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Dismantling Tools of the Incompetent: Exploring Cultural Competence Training in Undergraduate Education Policy and Education Studies Programs

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DISMANTLING TOOLS OF THE INCOMPETENT: EXPLORING CULTURAL

COMPETENCE TRAINING IN UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION POLICY AND

EDUCATION STUDIES PROGRAMS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

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BY

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My academic journey has not been pretty. I almost flunked the 7th grade, almost dropped out of high school, and pretty much flunked out of college. But they say it is not how you start it is how you finish. For me to finish my academic journey is a testament to the power of God to dream bigger for you than you can dream for yourself. So many people have helped me get to this point in my life that I could write an additional dissertation to thank them all.

To my mom Gwen Evelyn Allen who believes that I can do anything even when the things I want to do seem impossible or outlandish like working for Barack Obama or buying a house or getting a PhD. She never waivers in her belief in what I can do even when I do not believe in myself. To Errin and Spencer, all I ever wanted was to be someone you all could respect and who set a good example for what to do AND in some cases what not to do. You all were my original motivation. To my dad who pushed academic excellence on me before I came out the womb, even in your times of absence your impact was present. To the rest of my family that have encouraged and supported me in countless ways I am beyond grateful. My aunts, uncles and cousins expect nothing less than greatness and I hope I have made them proud. Special shout out to my cousins Dr. Lauren Jeanette Simmons and Dr. Hamilton Ross Allen who did it first. I would not know this was really possible if I did not see it with my own eyes from you two.

To my best friend Cathea Woodley who stood in academic turmoil with me as she got an M.B.A and kept me sane with late night talks and motivation to push through, you are the best. I

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ABSTRACT

Cultural competence is described as a set of skills, values, and principles that acknowledge, respect, and work toward optimal interactions between the individual and the various cultural and ethnic groups with which an individual might come into contact. Scholars have been critical of cultural competence training because the three-dimensional approach which is its foundation fails to address institutional and systemic racism. I posit that undergraduate programs should provide training, so graduates are culturally competent entering their respective fields. I examined cultural competence training within education policy and studies undergraduate programs because these graduates will work within education at all levels from the federal government to the classroom impacting student success. I conducted a qualitative study utilizing document analysis of ten education policy and studies programs across the country. Based on my analysis of program overviews, program courses, course descriptions, course syllabi and website visuals, I found that programs were implementing cultural competence training using a more robust three-dimensional approach. There were however some shortcomings as framed in the literature that each program needed to overcome to implement the most effective levels of cultural competence training, including explicit reference and acknowledgement of racism. These findings suggest that education policy and studies programs are developing more culturally competent graduates, but there are additional practices that could be incorporated to ensure the highest level of cultural competence is achieved.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Cultural Competence Becomes "Popular"

A job search on the website Indeed.com using the search terms "diversity and inclusion" with salaries over $50,000, produced over 37,000 results in locations across the United States. Banking, healthcare, education, and marketing were just a few industries represented in that search. Another search for jobs using the term "cultural competence" produced over 3,000 jobs. These search results demonstrate that industries are experiencing a growing need to better serve the changing demographics of the United States and realizing that the "old ways" of doing business are no longer acceptable.

In recent years, companies and organizations have apologized for culturally insensitive comments from their leaders, as well as offensive and overtly racist initiatives and campaigns. However, instead of learning from their egregious mistakes, the offenses and apologies continue. There is a never-ending cycle of public outrage and national boycotts, followed by social media public statements from the company, organization, or institution to calm the outrage and end the boycotts. The question that is often asked during these culturally insensitive or racist offenses is, "How did this get approved by so many employees and leadership without anyone realizing it was problematic?" One possible answer is there was nobody in the chain of approval with the cultural competence to understand why their actions were offensive. Even if there was someone

to call the action into question, oftentimes the voice of concern is silenced by the majority, who do not recognize the misstep.

