her school site. She said, "Talking to staff from different areas, like the SPED staff, the ELL staff, and just connecting with staff within all the grades has been really helpful."

Another critical aspect of the TCCs' sense of engagement with their school sites was evidenced by the support and mentoring they received from their coaches (field placement supervisors). The coaches worked with TCCs at their school sites and were critical to supporting the TCCs as they navigated the complexities of different roles and expectations in two different learning environments: the school placement sites and the university courses. They guided the TCCs in their school placements as they fulfilled the assignments and program requirements for certification, learned to become professionals, and completed the university courses.

Four of the TCCs spoke about the importance of their relationship with their coaches. For Tina, she experienced a level of support and relationship building that was particularly critical for her, as her mentor teacher was a White, mainstream woman and had little experience with culturally and diverse families and students. Tina felt disappointed that her mentor teacher was

not more appreciative of the cultural and linguistic diversity at her school and in her classroom.

Tina said:

They [her mentor teacher and coach] both taught in a diverse school, but for some reason I feel like my coach is more tolerant and respectful of the different cultures, whereas my CT is not. ... Maybe it's because my coach is a minority also. ... Which kind of helps me connect with her in some ways.

Lisa also explained that working with her coach helped her to build relationships with her students and work on classroom management skills. Lisa said, “You can't really teach too much about relationships. ... That's another thing I've been trying to learn, and I talked with [her coach]. I asked, ‘what are strategies?’ She said, ‘Well it's really relational.” Lisa’s coach was guiding her by suggesting that teaching is not blindly applying a strategy, but making sure that it was implemented individually in order for her to experience success with her students. This example highlights the important role that coaches played by helping the TCCs to take university coursework and apply it to their students and classrooms in a way that worked for the specific situation.

The importance of the relationship between the coach and the TCCs was also noted and observed during the debriefing sessions. All of these sessions involving the coaches and TCCs occurred during the fourth quarter (March through June 2015). In these sessions, the discussion between the coaches and the TCCs were focused on the TCC’s strengths in planning, implementing, and assessing the K-5 students in their classrooms. The discussion in all sessions was positive, instructional, collaborative, and friendly. All of the TCCs commented that the debriefing sessions were very beneficial for developing practice, as well as being ideal opportunities for relationship building between the TCCs and their coaches.

All of the TCCs talked about how helpful it was for them to collaborate with other TCs at their school sites as they learned how to differentiate their university assignments for their individual, and very different, classrooms. In these instances, the TCCs were able to work with each other as they were developing what Wenger (1998) referred to as the *production of a local regime of competence*, a critical component of engagement. In the case of the TCCs, this meant that they had to take a larger concept such as teaching literacy to fourth graders, and differentiate it to be appropriate for individual students. Andrew recalled, “ We work together a lot on a lot of our assignments; at least just talk about what we're doing, how could this be different.” The ability to learn with and from each other was an important aspect to the TCCs feelings of engagement at their school sites.

Additionally, working together in the schools, the TCCs often called upon each other to share resources, discuss different approaches to classroom management, and get new ideas about how to best serve their students in their school placements. Lisa said, “We can talk about what's been going on. What's working for you, what's not, whether or not it's school related. We just walk down the hallway, or meet out in the parking lot, or I pop into [another TCs'] class, or anyone pops in here.” Furthermore, Sarah noted, “I think having other teacher candidates there is helpful for me because I can always compare my experiences with them. ... She's [Lisa] always willing to help me ... and I like having another person of color. To me it's helpful just having that [another TCC at her school site].” All of the TCCs felt that being able to compare experiences, combine resources, answer questions, and brainstorm ideas, was a huge asset for them at their school sites.

Two of the TCCs were able to connect with their peers in the same grade level. At these times, the exchange of information was enormously helpful. The ability to collaborate with each

other based on common grade levels, school sites, and assignments was a key aspect for the TCCs feelings of engagement. Sarah noted,

I think having other teacher candidates there is helpful for me because I can always compare my experiences with them, and especially having Lisa next door is very helpful because it's the same grade level and same demographic so it's always interesting to share new stories with her.

Furthermore, all of the TCCs reported that their school sites were an invaluable part of their learning process due to the collaboration and teamwork with other mentor teachers, educational support staff such as ELL (English Language Learners) teachers, or in some cases, special education teachers. When asked about what resources she was using at her school site placement, Julia stated,

Talking to staff from different areas, like the SPED (Special Education) staff, the ELL staff, connecting with staff within all the grades. [I'm] learning from different teachers, learning from others as well about how to deal with issues and how they deal with things in the classroom.

Sarah also described the importance of being able to learn from more than just her mentor teacher, and how this aspect of being at her school site enhanced her learning. She noted, "I like the planning that we [other grade level teachers] do together. I like the strategy sharing that we do. I feel like those two are the main things that support me in my learning." Lisa described how she was learning the skill of teaching literacy from her mentor teacher, as well as other teachers at the school site. She reported, "It really has been helpful to work as collaborative, as colleagues of the same grade band ... you build foundations." Lisa was sharing her belief that foundations of teaching literacy are not only important, but that learning from and with colleagues is also

critical. The opportunity to collaborate and benefit from other experts at their school sites was an aspect of their learning that benefitted the TCCs and helped them to feel a sense of engagement with other mentors at their school placement sites.

Finally, for the two TCCs who were placed at Knoxhill Elementary School, there were additional resources and support programs available to the TCCs because the school was the recipient of a grant that funded additional supports for the families and students. Having the opportunity to see families and schools being supported by a constellation of resources was a unique opportunity for the TCCs. This also helped them to experience engagement with the broader community. Lisa said,

We're working on being a whole family or community group school. They have the family engagement meetings and we families be more engaged, or to be a community school. We have a health clinic here as well. ... We're trying to help the whole child in many ways.

Other TCCs also felt connected to the broader community at their school sites. This was an aspect that was encouraged and promoted by the university as being an essential component of the teacher candidates' ability to differentiate and individualize their lessons for all of their students, providing the highest level of instruction possible.

The feeling of having a common purpose in providing high-quality instruction and forging important bonds with their students and their families was a finding for all five of the TCCs in this study.

The majority of these instances of engagement occurred when the TCC were at their school sites and primarily involved students and families. Furthermore, the TCCs' reported that

they felt more connected and familiar with students and families because they shared the same culture and language as many of their students and families.

With regard to the TCCs' experiences in their university classes, they felt engagement with their community of practice mainly during one of the sections of the math methods course and their social foundations course. The math methods professor is a person of color whose family had immigrated to the United States as a child. Several TCCs shared that knowing the professor had a similar background as them, created a sense of camaraderie that they did not feel in other courses. In addition, several of the TCCs mentioned instances of engagement based on discussions and activities that were focused on cultural and historical topics as they applied to education in the United States.

Furthermore, the TCCs were working to balance and integrate their experiences at school placement sites with the material in their university coursework. It was intentional that this study occurred during a part of their teacher preparation program when the TCCs were spending time almost equally in both of these learning environments. This chapter shows that both learning environments provided meaningful and important moments of engagement within a community of practice.

The university environment. The university classroom environment refers mostly to the classes and instructors who were the focus of this study. Occasionally the TCCs referred to a class that was not a focus of the study. These courses were mainly social foundations courses⁸ that occurred in the summer quarter, or the first quarter of their program. The TCCs discussed their learning experiences in their math and literacy methods courses. As explained earlier, these

⁸ The social foundations courses for both sections were taught by the same instructor, had the same syllabus, and same assignments.

courses were taught at the university in the quarters during which the study took place. These courses are collaboratively taught with elementary teachers in partner school classrooms in the fall quarter. It is important too that there were two different sections of math and literacy methods. Each section had different instructors but the same syllabus, assignments, and assessments. Four of the TCCs under focus in this study were in one section, and the other TCC was in the other section, and there is a heavy preponderance of data from this one section. The detailed description of these classes is found in Chapter 4. The four TCCs who were in the same math methods section reported having meaningful discussions in that math methods course. For these TCCs, there were powerful moments of engagement and learning in that course.

Several of the TCCs spoke at length about a discussion in their math methods course that resonated strongly with them. The professor gave the TCCs real-life examples of incorporating culturally responsive math methods in lessons. This instructor is a person of color whose own story is similar to that of many of the TCCs as her family had immigrated to the United States when she was a young child. After having attended a math conference where she participated in a session on *Funds of Knowledge* (Moll & Gonzalez, 2004), the professor spoke about the importance of incorporating knowledge of students' home cultures into their math lessons.

In these examples, the accumulation of a history of shared experiences was evident due to the professor's personal history being similar to the TCCs' personal histories as being people of color, speaking languages other than English at home, and having parents who immigrated to the United States. All of the TCCs shared that they were happy to hear that the math they had been exposed to at home was not 'wrong,' but different, and should be recognized and valued as an asset for not just themselves, but also their students. Specifically, Julia remarked that the

discussion about funds of knowledge helped her to see the value in non-standard math, It reinforced a sense of camaraderie with some of her peers, and also her professor. She recalled:

She [the mathematics professor] tied it in with bakeries, and laundry, stuff like that.

Making it more relevant, because parents do certain types of math tasks that we don't think about. She brought in [that] with her mom; she doesn't really measure. She does it with her hands ... and how it's different in a different context. Made me think about how I am different, now, because of that.

Discussion about the importance of seeing cultural differences portrayed as assets was noted during one observation of the math course. All of the TCCs in this session responded with positive comments during the whole class discussion and then again when the class broke into small groups for discussion.

Moreover, with regard to the importance of funds of knowledge as it applied to their K-5 students, three of the TCCs felt more comfortable implementing this knowledge with their students. Tina noted, "What do they [her students] already know?" That helped further emphasize what they [the professor] teach us in math methods. Letting us remember that they [the students] are not just empty vessels that we have to fill but they have something to offer."

Furthermore, the math methods professor's discussion of funds of knowledge helped to deepen the TCCs understanding of how students' lives and communities are mathematical, even if standard U.S. definitions of math might not be immediately obvious. Wenger (1998) refers to this as a production of a local regime of competence, and contends that it is an important component to understanding an individual's engagement in a community of practice. For instance, Julia stated:

Some math problems that we provide students, we tell them this much and this much, but at the same time they might not know how much is what. I remember, even growing up, I didn't have allowance, so it was weird for me to hear that word. ... I think money's viewed differently by people. It made me think about that and how [the math methods instructor] challenged us to help build community knowledge and also the critical knowledge.

These examples are further evidence of engagement and moments when the TCCs were learning the importance of approaching culture as an asset. This local regime of competence was a powerful learning experience for the TCCs as it helped them to see that incorporating culture in thinking about math is not just being culturally responsive⁹, but making learning experiences personal and valued.