During my time working in the biotech industry, outright racism and microaggressions were rampant. I remained silent while my CEO repeatedly introduced his alleged friend to staff and board members as his "Black friend Woody." I received pushback and retaliation when I suggested we provide resources and funding to low-income, predominantly Black high schools to increase underrepresented students' interest and representation in the S.T.E.M. fields, which was part of our public mission statement. I was told, with no justification, to redirect my focus to affluent suburban schools. In marketing materials, we used stock photos of students to represent diversity instead of actually working with a diverse population of students and using real photos. Promoting the illusion of diversity and inclusion while exhibiting a lack of cultural competence reinforced a societal practice of funneling resources into affluent communities, while those that truly need and could benefit from the resources were left without. Culturally incompetent "missteps" occur in every industry, but most are beginning to see how these "missteps" have greater consequences beyond the need to craft another public apology. Recruiting culturally competent professionals and developing diversity and inclusion departments and initiatives are attempts at alleviating instances of cultural insensitivity and racism.

However, within human service professions, the call for more culturally competent professionals has been out there for decades. The term *cultural competence* is used to describe a set of skills, values, and principles that acknowledge, respect, and work toward optimal interactions between the individual and the various cultural and ethnic groups with which an individual might come into contact (Constantine & Sue, 2006). One of the first fields to

incorporate cultural competence into their professional training was social work. Social work is a profession devoted to enhancing the general well-being of people who are frequently the most vulnerable, oppressed, and marginalized members of a given society (Carter-Black, 2007). It is imperative in a field where most of the practitioners are not members of historically oppressed and marginalized groups that they develop skills to effectively work with those unlike themselves. Schools of social work around the country implemented a spectrum of curricula incorporating cultural competence strategies intended to help students recognize, respect, and value diversity. However, these strategies often tend to be overly general in nature, focused on broadly defined group characteristics observed in contemporary, sociopolitical, economic, and cultural contexts (Carter-Black, 2007). This oversimplification is a flaw in current cultural competence training.

Within the healthcare field, students also receive cultural competence training. However, cultural competence training has proved ineffective in improving care for patients of color. The current training models have thus far led to overgeneralization of certain races and ethnic groups and overreliance on checklists as opposed to authentic culturally competent practice (Jenks, 2011). Over 56% of all doctors (Association of American Medical Colleges, 2019) and 68% of social workers (Profile of Social Work Workforce, 2017) are White. Education follows the same trend, as over 75% of educators teaching kindergarten through college are White (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). Even at predominantly minority K-12 schools, the faculty, counseling staff, and administrators are often White. Research has found "unexpected tensions between students and teachers occur when teachers from middle-class backgrounds enter urban classrooms during their 1st years of teaching because there is a great possibility they misread the

cultural contexts from their own lives and the lives of their students" (Prier, 2012, p. 190). Phenomena such as culturally relevant pedagogy are the education field's attempt to develop educators that consider the personal experiences and culture of their students, and to some extent, this has been successful. However, educators can choose whether they implement culturally relevant practices. Current culturally relevant practices are a reaction to the system that does not traditionally create curriculum and learning environments for Black students but falls short of creating a system that includes curriculum and learning environments supportive of Black students. While all students of color are negatively impacted by a lack of cultural competence within education and society, my research is conducted through a lens on improving the educational experience of Black students because historically many laws, policies, and practices of systems were established to specifically oppress Black people. I posit that if the systems that overwhelmingly oppress Black people are reformed, all marginalized students will benefit.

It was predicted that by 2020 the majority of children in U.S. schools would be children of color or from diverse backgrounds (Davies et al., 2015). However, the practitioners in fields that support the socioemotional, physical, and educational development of these children remain predominantly White. Private corporations are building diversity and inclusion departments to prepare for their new target markets, but what are human service professions doing to prepare to effectively work with the shifting population? Many political and educational plans have failed because their author designed them according to their own personal views of reality, never once considering the situation of those for whom their program was created (Freire, 2014). If the practice of developing plans through the dominant culture's limited personal view continues, the efforts of human service professionals will remain futile.

Colleges and Universities Leading the Way

A range of industries within the public and private sector are leading the way in diversity and inclusion initiatives to develop culturally competent professionals. Institutions of higher education were at the forefront of this movement long before diversity and inclusion became cultural buzzwords. In the 1970s and 1980s, as more students of color went to college, there was a call to include more ethnic studies programs. Also, during this time teacher preparation programs began requiring multicultural education courses (McCarthy, 1991). In the 1980s, multicultural education, which is the foundation for cultural competence training, was led for the first time by educators, students, and activists of color (McCarthy, 1991). These efforts were steps in the right direction and more than what was being done in other sectors at the time. Unfortunately, higher education has found itself falling into the trap of focusing on diversity but failing to provide inclusive spaces. Diversity is usually focused on the individual as opposed to changing systems and ideologies, which is necessary to create inclusion. Within higher education and in the workforce, the goal is too often about meeting a quota and reporting the number of people of color in a space, without making the space inclusive so they feel a sense of belonging and have a positive experience upon arrival (Castagno, 2014).