In addition, Tina specifically mentioned that her math methods course was a place where all teacher candidates were working together to become competent math teachers. Tina said, “We're trying to listen to each other's thinking and see how we can learn from that, or how we could revise our thinking from that. Everybody seems really supportive about each other's methods.” All of the TCCs reported that lesson planning in their methods courses with their peers was enormously beneficial for them. Sarah felt that peer work in her literacy methods course was particularly helpful, “If you're stuck or you don't know what to do, then you have someone else helping you. We do a lot of grade level work. We can compare and contrast between other TC's.” As expressed by all of the TCCs, the opportunities for collaborating with

⁹ The term *culturally responsive teaching (CRT)* is used throughout this dissertation and refers to what Gay (2010) defines as culturally responsive teaching. According to Gay, “Culturally responsive teaching can be defined as using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant and effective for them” (p. 31).

their peers in their methods courses and social foundations course was a crucial aspect for their sense of engagement. During the observations of the methods classes, both literacy and math methods, the TCCs were given multiple opportunities to break into small groups and work together. The literacy courses in particular gave the TCCs opportunities to work together by grade level and collaborate about how to implement lessons for their grade levels and specific students.

Some aspects of the university classes struck four of the TCCs as being particularly more responsive to their work in their school placement classroom than others. Whether it was due to their own experiences in schools as English Language Learners (ELL) as students or the stark realization that the majority of their current students were ELL, whenever the methods courses specifically addressed the importance of supporting ELL students, the TCCs made strong connections to each other, the course content, and their students. Tina remarked, “I think our past class ... where they demonstrated how we could teach ELL students really helped me kind of revise and enhance my instruction ... without dumbing down the content.” Mutual engagement in shared activities is an important aspect of engagement (Wenger, 1998). Tina’s example shows that the TCCs were working on how to best teach their students who, like themselves as young children, were in need of differentiation due to language differences.

Furthermore, opportunities for learning were not solely based on how to teach academic content. All of the TCCs also engaged in university-based events and activities that were intended to support their burgeoning knowledge base around families and communities. All of the TCCs were given an opportunity to learn more about the perspectives of families when a panel of parents and guardians came to speak to their classes. The panelists were parents or guardians of students in the schools in which the TCCs were placed, as well as people of color.

Some of the panelists spoke a language other than English as their primary language. The panelists spoke, among other things, about what they wanted teachers to know about their children, experiences in schools, and how they wanted their children to feel appreciated. When asked about some of the important resources other than methods classes that she was acquiring, Julia stated:

I think that [the family panel] made me realize about my upbringing, and how it is true for me how my parents weren't as supportive because they didn't know to support me. People from my culture sometimes do go through that because of their upbringing, how communication is lost.

Andrew also shared a time when he felt as if his culture and/or ethnicity were highlighted in a positive manner in one of his university classes. He spoke about an activity in the first quarter of the program in a foundations course¹⁰. After having visited a Duwamish¹¹ longhouse, Andrew shared that he felt an affinity with the other TCs in his teacher preparation program, and pride in his identity as a Native American in a manner that he had previously not felt. He recalled,

We went there [Duwamish longhouse], and that was really fun. He [an elder at the longhouse] brought out his drum, and started singing. I had my drum in my car so I asked if I could drum with him. It was awesome. I had so many questions after that. Some of my peers were asking me about my drum and if I sing. That was really nice.

Finally, the four TCCs who were in the same section of math methods spoke about a particularly poignant discussion that made a lasting impression on them. It occurred in class on the day after the decision to not prosecute the police officers who had shot and killed an unarmed

¹⁰ This was a course designed to address questions around the role and history of education in the United States from a social justice perspective.

¹¹ A local Native American tribe in the Pacific Northwest

man in Ferguson, MO¹². The professor took time away from the planned instructional activities to allow her class an opportunity to process this issue with each other. The TCCs reported that the discussion gave them a chance to think deeply, react emotionally, and process a jarring real-life event together. As Julia explained, “We were all able to talk about it. What [the math methods instructor] brought up was, that these are the types [African American males] of students we’ll be teaching. This is like real life kind of thing.” Andrew also noted that the discussion was important because it served as a reminder that most of the TCs in the program will be teaching students who come from communities such as the schools and communities found in Ferguson, MO. He said,

She [math methods professor] gave us half of the morning time to talk about that and how we can learn from what happened and trying to understand all the students, and the racial profiles that come along with our students, and to make sure that we’re culturally responsive to our students and understanding.

The discussion had made an impression with four of the TCCs who were in the section of math and helped them to feel a connection with their math methods professor. The professor facilitated a discussion that was not directly related to the math content, but more importantly to them, rooted in the day-to-day realities of being a teacher in an urban, culturally, and linguistically diverse community. The complexities of race, culture, and language were felt on many levels for the TCCs who were part of the discussion. They shared that it was a moment in the program

¹² Michael Brown was shot and killed on August 9, 2014 by a police officer. Mr. Brown was unarmed. The shooting and protests after the event sparked an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The decision not to prosecute the police officer was highly controversial and sparked massive protests in the town of Ferguson, MO. This decision was a much-discussed topic throughout the media for months thereafter. The actual date of the decision’s release was March 4, 2015.

where they felt that an instructor connected with their racial and cultural identities and also extended those connections to include the students who were in the TCCs' schools.

Alignment with learning communities

As described earlier, there are two different communities of practice in the K-8 teacher preparation program at UVM. As the TCCs journey through the process of becoming certificated teachers, they must successfully navigate the two worlds of university coursework and their school placement sites. A critical aspect to the TCCs ability to complete the teacher preparation program is the ability for them to experience alignment with each of the learning environments in order to fully gain the knowledge and skills that are needed to become a competent novice teacher. Wenger (1998) reminds us, "Because alignment concerns directing and controlling energy, it likewise concerns power: the power over one's own energy to exercise alignment and the power to inspire or demand alignment" (p. 180). In each learning environment, the TCCs were aware that they were expected to be in alignment with the community of practice, whether it was the school environment or the university courses. However, the tensions of wanting to assert themselves as competent learners conflicted at times with their need to be in alignment with their learning communities.

Horn et al. (2008) extend our understanding of the process of alignment further. The authors contend that as teacher candidates journey through their teacher preparation programs learning more about the necessary skills and traits to become successful teachers, they modify their identities in order to make better sense of the new knowledge they are acquiring about teaching and learning. The authors refer to this process as *negotiation*. What follows is a description of how the TCCs were aligning their identities and experiences with both their school

placement sites and the university courses, and in this process were also negotiating their identities as both emerging teachers and emerging teachers of color.

School Placement sites

All of the TCCs relied heavily on their mentor teachers at the school sites to prepare them for becoming teachers in the classrooms. The TCCs spoke about the importance and influence that their mentor teachers had in this process. In the teacher preparation program, all teacher candidates (TCs) begin with their mentor teachers and classrooms in late August and stay with their mentor teacher and K-5 students for the entire school year. Because they have a single, year-long placement (as opposed to spending time at multiple school sites throughout a school year), the TCCs developed strong relationships with their mentor teachers and students in the classroom. With regard to alignment, the TCCs were aware of the importance of being in alignment with their mentor teachers with regard to all aspects of daily instruction and interactions with students. This aspect was sometimes referred to as being consistent with students in order to avoid confusion for the students. However, this also impacts teacher candidates as they must also learn how to both be consistent and assert themselves if they experience discontinuity with their mentor teachers.

Four of the TCCs described how they coordinated activities and resources in their classrooms to align working toward the goal of becoming a competent teacher with their mentor teachers. For example, Sarah stated, “Whenever I do a lesson or anything in front of the kids, he's [her mentor teacher] always giving me pointers, what went well and what didn't go so well. ... Sometimes he asks me to analyze his teaching.” Sarah felt that by asking her to critique his teaching, her mentor teacher was indicating that he was comfortable and confident collaborating with her around his own teaching practices. Here is evidence of alignment occurring through

interaction between Sarah and her mentor teacher as they coordinated their teaching methods in order to benefit both Sarah in her understanding of the complex task of teaching, as well as it impacted her students' learning.

Additionally, working together in the schools, all of the TCCs often called upon each other to share resources, discuss different approaches to classroom management, and get new ideas about how to best serve their students. This type of coordination was critical for the TCCs as they were working toward aligning the goals and competencies of the university coursework with each school site. Sometimes the two learning environments' goals and competencies lacked consistency. When this occurred, the TCCs relied upon other teacher candidates at their school placements to help navigate the challenge of integrating university coursework at school placement sites. Lisa said, "We can talk about what's working for you, what's not, whether or not it's school related." Andrew noted, "With one of the other candidates at my school, we work together a lot on a lot of our assignments. [We] talk about what we're doing, how could this be different [for the students]. I try to collaborate inside and outside the classroom." The work of aligning their university coursework with their school placement sites was observed on several occasions during both the literacy and math methods university course observations. During these classes, the TCCs were separated into grade level groups and given instructions to adapt generic lessons outlined by their instructors, for each TCCs individual classroom and the TCCs then modified lessons to be appropriate for their K-5 students.

All of the TCCs were seeking guidance about effective teaching practices from not just their mentor teachers, but also other teachers in the building. The sharing of resources, as well as seeking out guidance and input from other teachers, highlights how alignment occurs throughout a school placement site as veteran teachers and staff are working to guide TCCs toward the

common goal of educating K-5 students, for each specific K-5 school site. This alignment can also be described as adjusting to the local culture of a school. Individual schools emphasize different priorities in order to best serve the academic needs of their students. TCCs need to be not only made aware of the priorities, but also shown how to support and work toward an individual school's priorities.

Other TCs' mentor teachers were also helpful with regard to sharing other essential teaching resources such as teaching materials. Lisa shared,

I ran into this page on 'teachers being teachers.' I was like, 'Why do I want to pay for that?' The next day, one of the girls had everything. Her Cooperating Teacher gave it to her. I was like, 'This is awesome. This is great. I have material to work with.'

Lisa was highlighting an important aspect of teaching which is that often times, material resources are hard to come by, and newcomers often benefit from veteran teachers sharing not just their knowledge, but also essential resources. Julia said that she was learning about classroom management from other experts at her school. She recalled,

I went to observe a fifth grade teacher in a traditional classroom and just talking to her about her classroom management because I know I had some trouble with it a while ago ... learning from her and different teachers ... how to deal with issues and how they deal with things in the classroom.

The teachers and staff at school sites are working to align the TCCs with the educational goals of the school placement sites.