Colleges and universities can be the ideal setting to develop culturally competent professionals. While the work done by the private sector is needed and essential, there are two problems with beginning a professional's cultural competence development upon entering the workforce. First, a company may teach cultural competence and support diversity and inclusion, but only within the parameters of their corporate culture. Effective cultural competence could undermine the historical practices, values, and missions of a corporation, which they might not

be ready or willing to change. Secondly, professionals usually spend four years or more learning

the skills needed for their chosen profession. To convince a professional they may have to

dismiss some of the ideas, practices, and knowledge they gained in school or at other jobs to

become a competent professional could pose a challenge. Many students enter academic

programs aimed at helping diverse populations with limited knowledge and interaction with

diverse populations (Suneson, 2020). If colleges and universities incorporate cultural competence

as a significant part of their academic programs, then professionals ostensibly enter the

workforce prepared to work in a pluralistic society.

The Problem With Cultural Competence

One of the greatest critiques of cultural competence, also seen in its predecessor,

multicultural education, is its tendency to uplift the status quo and ignore the structural nature of

inequity (Castagno, 2014). Human service professionals are trained to serve the individual, but

not necessarily to alter the environment and systems that create the need for additional supports

and interventions. Former Secretary of Education Arne Duncan stated, "Poverty is not destiny,"

and further asserts that one's individual efforts are more important than one's circumstances or

barriers (Duncan, 2012). While effort does contribute to success, Secretary Duncan's comment

ignores how circumstances dictate how much effort is needed for success. For those with more

societal advantages, they will not have to work as hard as someone with fewer advantages.

Impactful cultural competence places the disparities among resources, opportunities, and

advantages, which are systemic issues, at the forefront of the conversations regarding solutions.

Unfortunately, current cultural competence practices focus more on individual efforts and

interventions versus systemic and institutional solutions to problems, especially in education.

Unawareness of institutional discrimination occurs when individuals minimize or deny the role of dominant groups in denying access to minorities through policies and procedures (Johnson et al., 2015). Secretary Duncan's comment is an example of unawareness of institutional discrimination. If students put forth equal effort but do not start at the same place, their outcomes will differ. Institutional discrimination is an example of larger systemic issues that cannot be ignored. Kohli et al. (2017) speak of "new racism," which is not an individual act of violence or mistreatment. New racism is the creation or maintenance of a racial hierarchy supported through institutional power and is an ever-present barrier to U.S racial progress (Kohli et al., 2017). The inequities found in our systems are steeped in racism (Burkholder, 2011), but if racism is seen only as an individual act, the systemic and institutional factors that produce inequities are ignored. For example, attempts to address the achievement gap between Black and White students resulted in ignoring the racist institutional policies created as solutions, such as student tracking, student surveillance, and curriculum adjustments. The inability to see racism as institutional made those policies seem like viable solutions as they were better than previous individual racist rationales used to explain the achievement gap, such as Black students are lazy, behaviorally challenged, or intellectually deficient (Kohli et al., 2017). The achievement gap is still a prevalent problem educators, researchers, and policymakers want to solve. Ignoring racist systems, institutions and policies reproduce the status quo in a never-ending cycle of ineffective "solutions."

Human service professions, particularly education, have fallen into ideologies of liberalism that do not address systemic issues but only suggest that if we keep chipping away and trying new approaches then issues of inequity will eventually be resolved (Castagno, 2014).

Ignoring systemic and institutional racism has led to reactionary one-off initiatives and practices that have short-term impact or no impact at all in the efforts to improve diversity and equity and build cultural competence. Unfortunately, when steps are taken to address systemic issues and to question the status quo there is often resistance, in most cases from White people. Research shows most people are typically "put off" (Castagno, 2014) by words such as *race*, *racism*, and *White* because they assume the words are imbued with personal and individual blame and guilt (Sue, 2011, 2013; Sue et al., 2009). Rather than attaching these words to structures and systems of oppression, most people attach them to individual actions and feelings (Castagno, 2014). This individual attachment leads to resistance against the systemic and institutional racial dialogue essential for optimal cultural competence development.