As discussed earlier, the TCCs were working in schools where students and families' language and cultures were similar to theirs. While most of the time this was benefit for them in establishing positive relationships with their students and families, at times it had the potential to

be a source of discomfort between the TCCS and their mentor teachers. For four of the TCCs, who were fluent in more than one language, they were also aware of the possibility of becoming too familiar with families and students. This in turn had the possibility of superseding the relationship that their mentor teacher had established with families and students. Lisa commented, “She’s [her mentor teacher] very supportive. ... I try to be careful not to do too much, as well for my CT's sake too, and for the student as well ...” This is an example of a time when a TCC, Lisa, was working to make sure there was a balance of speaking Spanish with her students, but not so much that it gets in the way of the relationship between the student and her mentor teacher.

Furthermore, some of the TCCs also experienced moments of having to adjust their thinking or alter their developing knowledge about the skills and strategies needed to become an effective teacher while at their school sites. Horn et al. (2008) suggest that *negotiation* is necessary as teacher candidates learn more about incorporating their newfound knowledge. Lisa noted, “I'm picking up more on my class management. ... It was hard because my CT [mentor teacher] has a really strong class management. ... They say you have to find your own voice ... but bring in my own way, right?” Lisa referred to the challenge of needing to rely upon her mentor teacher for basic how-to information, without neglecting the importance of infusing her own style. The processes of alignment and negotiation were critical for Lisa as she was adjusting her knowledge and skills to be consistent with her mentor teachers, while at the same time remaining true to her identity and authenticity as a novice teacher.

In addition, The TCCs were working to better understand how to be both a student and a teacher at their school sites. This difficult balance is often mediated by the support and guidance of their graduate student university coaches (the school site supervisors). For the TCCs, their

coaches were critical to helping them achieve a balance between the two worlds of university and school placements. The five TCCs in this study had three different coaches. Lisa and Sarah shared the same coach as they were at the same school placement. The coaches were not mentioned as frequently as one would expect, given the centrality of their role with supporting TCCs while at their school sites and also the fact that coaches are typically involved with university coursework. Four of the TCCs stated that their coaches were very supportive with regard to helping them implement university assignments and expectations while at their school sites. For example, Tina stated that her coach helped her to implement lesson plans that are both meeting the university standards and also supporting the students in her classroom by tailoring the lessons to the needs of her students. Tina commented,

The coaches provide a structure on how to do it so that we are not over planning, we are not under planning. How can you differentiate it? We looked at helping them [her ELL students] through the content. Giving them more resources and access to learning.

Furthermore, Lisa added that her coach gave her explicit feedback about her teaching, unlike her mentor teacher who expected her to basically 'do what she does.' Lisa remarked, "I feel [my coach] is more detailed and she looks at everything, the whole picture, and that's more helpful for me." This was an example of how coaches can provide an alternative perspective that enhances a TCCs learning experience in the school. Alignment, as it was experienced with their coaches, helped the TCCs to connect university coursework with the reality of working with students in a classroom.

The work of aligning university coursework with their individual school placement sites was evidenced on multiple occasions during the classroom observations and in the subsequent interviews after the TCCs debriefed with their coaches.

University Environment

In their university courses, all of the TCCs found themselves learning with, and from professors in order to adjust the academic course content with the reality of how lessons are implemented at the TCCs' school placement sites. The local applicability of knowledge as it pertained to their K-5 students was evidence of how the TCCs were working to coordinate activities and resources to achieve results. All the TCCs spoke about the importance of aligning efforts in order to help achieve results, Tina noted, "[the math methods professor] is super supportive of what questions we may have, how it may fit, how our math methods would fit into our mainstream course or placements." The five TCCs all remarked that differentiating for specific school sites and individual students was typically included in their methods courses and that without such knowledge, they would not have felt successful in either the courses or with their K-5 students.

The ability to take their university-based instruction and make it relevant for the students at their school placements was always at the forefront of the TCCs' minds. Lisa said, "I keep theory in mind as I'm planning, but then I really have to think about my own students as well and I'm really learning about that as I plan. What does this look like for this group of kids?" Andrew also remarked that in his math methods course, the professor was working with the TCs to adjust lessons so they were tailored to meet the needs of students in the K-5 classrooms. He recalled:

[The math methods professor] has us setup in grade level groups and so we're doing a lot of the same, ... but how we teach them might be a little different. ... That kind of collaboration, like what worked in our classroom; here try this or if it doesn't work, try modifying it in different ways.

Moreover, in some cases, the professors and instructors worked directly with the TCCs to help them write lesson plans that were specific for their students. Lisa explained, “They really hone in on us really understanding those pieces of a lesson plan. ... Then they give us feedback even afterwards too, of our own reflection.” As these examples indicate, some of the TCCs’ professors and instructors were helping the TCCs to align and implement the university coursework with the K-5 students in the schools.

At times, the TCCs were working to find common ground with their students, aligning the course content to be more culturally responsive to their K-5 students. Their efforts to incorporate the cultural backgrounds of their students helped the TCCs to more fully attend to their K-5 students as learners. Julia commented about how she was working to individualize her math lessons, thinking about her students’ cultural assets. She shared,

I think for math, before teaching lessons we try to write where we think each child will be at. I think that's kind of relevant, with culture, because some of the kids have different words for different areas of math, or aren't where they're supposed to be.

Julia was working on differentiating her student’s math lessons based on their cultural backgrounds which is what her math method’s professor both demonstrated in her class, and requested that Julia implement with her own students at her school site. While the TCCs did not indicate that their professors and instructors required this for their lessons, the program at UVM strongly encourages all teacher candidates to plan lessons for their K-5 students that demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of their students needs. Ideally, the lesson plans show that the teacher candidate has differentiated for K-5 students’ culture, language, learning style, or any other accommodations that are needed to increase their ability to achieve learning goals. All five of the

TCCs expressed a desire to adapt their lessons in order to meet the needs of their students by including culturally responsive curriculum whenever possible.

As mentioned earlier, the TCCs also relied heavily upon their peers to extend and enhance their learning experiences in university classes. The collaboration with their peers offered all of the TCCs unique opportunities in which they could come together and work on the task of implementing university coursework at school sites. With regard to opportunities to collaborate with peers Lisa said, “We [the teacher candidates] started a Facebook group together, so we are always bouncing off ideas and stuff. We started it because we wanted to know more about literacy. Then we started talking about math too.” The TCCs were also working on sharing ideas about what was successful and what needed adjustments with regard to the implementation of their coursework. When thinking about how he relies upon his peers to help extend his knowledge of differentiating for students, Andrew commented, “What has worked and what hasn't worked in our classrooms, like different ideas, you know collaborating, try this, if that doesn't work, try that.” The extension of university coursework into less formal learning spaces helped the TCCs to apply their knowledge in alternative ways both in university classes and at their school sites.

This collaboration was also observed at the school site during one observation when one TCC came into another TCC's classroom to inquire about a literacy methods assignment. The two TCCs spoke briefly about how they would meet after school, later that day, to compare lessons and share materials in order to differentiate the university assignments for their students. The TCCs were able to work together to adjust a university assignment in such a way that it fulfilled the course instructors' requirements while at the same time being appropriate for their students.

In some classes, the TCCs worked together to write joint lesson plans that could be implemented in each individual TCCs classroom. The opportunity to work and plan together in was often due to the professors or instructors having planned for this type of learning in their classes. This experience helped them to see the highly collaborative nature of teaching, as well as underscored the importance of adjusting lesson plans to be compatible with specific groups of students. Julia recalled,

In math, especially in the fall, we do partner lesson plans. You have to work with one specific person to do a lesson together. Then in literacy, it's more looking at what we're learning and talking about it, rather than doing it. We're taking the lessons and making them work for our classrooms.

Moreover, all of the TCCs were trying to align their varying levels of expertise amongst their peers, and then build on each others' strengths to extend their learning. For example, Tina stated, "We're trying to listen to each other's thinking ... see how we can learn from that ... how we could revise our thinking from that. Also, having the understanding that not everybody's on the same level." Lisa also described instances where she had to adjust to others' differences and that she benefited from the experiences. She said, "That was helpful, because I noticed that teamwork, which was something I wasn't really used to, was very helpful for me. ... I know everyone's different. ... I feel [that] I've actually learned a little from it." As with their experiences at the school placement sites, aligning their expectations and experiences in university courses helped the TCCs to increase their opportunities for learning and extended their knowledge through collaboration and peer support. The TCCs worked to align their knowledge with each other in order to make sense of how to implement the university coursework in their individual classrooms. This was observed in both the literacy and math methods courses. In all of

the university classroom observations (January 2015 – March 2015), the TCCs were directed to work in partners or small groups for the purpose of tailoring generic lesson objectives to their individual classrooms and students.

All of the TCCs also found themselves in situations where they were finding common ground with regard to mediating cultural and linguistic differences with their peers and instructors. At times, being non-mainstream positioned the TCCs as having to be cultural ambassadors for their peers, and instructors. This meant that they were put in the position of having to explain, or help others better understand, their cultural and linguistic identities. Andrew spoke of one such time, during the discussion related to the Ferguson protests. He recalled,

It [the Ferguson discussion] kind of brought me back to that shooting of that native man downtown Seattle. They [the police] didn't really think about who he was as person, and his culture. I shared that with our cohort, you know, that the Ferguson case hits home because there was this native man that got shot in downtown Seattle because he was deaf and he had a knife in his hand. So they [the police] just assumed that he was being dangerous or being a threat to people.”

Andrew's description of this classroom discussion is an example of how all the TCCs, at one time or another throughout their program, had to explain how their identities and experiences as people of color were not unique when compared to other people of color in the larger communities. Andrew's example highlights a time that the TCCs were working to find common ground, a necessary aspect of alignment, with their peers, their instructors, and the content in their methods courses.

Imagination of future possibilities

In this section, the findings describe how the teacher candidates of color (TCCs) continued to negotiate their learning experiences in two different environments: the school placement sites and the university classes. Wenger states, “My use of the concept of imagination refers to a process of expanding our self by transcending our time and space and creating new images of the world and ourselves,” p. 176. The findings, reported by themes, in this section speak to the TCCs’ ability to envision themselves in the new world of teaching.

The School Placement Sites. The school placement sites were culturally and linguistically diverse, mirroring the TCCs’ own cultural and linguistic heritage. The cultural and linguistic synchronicity found at the school placement sites offered more opportunities for the TCCs to both envision themselves as teachers, and see their past experiences as students within their K-5 classrooms. Imagination was experienced in three different contexts: The TCCs:

1. Wanted to be positive role models for their K-5 students
2. Often recognized their past selves as ELL students
3. Were able visualize themselves as being teachers, or having the expertise, authority, and respect that is typically given to teachers

Furthermore, the TCCs often recognized their past selves as ELL students, and thus tried to support their students as they might have wanted to have been supported.