Why So Defensive?

There are numerous tactics used to avoid racial dialogue that is uncomfortable and that forces people to reflect on their racial and cultural identity as it relates to their position in society. The most common or popular tactic is embracing a colorblind attitude. Colorblind racial attitudes refer to the denial of the social significance of race and the existence of racism in the U.S. (Chao, 2013). Defense and reversal are two other tactics. Defense is a judgmental mindset in which one may view different cultures in terms of us and them. An individual in defense may be overly critical of other cultures and uncritical of their own culture (Davies et al., 2015). Reversal is characterized by a mindset that is overly critical of one's own culture and uncritical of other cultures (Davies et al., 2015). None of these avoidance tactics result in authentic conversations that develop cultural competence as they still focus on individual actions and beliefs, which deflect from macro-level systemic issues.

White people use these previously mentioned tactics for various reasons. Derald Sue (2013) identifies the main reasons as "White Fears": fear of appearing racist, fear of realizing one's own racism, and fear of confronting privilege. These are valid fears as most people do not want to be racist or even appear to be racist, especially if they are preparing for a career where they will work with non-White populations. Additionally, Sue asserts, most people do not want to admit they did not earn their achievements on their own (2013). The idea of meritocracy is strong within American culture, and to question if someone "worked hard" with any implication they did not, is offensive (Van Galen & Norbit, 2007). Meritocracy makes the term *White privilege* so acerbic because White people feel it implies that they were just given success as opposed to earning their success (Van Galen & Norbit, 2007). For White people, it is not appealing to have to reconcile their perception of themselves as good moral and decent human beings with the horrifying realization that their unconscious prejudices, biases, and discriminatory behaviors have harmed others (Sue, 2011). Reconciliation means overcoming or working through emotions of fear, guilt, and defensiveness, and realizing how well-intentioned White people are embedded in a system of power and privilege that advantages them while disadvantaging people of color (Sue, 2011).

For Black people, conversations about race and racism can also be challenging. While Black people want to voice their hopes of achieving equity in all aspects of life, there are consequences for speaking about race and against racism. Black people who speak up are often perceived as the voice of their entire race, which is uncomfortable and an unwanted responsibility (Sue et al., 2009). Black people do not want to be seen as "angry" when speaking about racism, even though it evokes painful emotions that may be interpreted as anger (Sue,

2013). Lastly, Black people do not want to be accused of "pulling the race card," which negates the legitimacy of their experiences of racism (Sue, 2013).

As difficult as it may be, practitioners both Black and White are encouraged to participate in racial dialogues and avoid the conspiracy of silence. The conspiracy of silence encourages avoidance of honest dialogues of race and racism, denies that race is an important factor in people's lives, and prefers to believe differences are unimportant (Sue, 2011). Difficult systemic race conversations contribute to the greatest level of cultural competence for future professionals. The challenge is facilitating productive conversations acknowledging systemic racism.

Addressing Institutional and Systemic Racism With Cultural Competence

My research examined how undergraduate educational policy programs incorporate cultural competence training into their curriculum. Most of the research regarding cultural competence within the education field is centered around teacher preparation. Scholars such as Gloria Ladson-Billings have brought culturally competent pedagogy to the field, especially in urban education programs. However, the education field is vast and extends beyond those that work in the classroom or even within the confines of schools.

Education policy programs and similar programs produce education professionals that may eventually get a teaching certification and work in the classroom, but such programs also produce policymakers, youth advocates, people that work in government and nonprofits, and employees in the private sector. Therefore, education policy graduates can impact student success inside and outside of the classroom. Because education professionals outside of the classroom can provide additional academic support and resources to students, as well as create

the social policies and programs that impact educational outcomes, more research related to cultural competence of these undergraduate programs could provide insight and reform the systemic barriers related to Black student success.

Cultural competence in academic programs whose impact is as far-reaching as educational policy is critical and could benefit from more research. Effective cultural competence training does not frame racism and inequities as individual actions, but as institutional and systemic issues. I examined whether cultural competence training within educational policy programs addresses systemic and institutional racism as part of their preparation of preprofessionals to work with diverse populations and to eliminate social inequities. It is not enough for education policy programs, or any other academic program for that matter, to make claims of developing culturally competent professionals. Education policy programs should be mindful to make sure they are producing truly culturally competent professionals that are effective in their efforts.

I looked at education policy programs from a range of colleges and universities ranging in enrollment size, location, and geography. There are more graduate than undergraduate education policy programs, so I included undergraduate education studies programs that have goals and missions similar to those of education policy programs to ensure a large enough sample. My focus was on how undergraduate education policy programs are incorporating cultural competence training into their curriculum, to ultimately demonstrate the need for cultural competence training before entering the workforce. Cultural competence training can continue once in the field but will possibly be more effective if introduced earlier. The guiding questions for my research are as follows:

- How do undergraduate education policy programs address cultural competence and prepare graduates to be culturally competent professionals?

- How do these undergraduate programs prepare students for the most effective cultural competence development approach, which encourages attention to systemic and institutional racism in addition to individual cultural competence development?

This research will inform education policy and studies programs on options to effectively incorporate cultural competence training into their programs. Effective cultural competence training can highlight the systemic and institutional racism that contributes to ineffective policies and programs disproportionately impacting Black students. Once the deficiencies in systems and institutions are recognized and called out, they then can be corrected.

I began this work with a literature review in Chapter 2 that discussed the varying definitions of cultural competence and how these varying definitions create challenges to implementing cultural competence training. I then traced the history of cultural competence training starting with its predecessor, multicultural education. I then moved into an overview of the three-dimensional approach of cultural competence training and contemporary approaches that range in levels of effectiveness. I provided a brief overview of what modern-day cultural competence training looks like in healthcare, social work, and teaching, as those are the fields where cultural competence training research is most prevalent. I also explored the biggest shortcoming of cultural competence training, which is the lack of acknowledgement and discussion of institutional and systemic racism, and an overview of research of cultural competence within higher education academic programs. During this process, I found that there was a gap in the literature regarding cultural competence in education policy. There was cultural

competence literature in public administration, teacher preparation, social work, and healthcare fields, but limited literature outside of those areas. The relevant literature highlighted the three-dimensional approach as the foundation of cultural competence. However, scholars found that the three-dimensional approach was not sufficient on its own for effective cultural competence. Across fields, the literature supports the need to acknowledge institutional and systemic racism for effective cultural competence training. I then outlined the theoretical framework I used for this study, which was critical race theory (CRT). I highlighted the critique of liberalism, which is the tenet of CRT I centered on for this study. I close by connecting my study to how CRT is incorporated within the field of education. A CRT lens brings to the forefront the shortcomings of cultural competence training. The main shortcomings of cultural competence addressed by CRT are that racial and ethnic differences cannot be ignored and social issues should be addressed at the systemic and institutional level. Therefore, CRT helped me frame my research questions, which seek to understand how and if educational policy programs offer effective cultural competence training.

In Chapter 3 I explain the qualitative methodology I used to carry out my study: document analysis for my textual data and critical discourse analysis for my visual data. My sampling plan allowed me to study programs covering a variety of geographic locations, population sizes, and institution types. I analyzed textual data that included program goals and overviews, course requirements, course descriptions, and course syllabi. I also analyzed visual data found on each program's webpage. During my analysis I looked for evidence of cultural competence–oriented instruction in my textual sources. I also analyzed images to determine if they aligned with the evidence of cultural competence found in the texts.

Chapter 4 outlines my findings. These findings revealed that the traditional three-dimensional approach, which I described in this dissertation's literature review, is still the foundation for cultural competence training. However, the training is more robust in that it moves past the basic three-dimensional approach seen in professional fields outside of education. There is more discussion and coursework that focuses on diversity along with equity and inclusion, racial dialogue, and critique of systems and institutions steeped in racism. There were some shortcomings of cultural competence training within the programs in my study, such as not explicitly calling out racism and instances of inclusiveness at the expense of discussing race. While inclusiveness is not a shortcoming in and of itself, when other aspects of personal identity such as gender, socioeconomic status, or sexual orientation are used to deflect from discussions of race, inclusiveness is not beneficial to cultural competence training. However, the shortcomings were not so substantial that they would completely negate the cultural competence training within the education policy and studies programs in my study. Lastly, my findings showed there was no visual representation of cultural competence on the program webpages, even if the text expressed some sense of cultural competence. Instead, the visuals on the program webpages were traditional education images, such as campus shots and student and faculty interactions.