All of the participants said that their motivation to become a teacher was because they wanted be a positive role model for younger students. For Sarah, her call to teaching occurred after she had been tutoring East African students at a community center. She saw her former self, a student who had felt disconnected from the educational process, in the students at the community center where she volunteered. It was the realization that she could make a positive

impact on these students if she were to become a teacher that was a big incentive for her. Sarah explained:

One of the biggest factors that for why I wanted to teach was that I was working at a community center with a lot of East African high school students. They had the same kind of attitude towards school that I had. They didn't like school. They felt like they weren't supported. They felt like they were alienated. Those definitely made me want to go into teaching, especially to teach the younger grades, since that has such a huge impact.

Sarah's reasons for going into teaching were related to her desire to help young students feel more connected and supported in school. The motivation of wanting to be a positive role model was embraced by all of the TCCs who felt that becoming a teacher could possibly change lives.

Furthermore, four of the TCCs had experiences in their school placements that made them see themselves and their former selves as K-12 students in new ways. Julia talked about how she wanted her students to retain their culture and language because when she was their age, she almost lost her fluency in Spanish and didn't want her students to lose theirs. She said:

I would say my culture and ethnicity especially helped me with this school [Lexington International School] because it's made up of over half of the students who are Hispanic and that's what I am. That's what helped me learn more about my culture and also embrace it more than I had when I was their age, especially when I was in fifth grade I was slowly not speaking as much Spanish. It helped me learn that retaining a language is really important, especially when you're younger, because that's when you could lose it.

Moreover, all of the TCCs recognized that because of cultural and linguistic synchronicity with their students, they saw themselves, as former students, having similar

experience with their current students. The personal connection around shared experiences brought out feelings of empathy for their students. For instance, Sarah shared her concerns for one of her students who had been experiencing difficulty with transitioning to the classroom. She commented,

I'm struggling to find ways for him [her student] to be part of the classroom community. He can be pretty disruptive, which is understandable. He doesn't understand what's being asked of him. The kids see that as him being rude or disrespectful. My heart breaks for him. I just want to help him. I guess the reason why I want to help him is because I could see myself in him.

Sarah recognized that her student was going through the same type of struggle that she had endured as a student and this made her work hard to find ways to support him.

Finally, all of the TCCs spoke about the benefits of having parents who saw them as being the lead teacher in the classroom and school. When parents related to the TCCs as teachers, it helped them to feel as if they were teachers, not teachers in training. Lisa stated, "We've been going on a lot of field trips so that's been very good for them [the parents] to come to me too. They see me now as a teacher in Spanish that they can talk to so that's been very supportive." Furthermore, Sarah also revealed that being in the schools helped her to envision herself as a teacher. She said,

It [being in the schools] prepares you to be in an elementary school. Even though I'm going to go into teaching, I've never actually been in an elementary school for that kind of purpose as a teacher. I've always been in there as a tutor or as a volunteer but never with that kind of title.

During the school placement observations, it was noted that the TCCs frequently interacted with other adults, including parents and guardians, in the buildings. It was apparent that in all cases, the TCCs were viewed as authority figures, or at the very least, as student teachers who were in charge of a group of students. For all of the TCCs, being able to imagine themselves as teachers was an important aspect to their school placement experiences.

University Environment. All of the participants spoke about the power and importance of seeing their own cultures and languages represented in their social foundations course and in one of the math methods course and how affirming it was for them to experience this positive reinforcement. The inclusion of their heritage gave them a sense that their cultures and languages were considered to be assets. As previously reported, several conversations in one section of the math methods course resonated strongly for four of the TCCs. For example, Julia spoke about seeing a documentary in one of her foundations classes, *Precious Knowledge*,¹³ and that seeing the movie reminded her of the importance of infusing cultural awareness and history into her own classroom curriculum. She stated:

(The) [sic] Precious Knowledge film made me realize that that could have been me going through that [Mexican American curriculum] and not learning [solely] about my own culture. There are different types of segregations that we don't know about or can't really see as much. It will be interesting to see how the students relate to that.

As mentioned in previous chapters, four of the TCCs who were in one section, reacted positively to conversations in their math methods course around using culturally responsive math methods.

¹³ Precious Knowledge is a documentary film released in 2011 about the Mexican American Studies Program at Tucson High School and the struggle to keep it as part of the curriculum.

These culturally responsive methods included identifying cultural funds of knowledge as positive assets for students and highlighting the importance of students' cultures in the classroom.

Imagination played a role in inspiring some of the TCCs to become teachers as they wanted current students to have positive role models in schools. The TCCs also saw shared feelings of empathy based on having similar experiences in schools as their K-5 students. The TCCs reported that when families and other people at their school placement sites viewed them as teachers, they then could envision themselves as practicing teachers.

With regard to their university courses, the TCCs all spoke about the importance of being able to see their cultures represented in positive ways in the coursework. One section of math methods, four of the five TCCs who were in this section, were given multiple opportunities in which to engage in discussion and engagement of the importance of using cultural funds of knowledge as an asset in coursework. Another course that also provided multiple opportunities for TCCs to both experience culturally responsive teaching methods, as well as learn about how to implement them in their K-5 classrooms was the social foundations course that was taught in the first quarter of the program. These two courses were mentioned frequently as portraying the TCCs and their students' from an asset-based perspective.

The constraints experienced by Teacher Candidates of Color in their learning environments:

Thus far, the data reported has focused on the TCCs ability to fully engage with their communities of practice using Wenger's (1998) lens. However, there are multiple instances of TCCs experiencing challenges with regard to their sense of belonging to their community of practice, whether it was at their school placement sites or in the university courses. The

following data describes those instances when the TCCs did not experience moments of engagement, alignment, or imagination with their communities of practice.

Moments that conflicted with TCCs' sense of engagement.

Although the TCCs shared instances of times when they felt a sense of engagement, it was not felt consistently throughout their time in the program. The TCCs mentioned that at times they did not feel fully included during their university-based classes. In particular, all of the TCCs mentioned that they felt as if the attempt to prepare teacher candidates for working in racially and culturally diverse communities fell short of UVM's social justice mission. Julia commented:

I'm not sure if they're [university instructors] really hitting cultures within our cohort. I think that's something that some of us who are culturally different wish they [the instructors] would ask [about the TCCs' cultures]. It would help our classmates in general, getting it from someone who did go through that [being from another culture]. How they [the TCCs in the cohort] felt growing up being different.

Julia was reacting to the program's stated desire to prepare teacher candidates to be culturally responsive teachers by incorporating ethnic and cultural material in their classes. Julia felt that instructors were missing opportunities to include the personal experiences of the students in the program, and due to this absence, were not engaging in culturally responsive methods themselves. Andrew also commented that aside from the academic demands and workload of the program, one of the most difficult things about it was not seeing his culture represented in the majority of his coursework. He recalled, "The hardest thing for me personally was the workload. ... [and] not seeing my culture being reflected in any of the readings or any of the research.

When I say my culture, I'm identifying as [Northwest Native American].” As expressed by the five TCCs, they felt that the lack of acknowledgement of their cultures in the program was at odds with the culturally responsive teaching practices the program worked to have the candidates embrace.

Moreover, Sarah, the only East African teacher candidate in the program, spoke at length about her sense that some of the faculty or instructors in the program were not entirely sincere in their desire to be of assistance or support to her. She shared,

Sometimes being singled out or stuff like that [being given attention for being a student of color], I would much rather avoid it. It doesn't feel genuine. It's, like, are they [instructors in the program] interested in how I'm doing for real? Or is it just because they want to make sure I stay in this program? ... It's the difference between someone being empathetic and being sympathetic.

Sarah felt that her personal welfare was not the real issue, but rather that the teacher preparation program at UVM was more concerned about losing a student, especially a student of color.

The TCCs' skepticism toward the teacher preparation program's social justice focus was also observed during one of the math methods courses. The course instructor asked the teacher candidates to rate the class over the course of the quarter, based on three categories of mathematical knowledge. Gutstein, (2006c) identifies the three categories as being: Classical, or canonical math knowledge; Community math knowledge, the way that math is used in communities such as people's work in gardens, street vendors, etc.; Critical math knowledge, mathematical knowledge that is used to understand injustice – how race affects mortgage lending, legislative boundaries, etc. Three of the TCCs who were in one section rated their math methods course as being mostly classical knowledge, but leaning towards community. The faculty

member who had discussed culturally responsive math methods at length, and also had engaged in discussion about the Ferguson decision taught this math section. One of the TCCs, who was not in the section that was taught by the faculty member who had engaged her students in culturally responsive math methods on several occasions rated the math knowledge as being strictly classical. Although these four TCCs had been given more opportunities in which to discuss culture, race, and culturally responsive math methods, they still felt that the math methods course, at best, only touched on community knowledge, despite the efforts of their professor to be more inclusive of such practices.

There were times when the TCCs felt that their culture and ethnicity were barriers to success in the program. Three of the TCCs expressed their frustration with lack of support for cultural and linguistic differences for the teacher candidates as a whole. Lisa remarked that because her family was not from the dominant culture (and language), this was a negative factor for her. Referring to the state requirement that all teacher candidates pass a standardized test, the Evergreen (pseudonym) Educator Skills Test- Endorsement (EEST-E)¹⁴, Lisa voiced her frustration:

I took it, and because people were telling me, ‘You don't have to study for it.’ I did it [took the test without studying]. That wasn't my case ... I didn't know a lot of stuff. That's when it became very obvious. They [other TCs] said, ‘Oh, we kind of grew up with some of the stuff, or we read about it.’ Ask me about Latin America and I'll tell you

¹⁴ The EEST-E test (now called the National Evaluation Series, or NES) is a state mandated standardized test that all teacher candidates must take and pass prior to the start of their full-time student teaching practicum. The usage of “E” is due to the need for anonymity. This test is a general knowledge and skills test that includes: reading/language arts, social studies, math, science, arts, health, and fitness.

about that. But ask me about this [American culture], I can't really tell you about that, because I didn't grow up speaking or knowing about that stuff.

Despite the program's overall desire to diversify the demographics of the teacher candidates, from Sarah's perspective, the goal came at a high personal cost. Sarah felt the weight of her personal life circumstances keenly. She stated,

I don't think there's really any support for someone like me, compared to someone who was born and grew up here and might be from the dominant culture. I feel like we have the same support systems. It's equal but it's not fair. I struggle with certain things when it comes to school, assignments, or even the basic conventions of writing, which is a part of my background, the fact that I speak a lot of languages. I'm fluent, but then when I have to actually write, that's when I struggle. I don't have any type of support when it comes to that.

The examples of the two TCCs were especially indicative of times when the TCCs felt frustrated that their cultures and languages were, at times, impediments to their learning.