Lastly, in Chapter 5 I discussed my findings' implications for various stakeholders, including education policy and studies programs, professors and their curricula, and potential education policy and studies students. I review the limitations to my study and made recommendations on ways to expand on this study. I conclude with the importance of continuing discussions on race and racism, and the need to push for reform of the systems and institutions

that were founded on racism. When I conducted this study, America was in the middle of race riots and possibly on the verge of what some have likened to a civil war. With these events as evidence, I argue that until we can explicitly confront racism and reform how we operate as a country, we cannot develop an education system or any social system that is effective for all people. Ultimately, culturally competent education policy and studies graduates can be a catalyst for the change we need.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Overview

Cultural competence is not a new concept. It has roots in multicultural education, which has been a topic of interest since the early 19th century. Cultural competence and multicultural education have been described as the answers to addressing diversity and changing demographics in the United States for over a century. Often cultural competence and its predecessors found their way into K-12 education, initially to make immigrant children more "American," which ultimately meant more Anglo (McCarthy, 1991; Mirel, 2010; Selig, 2008). Now cultural competence is often found within educational practices like culturally relevant pedagogy, which has among its goals to make curriculum and instruction more relatable to the experiences and lives of children that are not White and middle-class. Cultural competence has been even more prevalent in fields such as social work and healthcare. While the need for cultural competence training could benefit professionals in all fields, the consequences of being culturally incompetent in professions such as education, social work, and healthcare have greater implications.

This literature review will examine how cultural competence is defined among various professional fields and why the varying definitions have contributed to its difficulty in effective implementation. I will also trace how cultural competence developed over the years, starting with multicultural cultural education and failed iterations such as colorblind theory, assimilation,

and the melting pot theory. The foundation and history of cultural competence training illuminate the reasons why cultural competence scholars are calling for a paradigm shift from a focus on individual actions to one that addresses issues within institutions and systems. There are still many challenges within current cultural competence training, the most commonly acknowledged issues found in the literature include lack of critique of institutions and systems steeped in racism and oppression, the unwillingness to engage in racial dialogue, overgeneralization of racial and ethnic groups, and the application of those generalizations in professional practice.

While there is research on cultural competence within the education field, particularly in teacher preparation, school psychology, and social work programs, there is limited literature regarding education policy programs. Ultimately, more research on cultural competence within education policy programs can develop academic programs that produce culturally competent professionals ready to positively impact the education system outside of the classroom. More importantly, additional research in these areas can help to develop professionals who could reform the institutions and systems that have historically placed Black students at an educational disadvantage. Following my literature review, I introduce the theoretical framework for this study, which is Critical Race Theory. CRT frames the shortcomings of cultural competence training mainly through the tenet critique of liberalism. Scholars I cite argue that we must acknowledge that race and racism are embedded within the systems and institutions in which we all operate. Once we acknowledge institutional and systemic racism, they claim, we must advocate for sweeping change and reform as opposed to slow and incremental change. They assert that the promise of slow change over time has been detrimental to the livelihood of Black people and other marginalized groups. Using a CRT lens on cultural competence calls for

explicit acknowledgement of systemic and institutional racism, critique of the systems founded on racism, and reform of these systems, all of which are areas upon which I focus my inquiry.

Defining Cultural Competence

In recent decades, cultural competence has been a prominent topic within the fields of social work, counseling, healthcare, and other human service professions (George & Tsang, 1999; Lee & Greene, 1999; Sue, 2001; Suh, 2004; Torry, 2005). Elaine Pinderhughes (1994) notes that, as early as 1971, the Council on Social Work Education had already recognized "the urgent need for training that would prepare all social workers to work effectively with people of color, ethnic minorities, and any client who is culturally different" (Torry, 2005, p. 264). Many different interpretations of cultural competence have been articulated since the 1970s (Torry, 2005). Within each profession, the definition may change to address the goal of that profession. The many interpretations and definitions suggest that cultural competence is "a professional imperative" (Torry, 2005).

Cultural competence in public administration is defined as a respect for, respect by, and understanding of diverse ethnic and cultural groups, their histories, traditions, beliefs, and value systems in the provision of delivery of services (Saldivar, 2015). Cultural competence for public administrators can improve the relationships between government and citizens eliminating disparities among racial and ethnic groups that develop through laws and policies (Saldivar, 2015). White (2004) states that public administrators should serve citizens and become a means for achieving a compromise that works toward social change. Their process, according to White, should be to redress injustices, redistribute resources, and improve the atmosphere in which

people live and work. Therefore, it is imperative universities expose students to courses with a multicultural approach (White 2004).

Gloria Ladson-Billings (2001) defined cultural competence within education as taking responsibility for learning about students' cultures and communities, and using students' culture as a basis for their learning. Culturally relevant teaching and competence is something a teacher can "do," instead of a critical stance that a teacher takes (Schmeichel, 2012). While Ladson-Billings uses her definition within the context of K-12 education, it can be applied at all stages of education including higher education to ensure the perspective and experiences of preprofessionals of color are incorporated into various professions.

Defined broadly, cultural competence is a cultural learning process in which one builds authentic relationships by observing, listening, and asking those who are from different backgrounds to teach, share, and enter into dialogue together about relevant needs and issues (Davies et al., 2015). Generally, cultural competence is not something that can be attained from one class or study abroad experience; there must be consistent action and intention, and like any other skill, it is something that develops over time (Davies et al., 2015).

The various definitions of cultural competence within different professions can be a challenge to training implementation. Identifying what should be included in cultural competence training also creates challenges for implementation. The debate over differences is particularly prevalent within the field of psychology (Carter, 1995). The focus of cultural competence training and multicultural education, in which cultural competence has its roots, initially focused on race and ethnicity. Over time, cultural competence and multicultural education have become more inclusive of the marginalized groups it addresses. Gender,

ability/disability, and sexual orientation among other aspects of identity have been included in

cultural competence discussions. Carter does not negate the importance of the many cultural

dimensions of human identity but notes the greater discomfort people have with addressing

issues of race compared to other sociodemographic differences (1995). As a result, race becomes

less salient and the incorporation of other cultural factors allows us to avoid addressing problems

of racial prejudice, racial discrimination, and systemic racial oppression. It is not uncommon for

people to refocus the dialogue on differences related to gender, socioeconomic status, or

religious orientation in conversations about cultural competence, diversity, and inclusion. Many

groups often rightly feel excluded from the multicultural debate and find themselves in

opposition to one another (Carter, 1995). Enhancing multicultural understanding and sensitivity

means balancing our understanding of the sociopolitical forces that dilute the importance of race

and our need to acknowledge the existence of other group identities related to culture, ethnicity,

social class, gender, and sexual orientation (Sue et al., 1999; Ridley et al., 2001).

 Cultural competence is not to be simply defined as or confused with diversity. Diversity

is more about achieving a number of a particular demographic and tolerating the presence of a

variety of people (Torres-Guzman & Carter, 2000). Cultural competence defined by most experts

aims to change existing structures that perpetuate intolerance, oppression, and inequity (Torres-

Guzman & Carter, 2000). There can easily be diversity within an organization, school, or system

that might still be overrun by issues of discrimination, racism, intolerance, and oppression.

Betancourt (2003) defines cultural competence as learning values, beliefs, and behaviors of

certain cultural groups, but emphasizes this should not result in the simplification of culture and

must strive to avoid the tendency to stereotype cultural groups. This concern of

oversimplification and stereotyping reflects one of the most frequent critiques of cultural competence, which centers around the danger of reifying "culture" as an objective, one-dimensional entity attached to particular racial and ethnic groups (Lee & Farrell, 2006; Taylor, 2003; Shaw, 2005; Santiago-Irizarry, 1996; Carpenter-Song et al., 2007; Lakes et al., 2006; Gregg & Saha, 2006; Jenks, 2011).

Cultural competence has been relevant within various professional fields since the 1970s, and each field has its own way of applying cultural competence to their professional goals. However, across fields, cultural competence can be expanded to include the history, beliefs, and values of a culture, examining and critiquing systems to eliminate intolerance, oppression, and racism. Cultural competence does not produce diversity, nor is it one academic course or experience that leads to generalizing a particular culture. Understanding the history and the definition of cultural competence provides context to how and why developing culturally competent individuals has historically been a challenge, although a necessary one, within academic and professional settings.