Furthermore, Tina the only Southeast Asian American in the cohort during that year also echoed the feeling of being the only person from Southeast Asia, and the tensions that resulted from being in that situation. Tina stated:

I'm singled out for being the only Vietnamese student in the program. ... I wish they would ask me more about what's going on, or how do Vietnamese people do this, and what's going on with that. ... There's that delicate balance of I want to speak up for my culture and my background, but I also don't want to be seen as somebody who is so ethnocentric, I guess.

As Tina's and the previous examples have shown, all of the TCCs, at times, felt a lack of engagement that was related to their cultural and/or linguistic heritage. They all remarked that at times, and in certain university classes, their cultures were not represented, or even acknowledged. In addition, the frustration of having to work harder due to both cultural and language differences affected all of the TCCs.

The TCCs described the challenges they experienced throughout the program because they had to work harder than most of their peers due to their linguistic and cultural differences. Cultural and linguistic differences impacted three of the TCCs in indirect, but nonetheless important ways. Lisa, as explained earlier, had difficulty passing the state mandated NES test and had to retake it during her program. Having to retake the test meant that she had to take time away from the regular heavy academic load of classes to study for the test while also needing to prepare for teaching at her school placement where she had responsibility to be the lead teacher three days of the week. Sarah also struggled with the academic demands of program. She, like Lisa, had difficulty passing the NES test and needed to retake it. In addition, she had fallen behind with some of her university coursework and was attempting to juggle both catching up and staying current with her assignments. Because Sarah had to juggle preparing for the NES test and handle demands of the academic work load, she was unable to complete and pass the final state mandated pre-service teacher competency test, the Education Teacher Performance Assessment (EDTPA) within the normal timeline. Sarah completed and passed the EDTPA in the summer after the program ended.

Finally, Andrew also faced challenges with the program and had to drop out of the study before it was complete. He was pressed for time in which to complete his assignments and prepare for teaching his K-5 students and he felt that he had no extra time to continue in the

research project. These examples, all from observation and field notes again underscore the difficulties that the TCCs experienced to some degree because of their cultural and linguistic differences.

The Absence of alignment

At times, all of the TCCs did not feel aligned with their learning environments. There were instances when they felt a sense of disconnect, or perhaps even in conflict with expectations in certain activities. For example, Sarah shared an experience that she had while working on an assignment for her literacy methods course. She commented,

I didn't go through elementary school here. I don't have a lot of the background knowledge that other students might have. That's also been challenging for me. Things like the literacy lessons that they [her peers in the teacher preparation program] went through in elementary school that they can use as an idea to start to make a lesson plan. I struggle with lesson plans because I feel like it's hard for me to get started. It's hard for me to think of ideas. That was one of my struggles starting.

Sarah identified an aspect of the program that was not just difficult for her because of the academic assignment, but also that it was extra challenging for her due to the fact that she did not attend elementary school in the U.S. Sarah felt at odds with some of the literacy assignments and to some degree, at odds with other TCs in the program. There was no acknowledgement of the additional difficulty for her with regard to this assignment from her instructor(s), and thus the very thing that TCCs were being taught to do, which is to differentiate for their students' varying levels of background knowledge, was denied to her as a learner.

Tina talked about the challenge of not always being in agreement with her mentor teacher about how to best meet the needs of her students. Tina commented, “The language barrier has always been targeted as a weakness for the students. Whenever kids don't do well on some sort of reading assignment or a writing assignment, they always pinpoint it to the language, the cultural barriers.” When asked about how she felt about the students’ language being presented as a deficit, she said, “I wish it wasn't. . . . Because, I mean, knowing so many languages helps you in a lot of ways.” Here is an example of a time that a TCC was trying to make sense of her own beliefs about how culture and language are assets to learning, but was not in alignment with what her mentor teacher believed about students’ learning, viewing ELL students from a deficit perspective.

Absence of Imagination

Just as the power of being able to imagine oneself as a teacher is a critical aspect to becoming a teacher, not being able to imagine oneself as such made an impact on the TCCs. All of the TCCs shared that they felt an affinity with their K-5 students and families’ negative, and sometimes damaging experiences in classrooms and schools. The memories of negative experiences in schools were factors for two of the TCCs as to why they decided to become teachers. Andrew was explicit about wanting to be a positive role model for students. He stated:

The main reason, and why I wanted to go into teaching, was because in my community, where I grew up, one, I didn't see many [Native American] teachers. Two, I didn't see many male teachers. I didn't have my first male [Native American] teacher until I got to high school. Growing up there, I think that the male role model and the [Native American] male role model, as a teacher would be really influential and powerful. That's

one of the single, biggest reasons why I got into teaching, was so I can go home and give the students something I never had, and that's a male [Native American] teacher.

Andrew's lack of role models as a young student motivated him to become a teacher and thus help other young, male, Native American students to envision themselves as teachers, leaders, and professionals.

On a different note, Sarah spoke about instances when, because of her racial and cultural heritage, parents or other people at her school placement mistakenly assumed that she was not a teacher. She stated,

I think sometimes it [racial and cultural heritage] can be a negative because oftentimes people, they assume that I'm volunteering. This comes from parents or people that work there [at the school placement site] that are also people of color. They naturally assume that I'm a parent. They'll ask me which one is yours. None of them is mine. They don't belong to me. 'But you stay here so long.' It's like yeah, I'm a teaching candidate, I have to be here, so I think part of that is because they just assume that I'm not a teacher.

This is an example of a time when a TCC's racial and cultural heritage interfered with what some people consider to be a 'teacher.' Although there were very few of these types of incidences, Sarah's experience shows that when they did occur, the TCCs felt the sting of not being 'seen' as a teacher.

Finally, there were examples of times when the TCCs felt the absence of other people of color in their university courses and school placement sites. For three TCCs, they felt the absence of not having others in the building and their program who shared a similar cultural background. The lack of imagination is reinforced by a sense of invisibility for those who do not have opportunities to interact with others who share the same racial or cultural heritage.

Imagination is being able to see oneself in a new role and the lack of imagination occurs when one cannot see herself at all which was sadly, the case for the TCCs in this study.

Summary

The TCCs at UVM experienced engagement in both of their learning environments: school placement sites and university classes. The majority of these instances occurred when the TCC were at their school sites and primarily involved students and families. Furthermore, the TCCs' reported that they felt more connected and familiar with students and families.

With regard to the TCCs' experiences in their university classes, they felt engagement with their community of practice mainly during one of the sections of the math methods course and their social foundations course. The math methods professor is a person of color whose family had immigrated to the United States as a child. Several TCCs shared that knowing the professor had a similar background as them, created a sense of camaraderie that they did not feel in other courses. In addition, several of the TCCs mentioned instances of engagement based on discussions and activities that were focused on cultural and historical topics as they applied to education in the United States.

Furthermore, the TCCs were working to balance and integrate their experiences at school placement sites with the material in their university coursework. It was intentional that this study occurred during a part of their teacher preparation program when the TCCs were spending time almost equally in both of these learning environments. This chapter shows that both learning environments provided meaningful and important moments of engagement within a community of practice.

Despite the instances when the TCCs expressed a lack of engagement with the program in some of their university courses, they spoke at length about how strongly connected they felt

to students and families in their school placement sites. The TCCs connected with their students in two important ways: 1) a sense of familiarity with their students' cultural and linguistic heritage, and 2) a bond with the families and parents of their students. Each environment afforded the TCCs with opportunities for learning, but the university-based courses and the program at large, presented some challenges and moments of adversity for them. The affordances and constraints that were related to the TCCs racial and cultural identities will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8: Discussion and implications of the findings.

Despite experiencing difficulties combining different knowledge bases and a variety of individuals in both contexts, the TCCs experienced many moments of alignment, times that they felt in sync with their instructors, mentor teachers, peers, and students. Without moments of alignment, newcomers to communities of practice may never ultimately be considered, or consider themselves, to be fully participating members and for the TCCs, becoming fully participating members of the teacher preparation program was critical to their success.

Wenger suggests that imagination is an important aspect of becoming a member of a community of practice. This section reported examples of when TCCs experienced imagination at their school placement sites and in their university classes. Imagination played a role in inspiring some of the TCCs to become teachers as they wanted current students to have positive role models in schools. The TCCs also saw shared feelings of empathy based on having similar experiences in schools as their K-5 students. The TCCs reported that when families and other people at their school placement sites viewed them as teachers, they then could envision themselves as practicing teachers.

With regard to their university courses, the TCCs all spoke about the importance of being able to see their cultures represented in positive ways in the coursework. One section of math

methods, four of the five TCCs were in this section, were given multiple opportunities in which to engage in discussion and engagement of the importance of using cultural funds of knowledge as an asset in coursework. Another course that also provided multiple opportunities for TCCs to both experience culturally responsive teaching methods as well as learn about how to implement them in their K-5 classrooms was the social foundations course that was taught in the first quarter of the program. These two courses were mentioned frequently as portraying the TCCs and their students' from an asset-based perspective.

Finally, there were examples of times when the TCCs felt the absence of other people of color in their university courses and school placement sites. For three TCCs, they felt the absence of not having others in the building and their program who shared a similar cultural background. The lack of imagination is reinforced by a sense of invisibility for those who do not have opportunities to interact with others who share the same racial or cultural heritage. Imagination is being able to see oneself in a new role and the lack of imagination occurs when one cannot see herself at all which was sadly, the case for the TCCs in this study.

Chapter 6

Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This study sought information about how teacher candidates of color (TCCs) experienced a teacher preparation program at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI). Specifically, this study followed TCCs as they participated in two key learning environments throughout their program: the school placement sites and the university-based courses. The intention of the study was to look for ways in which the TCCs' racial and cultural identity was either afforded or constrained in these learning environments.

This chapter begins with discussion of the key findings as they relate to the research questions. These are presented in three overarching themes: (1) Racial and cultural identity as positive factors (2) Racial and cultural identities creating tensions at the TCCs school placement sites and (3) Relational, ideational, and material resources that supported the TCCs in their two learning environments. The next section addresses the limitations of the study. Finally, the chapter offers conclusions and recommendations for future research.

Racial and cultural identity as positive factors

School placement sites are critical learning environments. All of the TCCs spoke at length about the positive impact their racial and cultural identities had on the relationships with their K-5 students, their families, and the communities in which their placements schools were

located. For Sarah, Lisa, Julia, and Tina, the cultural affinity they had with the students and families in their schools was made even stronger by the fact that the TCCs were also fluent in the home languages many of the families at their school placement sites.

Sociocultural learning theory has given us a deeper understanding of how individuals do not learn in isolation, but rather, within a constellation of factors including language, culture, and relationships (Moll, 2104; Wenger, 1998; Vygotsky, 1978). The TCCs felt that their cultures were appreciated and supported at their school sites. For Lisa, Sarah, Julia, and Tina, the ability to translate for their students and families made it easier to communicate with them. Moreover, there were more complex and meaningful benefits for the TCCs, their students, and families that went beyond the basic act of translating words into English. The ability for TCCs to be cultural translators also contributed to forming and maintaining positive relationships with the K-5 students, their families, and the school community at large.

One of the more difficult and yet critically important aspects of successful teaching is that a positive and affirming relationship exists between a student and teacher. This relationship must also include the student's family and community (Ayers, 2001; G Ladson-Billings, 2009; Murrell, 2001). It is this aspect of relationships that played a pivotal role in the learning experiences of the TCCs in this study. At their school sites, the TCCs were viewed as knowledgeable experts by their mentor teachers within the context of the classroom. TCCs reported they were seen by students and parents as allies, especially because the TCCs, students, and families often shared similar life histories.

The TCCs in this study also had unique learning opportunities in their placements because they spoke the same languages and belonged to the same cultures as some of their students and families. Teacher candidates who do not speak the same language, or share a similar

life history can, and often do, form positive relationships with students and families (Ayers, 2001). However, the TCCs in this study who shared language, culture, and life histories with their students and families reported that their opportunities for engaging and learning in these situations positively impacted their learning to a heightened degree than if they had not been in a culturally and linguistically diverse school site. It also created a deep and personal connection in their relationships with the students and families in their placement classroom.

Cultural Translators. This study found that the TCCs were not just linguistic translators for their students and families, but also cultural brokers (Fadiman, 1997) or cultural translators. Linguistic translation by itself is highly valuable, but a cultural translator also understands cultural norms and expectations, and is more likely to be able to affect positive outcomes in potentially difficult situations. The benefit of understanding students' cultural backgrounds and expectations is of huge importance for building positive relationships with them and their families. While language translation is critical for students and families, this study shows that being an insider who is privileged to cultural ways of knowing and understanding also has its advantages (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003; Herrenkohl & Mertl, 2010). Research suggests the ability of a teacher to act as translator, advocate, and interventionist with students and families, with racial and cultural congruency, can be a positive and important factor in ensuring that students and families feel appreciated, respected, and valued (Cochran-Smith, 2000; Howard, 2010; Milner IV, 2007; Nieto & McDonough, 2011).

The role of cultural translator has many positive implications for relationships with students and families (Ladson-Billings, 2009). This was the case for Sarah, working in a school where she could translate and interpret language and culture for her students. She was able to mitigate a potentially difficult interaction with a student's parent. There is the potential to

prevent conflicts with students and parents due to having insider knowledge of cultural norms and expectations. In this study, a teacher's lack of cultural knowledge was offset by a TCC's insider understanding. The cultural translator role enabled the TCC to position herself as a partner with the parent, and not an adversary while also supporting her mentor teacher.

Seeing themselves in their students. The similar life histories of TCCs and their students, positioned the TCCs as insiders with them and their parents. The TCCs described how having similar life histories built strong connections between them and the students' families. The connections were made stronger because the TCCs had access to first-hand knowledge of some of the struggles that face many of the families with whom they worked. In particular, their home language was not English, and they shared the experience of either being an immigrant, or the child of immigrants. The opportunity to reassure, encourage, and welcome parents who may otherwise have felt marginalized due to language and culture barriers, was of great benefit to parents and families too. This benefit also affected the TCCs and gave them a sense that they were needed and valued as experts, even though they were novice teachers.

In addition, The TCCs empathized with their K-5 students when they struggled or were faced with challenges, perhaps due to the fact that they were able to see their own past selves in the experiences of their students. Having empathy for their students' difficulties both in and outside of the classroom reinforced the TCCs' desire to stay in teaching and to be both a role model for their students generally, as well as be a teacher who makes a positive impact in her student's lives. These incentives are important to keep in mind as research shows that the retention and turnover of teachers is a challenge for many diverse, urban, and poverty-impacted schools (Achinstein et al., 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2010; "Metlife survey of the American Teacher: Challenges for school leadership," 2013).

Classroom management. Several of the TCCs mentioned that when communicating with their students in their home languages, the students responded differently than when being spoken to in English, especially as it related to classroom management. For many novice teachers, classroom management is one of the most difficult skills to master. For K-12 students, the affinity that they may feel with their teachers is a key factor with regard to classroom management Ladson-Billings (2009). Sharing a home language likely helped some of the TCCs forge positive relationships between themselves and students; also, contributing to TCCs approachability for families. Speaking the same language might also give a teacher both credibility and authority with students. Lisa, when asking her student to pay attention in English was ignored. When she switched to Spanish, Lisa's student then stopped her distracting behavior and went back to the assigned task. Lisa commented that her student might have seen her more as an authority figure because she could speak in the home language of the student, gaining her full attention because that student knew that Lisa meant business. It is also important to note that even though TCCs may have shared a common culture and language with some of the students and families, bias can still be present in connection to other cultures. TCCs, like all teacher candidates, must be vigilant in addressing these biases.

University Courses

Culturally responsive methods in action. The TCCs did not share many examples of times in their university classes when culturally responsive teaching methods were enacted. The lack of examples is notable given that the TCCs had over 20 courses throughout their program. During the analysis stage, the lack of examples of culturally responsive teaching methods led me to wonder if the TCCs did not share many examples because they didn't exist, or if there were

other possible reasons. The few instances of culturally responsive teaching that the TCCs mentioned occurred in their social foundations course and math methods¹⁵.

The TCCs gave examples from the social foundations course like visiting the Duwamish Longhouse and hearing about civil rights struggles like the Chicano movement and its relation to schools and education. These are especially interesting examples because they are instances when the TCCs saw their cultural identities represented in their coursework. For Andrew, this happened at the Longhouse when he excitedly took his drum from his car and began drumming with the cultural teacher in front of his classmates. Julia, who identified as a Latina, realized that other Latino students also struggled to know about their own cultures in school, as seen in the documentary, *Precious Knowledge*. These experiences were validating, likely because of the opportunities they provided for the TCCs to see their cultures as valued parts of the curriculum.

In math, as described in the Findings, Chapter 5, the professor engaged the teacher candidates in culturally responsive math methods, when she spoke about how her mother used non-standard measurement in the kitchen. She also demonstrated that same approach to teaching when she made room for a discussion post-Ferguson decision. This caused the TCCs to feel a strong affinity with the professor and helped them to make personal connections about how to implement culturally responsive math methods with their own K-5 students. They saw the power of both implementing and experiencing culturally responsive teaching. Likely, these opportunities were not prevalent in their other coursework, which may be why other examples did not come up (Montecinos, 2004).

¹⁵ 4 of the 5 TCCs were in the same section for math methods, with the same faculty. All 5 TCCs had the same instructor for their social foundations course, despite being in different sections.

Racial and cultural identities creating tensions at the TCCs school placement sites.

The few times that some of the TCCs' racial and cultural identities were mentioned as not being positive factors while at their school sites, mostly occurred with their mentor teachers. These interactions and concerns the TCCs reported were all centered in discussions around students' and families' cultural and linguistic differences. Some of the TCCs recalled that their mentor teachers' feedback and advice was, at times, in contrast to how they personally viewed culture and language.

In most instances, TCCs were able to work productively with their mentors, like when Sarah suggested an alternative to a behavior intervention for a student to her mentor teacher, or when Lisa used Spanish with her students, and remained aware and communicative with her mentor about what she was saying and doing. Even these positive examples seemed to the TCCs to require extra negotiation that some of their White classmates likely did not encounter. There was also one TCC who had to negotiate with a mentor teacher who had embraced ideas that were in opposition to how TCCs were being taught to view culture and language in their university courses.

The TCCs in this study worked hard to teach and interact with their students and families in a culturally responsive manner. Having to consider culturally responsive teaching methods added another layer of complexity to the negotiation work they engaged in with their mentor teachers, which other teacher candidates may not have had to consider. Thus, Racial and cultural differences between the mentor teachers and teacher candidates is an added dimension that should be taken into consideration, especially as it applies to school site placements for all teacher candidates, but especially TCCs.

It was of critical importance that the TCCs maintained positive relationships with their mentor teachers because without the support of their mentor teachers, the TCCs would not have been able to complete their program successfully and perhaps not been able to obtain employment afterwards. Four of the TCCs mentioned that they were working to balance their insider's advantage of speaking the same language and coming from the same culture as students and families so as not to supersede the relationship between their mentor teachers and their students and families. This was particularly difficult in some situations. Lisa, Sarah, and Tina had mentor teachers who could not communicate easily with some of the families due to linguistic differences. While it was, overall, a benefit for the three TCCs to have this commonality with the children and their families, it was also tricky for them not to appear as knowing more than their mentor teacher.

Finally, at times Sarah was mistakenly identified as a volunteer or parent in her school site, and not as a teacher candidate. Being the only East African TCC at her school placement site, and in her university classes, and one of the very first to become a certified teacher in the state in which this study took place, she experienced many instances where her racial and cultural identity were viewed from a deficit perspective. While this type of question (*'Are you a parent volunteer?'*) on the surface appears to be innocent and not laden with negative connotations, for Sarah, it was frequent reminder that she does not look like the typical teacher. For a TCC to be reminded that she does not look like a typical teacher is what many would consider to be a microaggression¹⁶ and being subjected to microaggressions deters from that individual's feelings of confidence and success. For TCCs who already battle their own

¹⁶ Microaggressions are subtle insults (verbal, nonverbal, and/or visual) directed toward people of color, often automatically or unconsciously, (Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000).

insecurities, having to endure subtle and not so subtle interactions in which they are further belittled, is deplorable. Being a lone representative in a school and community where there is a lack of diversity, can add to the possibility that a TCC might endure microaggressions and makes the call to diversify teacher preparation programs even more urgent.

Absence of Imagination in University Courses

Invisibility. The TCCs study referred to the challenges of being either the lone representative of their culture, or one of the few. Three of the TCCs, Tina, Andrew, and Sarah expressed a longing for seeing their cultures represented in university coursework. Perhaps the difficulty of being an only or one of the few could be mitigated with the inclusion of culturally responsive materials that incorporate the TCCs' cultures. A sense of alienation and a sense of invisibility are perennial challenges for many TCCs in PWIs and might contribute to the feeling that they do not belong.

The TCCs noted that the lack of faculty and staff who are people of color in the program also contributed to their sense of isolation. The TCCs who were in the math methods course with a professor of color all mentioned that this made a positive difference for them. They felt an affinity with her as a person of color and as someone whose immigrant background is similar. Being able to see others who are like you, in peers and mentors, is a privilege that is most often experienced by White mainstream individuals, and we can assume by extension that not seeing yourself is a disadvantage. There is a need for more faculty and staff of color in teacher preparation programs at PWIs for the very same reasons that we need more teachers of color in K-12 schools (Brown, 2014; Montecinos, 2004)

Work harder and smarter. All of the TCCs spoke about the academic expectations of the teacher preparation program and how hard they had to work in order to keep up with the demands. Without exception, all five of the TCCs, experienced academic challenges in their teacher preparation program with either courses or the standardized tests that are mandated by the state of Evergreen. For many teacher candidates, the challenge in managing a full academic course load, combined with the pressure of successfully completing school placement practicum requirements can be daunting. For the TCCs in this study, these pressures were compounded by the extra time and effort that was needed due to their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. As previously discussed, the demands of having to communicate in a language that was not their first language and not having the stereotypical American cultural experience growing up, created more work for all five of the TCCs.

The TCCs spoke of the academic pressure and high expectations of the program. However, they did not explicitly address the inconsistency within the program of being asked to make accommodations for K-5 ELL students while at the same time, not typically receiving accommodations in their own classes. This was a recurring theme for all of the TCCs. Andrew was unable to complete this study and had to discontinue his observations and interviews because he had no extra time in which to meet with me. Andrew was observed in his methods courses but I did not have the opportunity to observe and interview at in his school placement site.¹⁷ Moreover, Sarah had to extend the completion of her program by one quarter as she had fallen behind in her academic coursework which then affected her ability to finish the program within the four quarters. Lisa went so far as to say that advice from her peers and mentors,

¹⁷ Andrew was observed in his literacy and math methods courses. He was interviewed after both of those observations. This occurred January 2015 – March 2015.

regarding a standardized test, did her a disservice. She was told that it would be easy and that she did not need to prepare. Sadly, she discovered that due to her cultural and linguistic differences, she did not have the same background information upon which to rely, and wound up not passing the test. All of this points to the need for strategic academic supports for TCCs whose cultural and linguistic backgrounds differ from the White mainstream. In essence, the TCCs in this study would have benefited from more of the culturally responsive teaching practices that were embraced and taught in their university-based courses, but not enacted by instructors consistently.

Relational, Ideational, and Material resources that supported the TCCs in their two learning environments

Nasir (2012) contends that congruence between learning and identity processes is enabled by,

(1) the social organization of the practice and the roles available within it (2) the opportunity of participants to personally contribute to the practice. ... Underlying both of these aspects of the practices were the ways that students' social and racial identities were viewed as being aligned with learning in these settings," p. 35.

In this study, the TCCs expressed that they experienced racial and cultural congruence more frequently at their school placement sites. In both of their learning environments, the TCCs were relying upon what Nasir (2012) calls, *relational, ideational, and material resources*. The resources enabled the TCCs to both build upon and in some cases, overcome situations where their racial and cultural identities were viewed as deficits.

In particular, the schools were places where the TCCs shared similar racial, cultural, linguistic, and family histories. The TCCs' racial and cultural identities were especially afforded at their school placement sites and they frequently accessed relational and ideational resources

through interactions with students and families who shared similar life histories. Nasir (2012) explains that relational resources are “the way in which positive relationships with others in the context can increase one’s connection to practice,” (p. 110). Jennifer, Lisa, and Sarah were especially aware of positive impact that their cultural and linguistic similarities made on students and families. For all the TCCs, the racial and cultural congruence with students and families at their school placements afforded them opportunities to develop positive relationships with the students and the communities in which the schools were located. The racial and cultural congruence also enhanced their ability to provide culturally responsive instruction that was based upon their personal history and experiences. Moreover, the relational resources that TCCs accessed at school placements, were in the case of three of the TCCs, the only times in which they were able to interact with others from a similar cultural and linguistic background. For all of the TCCs, the opportunities to connect with others from a similar cultural, linguistic, and religious heritage was of critical importance to their developing identity as a teacher, and most importantly, a teacher of color.

Other instances of the importance of relational resources in the schools were highlighted by the guidance and support that the TCCs received from their coaches. The TCCs relied upon the coaches to help them bridge the gap between the university coursework and implementation in their K-5 classrooms. Often this meant that their coaches were also guiding them to be mindful of and inclusive of their students’ racial and cultural identities. In Julia’s case, her coach was also a bilingual instructor and could support her need to provide math instruction in Spanish for her K-5 students. The coaches were frequently the main support for TCCs with regard to viewing cultural and linguistic differences as assets and important considerations with regard to classroom instruction.

There were also times during their university coursework when the TCCs relied upon their relational resources for guidance and support in order to successfully complete the academic portion of the program. As discussed in Chapter 5, Findings, All five of the TCCs noted that during their university courses, they were able to make strong connections with peers in their courses, but they especially appreciated being able to rely upon their fellow TCCs. Having other people of color who had similar personal histories was of critical importance to all of the TCCs in this study. The benefit of having someone ‘like me’ with whom they could share challenges and successes was of huge importance to the TCCs.

The TCCs also encountered *ideational* resources in both the school placements and university courses as they worked toward becoming new teachers. Nasir (2012) states that ideational resources are, “Ideas about oneself and one’s relationship to and place in a practice and the world, as well as what is valued and good,” p. 110. At the school placement sites, the TCCs’ cultural identities as bilingual people of color were received positively and were frequently affirmed in their strong relationships with students and families. As described in Chapter 5: Findings, the TCCs were viewed as assets to the communities, schools, and students especially because of their cultural and linguistic identities. Thus the school placement sites were often the counterbalance to challenges that they encountered in their university courses as bilingual people of color.

The TCCs were also accessing ideational resources in their university courses. While their cultural and linguistic differences were at times an impediment to their ability to efficiently complete coursework, there were instances when their cultural and linguistic identities were positioned as assets. All of the TCCs reported that discussions of race and culture in their university courses helped them to feel more connected and in some ways, more expert, in their

courses. The TCCs had to work harder or put forth more effort than many of their peers in their academic endeavors. Hence, being positioned as more adept and expert with teaching K-5 students who like them, have cultural and linguistic differences, helped the TCCs to see positive benefits to their racial and cultural identities. The ideational resources that the TCCs encountered were especially important for them as they struggled to enact the concepts and principles of being culturally responsive teachers without consistently experiencing it throughout their program.

Finally, the TCCs also accessed *material* resources in both their school placement sites and university courses as they progressed through the program. Nasir (2012) contends that material resources are “The ways that physical environment, its organization, and the artifacts in it support one’s sense of connection to a practice,” p. 110. The school placement sites were hugely important to the TCCs with regard to material resources. The TCCs utilized material resources that their mentor teachers, coaches, and other faculty and staff shared with them. The process of learning to teach is heavily dependent upon resources that are often times found solely in K-5 classrooms. The use of lesson plans, teacher created materials for K-5 students, curriculum, and many other resources were key to the TCCs’ ability to plan and instruct lessons with their students and the school sites were of utmost importance to their ability to successfully accomplish these tasks.

While the TCCs also accessed material resources such as lesson plans, curriculum guides, and even suggested materials for use in their K-5 classrooms in their university courses, they also noted the absence of some key resources. The TCCs mentioned that one challenge they experienced in the program was ‘not seeing themselves’ in the curriculum. The lack of material resources, whether in the form of suggested adjustments to accommodate culturally and

linguistically diverse students in their lesson plans, recommendations of ethnic specific children's literature and/or activities, or the inclusion of ELL materials in their courses sometimes left them feeling as if the social justice mission of the preparation program at UVM fell short of its stated goals. Moreover, the physical environment of the teacher preparation program at UVM, that is to say, the lack of other people of color, especially those in faculty and leadership positions, was mentioned by all of the TCCs as being one of the biggest challenges of the program. Overall the TCCs expressed their disappointment with the lack of material resources that would have supported and extended their learning in the university courses.

Limitations of the study

In Methods, Chapter 4, I discussed some of the overall limitations. Here are some that bear mentioning post-discussion.

- 1) The study was focused on teacher candidates of color who were in a teacher preparation program at a Predominantly White Institution, which made for a small data set from which to draw.
- 2) It would be valuable to follow TCCs who were different generation immigrants to see how race and culture might or might not be an influence on their learning in different environments. Moreover, there was very little variation in socio-economic status as all five of the TCCs as they came from working-class families who did not have an over-abundance of financial resources. Overall, this study did not specifically address the intersectionality of TCCs' identities, including religion, gender, (dis)abilities, and sexual orientation.
- 3) The coaches, or field supervisors, were critical resources for the TCCs in their school placement sites but the data did not reveal the extent of their involvement and support

with the TCCs. This may be because the questions did not specifically probe for information about their relationships and interactions.

- 4) The findings from the study were organized into three sub-categories defined by Wenger's (1998) mode of belonging: engagement, alignment, and imagination. The data was placed into a single category, yet there is considerable overlap within the categories. While some findings fell into one category, like alignment, for example, other categories would also be applicable. For the purposes of this study, one category was chosen despite the possibility that other categories might have also been appropriate.

Summary of discussion points

This study sought to document moments of success and tension for teacher candidates of color during their teacher preparation program, paying attention to the ways in which their cultural identities affected their opportunities for learning in two different environments: (1) the school placement sites, and (2) the university-based courses. These discussion points are summarized below:

1. School placement sites were positive learning environments for TCCs, especially because some of the students and families' cultural backgrounds were congruent with theirs. The opportunity for three of the TCCs in this study to connect with individuals who shared the same culture, language, and histories was often found only at school placement sites.
2. When TCCs were placed at schools where there was cultural congruency with students and families, they frequently took on the role of cultural translators that also helped them to develop positive relationships with students and families, while at the same time, reinforced their own growing identity as teachers.

3. TCCs were better positioned to respond empathetically when their students struggled in a myriad of ways, including academically and emotionally, due to cultural congruency with students at school sites.
4. The TCCs expressed a sense of appreciation for the opportunity to see examples of culturally responsive teaching as well as being the recipients of culturally responsive teaching pedagogy in one of the sections of the math methods course and in the social foundations course.
5. At times, TCCs had to negotiate power and knowledge with regard to students and families, especially because they were cultural insiders and in these instances they were more expert than their mentor teachers.
6. The school placement sites were not guaranteed safe havens for TCCs as was evidenced by some microaggressions experienced by one of the TCCs, despite the fact that there were many students and families who shared her culture and language at her school site.
7. The TCCs struggled with issues of invisibility. They felt as if their cultures were not represented in their university coursework and that the lack of people of color as peers, faculty, and staff members was discouraging.
8. The academic demands of the teacher preparation program were even more challenging for the TCCs due to their language and cultural differences. There were very few instances of accommodation for their differences from instructors or the program at large.
9. The TCCs relied upon and benefited from relational, ideational, and material resources that were present in both of their learning environments, and the school placement sites in particular positively reinforced their racial and cultural identities.

Recommendations for Teacher Preparation Programs

The previously mentioned positive implications of the TCCs' experiences at their school placement sites suggest that there are some important recommendations that should be made with regard to teacher preparation programs at PWIs. Paying attention to both the findings from this study and the previously discussed literature, the author recommends:

1. Teacher preparation programs must be intentional and strategic with regard to teacher candidates of color and school placement sites, with the goal of cultural and linguistic congruency.
2. Teacher preparation programs need to also focus on increasing the number of people of color in faculty, staff, and other leadership roles.
3. Along with increasing the number of people of color, teacher preparation programs must also focus on education, training, and on-going professional development work to disrupt the dominant narratives and systems of privilege in Predominantly White Institutions.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are many questions that have resulted from this study. The following are some recommendations for future research to add to this body of literature.

1. A study that includes a substantially larger number of teacher candidates of color, possibly across multiple teacher preparation programs, including alternative certification tracks would further our knowledge of this field.

2. A multiple cross-case study to follow TCCs in Historically Black Universities (HBUs) would offer insight into the experiences of TCCs whose teacher preparation programs are likely to be culturally and possibly linguistically, congruent.
3. A longitudinal study following TCCs in PWIs that follows them into their induction and first few years in teaching.

This study sought to document the experiences of teacher candidates of color at PWI. The intention was to add to the body of literature that focuses on increasing the number of teachers of color in K-12 public schools. Because university teacher preparation programs continue to be one of the major pipelines for teacher certification, it is critical that research continues to examine and question the on-going shortage of teachers of color. It is my hope that this study sheds some light on this complicated and necessary area of research.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Letter

Hi,

I am contacting you because, I and others just like us in teacher education, desperately need your help. There is a lot of research being done on how to improve the quality of teacher preparation and education in order to better serve our culturally and linguistically diverse students in public schools. This research is critical to overcoming the opportunity gap and achievement debt. However, what is not being researched enough or talked about more, is how important it is to focus our efforts on increasing the cultural and linguistic diversity amongst K-8 teachers! This is why I am contacting you and asking for your help. I am embarking on my Ph.D. dissertation which is focused exclusively on studying teacher candidates of color and their learning experiences while in their teacher preparation program.

I am hoping that you will participate in my study. This would entail allowing me to observe you 2 or 3 times this quarter. I would need to see you (and others who are in my study) in a UW methods-based course at least once this quarter, ideally twice during the quarter. I would then need to spend approx.. ½ hour with you to ask a few questions about your learning experiences. I would also need to observe you in a non-academic learning environment (e.g., at your school placement, after a Martinez fellows seminar, a panel presentation, etc.).

I am keenly aware of how precious your time is and would keep each of our interviews to less than an hour, ideally 30-40 mins. each. I would need to start observing you asap, hopefully beginning the week of Feb. 2nd. I would interview you post-observation at your convenience and would be happy to meet you on campus, at your school placement, at a coffee shop, etc. I will do my utmost to make this easy and simple. Also, I will compensate you for your time with a small stipend. The dollar amount won't be much but will be a gesture to thank you for your role in my study. Please, please say yes 😊

Gratefully.

Mary Beth

Appendix B: Teacher Candidate Protocol, Winter 2015

Title of Study: Investigating teacher candidates of color's learning experiences in their teacher preparation program

Introductions and context:

1. How would you describe yourself culturally? Linguistically? Racially?
2. Can you tell me in what ways do you feel your racial/cultural identity has been supported throughout the program so far?
3. Are there ways in which you feel that your racial/cultural identity has not been supported or gone unrecognized?
4. What motivated you to apply to the teacher education program at UW?
5. What reservations did you have about this program before you applied? Did they come true?
6. Can you briefly tell me about any positive or negative experiences in educational settings that you had before entering ELTEP?

The University context:

1. How would you describe the ELTEP program to a friend or family member who is unfamiliar with teacher preparation?
 - a. What would you describe as the highlights so far?
 - b. What type of person might be successful?
 - c. What might some of the difficulties be for a potential TC?
 - d. Do you believe there are any particular considerations that a TC of color should keep in mind in order to be successful in ELTEP?

The University Classroom:

2. Can you tell me more about this class?
3. What kinds of things are you learning?
4. How do you think this is relevant for your future teaching career?

5. Can you describe your relationship with your peers in this class? Your instructor?
6. What aspect(s) of this class do you feel supports you as a learner?
7. Are there any impediments to your learning in this class?
 - a. If so, can you say more about how your needs as a student are not being met?
8. What kinds of considerations of race, culture, and language are either supported or challenged in this class?
9. Is there anything else you would like me to know about this class?
10. On a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being the highest, how would you rate your overall learning experience in this environment?
 - a. Can you tell me why you chose that number?

Closing Questions:

Just a few final thoughts/questions for you:

1. How would you describe your overall experience in this class?
2. What suggestions might you have for how to insure that all TCs feel supported in this environment?
3. Is there anything else that you would like to mention about your experience in eltep?

Appendix C: Teacher Candidate Protocol, Winter and Spring 2015

Title of Study: Investigating teacher candidates of color's learning experiences in their teacher preparation program

Introductions and context:

7. Can you tell me about this particular learning environment? (could be post-community engagement panel, post-observation in classroom placement, etc)
8. Can you tell me about what kinds of things you are learning here?
9. How do you think this is or is not relevant for your future teaching career?
10. What do you feel you are doing well here?
11. Is there anything that feels challenging? Can you describe any impediments to your learning in this environment?
12. How would you describe your relationship with your peers in this environment? Your instructors/mentors?
13. What aspect(s) of this experience do you feel supports you as a novice teacher?
14. In what ways do you feel race, culture, and language are supported for members of this community in this environment?
15. In what ways do you feel race, culture, and language are challenged for members of this community in this environment?
16. In what ways do you think your race/culture/ethnicity is an asset in this environment? Challenge?
17. Can you tell me about some people or resources in this environment that have been particularly helpful for your learning process?
18. On a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being the highest, how would you rate your overall learning experience in this environment?
 - a. Can you tell me why you chose that number?

Closing Questions:

Just a few final thoughts/questions for you:

4. What suggestions might you have for how to ensure that all TCs feel supported in this environment
5. Is there anything else that you would like to mention about your experience here?

Appendix D: Teacher Candidate Consent

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Title of Study: Investigating teacher candidates of color's learning experiences in their teacher preparation program

Teacher Candidate Consent

Principal Investigator:

Dr. Ken Zeichner, Professor, College of Education,
kenzeich@uw.edu

Co-investigator:

Mary Beth Canty, Graduate Student, College of Education,
cantymb@uw.edu

Investigators' Statement:

I am asking you to be in a research study. The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether or not to be in the study. Please read the form carefully. You may ask questions about the purpose of the research, what we would ask you to do, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in this study or not. This process is called "informed consent." I will give you a copy of this form for your records.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study aims 1) to provide feedback for the Teacher Education Program at the University of Washington on the experiences of teacher candidates of color 2) to inform the work of teacher education programs, at large, regarding strategies they might employ to improve the preparation of teacher candidates of color for retention and recruitment purposes.

PROCEDURES

If you choose to participate, I would like to interview you up to three times. I would interview you after observing you in one of your methods courses. I want to know more about how you have experienced 'learning' within this environment. Some of the questions that I might ask could include: What kinds of things are you learning? How do you think this is relevant for your future teaching career? What aspects of this class do you feel supports you as a learner? Each interview will take 30-45 minutes. I would like to digitally record the audio of each interview. Only I will have access to the audio files. I will transcribe the audio files and assign a code to the transcripts. The links between your name and the transcripts will be destroyed by December 2015. None of the data we collect will be used for evaluating your progress in the program.

RISK, STRESS, OR DISCOMFORT

If you feel uncomfortable at any time you may withdraw from the study. You may contact the investigator (above) if you have any questions or concerns about the study. The greatest risk to study participation is breach of confidentiality. In order to uphold high standards of confidentiality, it is guaranteed that only researchers exclusively have access to the information disclosed in the research study.

BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

I hope the results of this study will help teacher educators to better support teacher candidates of color in their teacher preparation programs. You may or may not directly benefit from this study.

OTHER INFORMATION

All information from this study will be confidential. Your participation is voluntary. Only the primary researcher will have access to your name. The links between transcripts and your name will be destroyed by December 2015. The tapes will be destroyed after analysis is complete, by December 2015. Only descriptive information (e.g. gender, grade level placement, and that you are a person of color, in general) will be retained with the records. At any time, you can decide not to participate in the study. Government or university staff sometimes review studies such as this one to make sure they are being done safely and legally. If a review of this study takes place, your records may be examined. The reviewers will protect your privacy. The study records will not be used to put you at legal risk of harm.

Dr. Ken Zeichner

Name of Investigator	Signature of Investigator	Date
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Name of Co-Investigator	Signature of Investigator	Date
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Subject's statement

This study has been explained to me. I volunteer to take part in this research. I have had a chance to ask questions. If I have questions later on about the research I can ask one of the investigators listed above. I give my permission to be audio recorded as described above. If I have questions about my rights as a research subject, I can call the Human Subjects Division at 206.543.0098. I will receive a copy of this consent form.

_____ I give you permission to audio record my interviews.

_____ I DO NOT give you permission to audio record my interviews.

Name of subject	Signature of subject	Date
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Copies to:

Teacher Candidate; Investigator

Appendix E: Data Collection Chart

Evidence of Themes in Data Collection:

THEMES:	Interviews post School Placement Observations	Interviews post University Courses Observations	Observation Notes
Engagement:			
Students & families	✓		✓
History of shared experiences with students	✓	✓	✓
Language & culture as an asset in schools	✓		✓
TCCs as cultural interpreters	✓		✓
Benefits for K-5 students	✓		✓
Coaches	✓		✓
Other TCs	✓	✓	✓
Other teachers	✓		✓
Outside resources	✓		✓
Funds of Knowledge	✓	✓	✓
Sharing educational trajectories	✓	✓	✓
Affinity with community members	✓	✓	✓
Culture as an asset	✓	✓	✓
Moments that conflicted with engagement		✓	
Alignment:			
Coordinating activities & resources	✓	✓	✓
Other faculty & staff	✓		✓
Finding Common Ground	✓	✓	✓
Coaches	✓	✓	✓

Absence of alignment	✓	✓	✓
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THEMES:	Interviews post Field Based Observations	Interviews post Methods Classes Observations	Observations Notes post field Based Observations
Imagination:			
Students & families	✓		✓
Methods courses		✓	
Absence of Imagination	✓	✓	✓