History of Cultural Competence Education

Cultural competence education and training is an attempt to refine what was historically known as multicultural education. Multicultural education is defined differently among scholars. Some scholars see multicultural education as an educational reform movement and a process whose primary goal was to change the structure of educational institutions so members of diverse racial, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural groups had an equal chance to achieve academically (Ozturgut, 2011). As multicultural education took shape, the United States was also taking shape as a country, opening its arms to immigrants from all over the world, more specifically, Europe.

The new face of America called into question, "What exactly is culture?" Burkholder states, "Culture changes and adapts to new circumstances" (Burkholder, 2011, p. 27). The adaptability of culture was significant in the development of "new Americans." During the 1920s, and even in present-day, culture was mistakenly oversimplified to signify the visible elements of a minority group and dominant White protestants in America (Burkholder, 2011). Defining culture through visible elements contributed to the exclusion of many ethnic and racial groups from American culture.

Schools were dedicated to ministering to the diverse populations coming to America while producing a "new American" (Dantley, 2002). For students that immigrated from Europe, culture was celebrated through multicultural education. Within schools, culture was taught through visible aspects in isolation, such as food, holidays, folklore, and dance (Hoffman, 1996), that could be easily digested. Franz Boas used scientific terms to define culture as "society's complex response to given environmental, historical, social, and political circumstances that made meaning in individuals' lives" (Hoffman, 1996). Schools ignored Boaz's more complex definition of culture in favor of the celebrating the "fun" parts of culture and labeling it intercultural education (Hoffman, 1996). Intercultural education was a methodology that was intended to integrate and uplift European immigrants to create a supposed melting pot (Burkholder, 2011). The melting pot metaphor decries the place and celebration of difference and eliminates "the other" through a systematic silencing of the different voices, cultures, and experiences through the belief that all people are essentially the same (Burkholder, 2011). However, the "same" that everyone should strive to be was that of the dominant culture of America at that time. Educational leaders have long accepted these notions of homogeneity, as it

is easier than accepting the varying and sometimes troubling experiences and voices of those that are different (Maxcy, 1995). The essential work of the melting pot, according to Maxcy (1995), was to sacrifice any sensitivity to cultural uniqueness for homogeneity and solidarity. Melting pot theories are also coupled with colorblind theories, where differences were overlooked.

Ethnicities and other nationalities outside of Europe were not part of the intercultural curriculum. While there was a perceived celebration of European culture, the goal was to incorporate immigrants into the American way of life. This was mainly done through the means of assimilation. Assimilation methods were used in the early days of common schooling (Fass, 1989). Assimilation heightened in the early 20th century, as the immigrant population shifted. From the late 1950s through the 1970s, a student was either White or different/deprived/ disadvantaged (Schmeichel, 2012). The concept of cultural deprivation or disadvantage was used to describe children of color within the academic literature in the years immediately following the *Brown* vs. *Board of Education* decision (Schmeichel, 2012).

Culture was described as the key to understanding what prevented the academic success of children of color. The perceived difference and deficit between "mainstream" culture and the culture of children of color were described in terms of a gap that must be filled (Schmeichel, 2012). The key to overcoming these differences was knowledge of how the culture of the deprived student deviated from the "norm," with the norm being White. Taba and Elkins (1950) posited that it was the teacher's responsibility to gather data and diagnose culturally deprived children to avoid "teaching students in a way" that their background, motivation, learning styles, and habits would not allow them to understand. Gordon and Wilkerson (1966) described children of color as those whose culture has failed to provide them with experiences that are 'normal' to

the kinds of children schools are used to teaching. They concluded that, in order to provide equality of education for disadvantaged children, we must identify the children and characterize the specific nature of their disadvantage. We need to know exactly how these children of color differ from those children for which the traditional educational system has been successful (Gordon & Wilkerson, 1966). Researchers of this time did not look at the system as having a deficit; instead, it must be that the culture related to the color of students' skin was the reason for their deficit. Unfortunately, the deficit model of thinking still lingers within education.

The colorblind and melting pot mentality that developed in early multicultural education was finally deemed a failure in the 1980s. No matter how it was constructed, "colorblind ideals masked institutionalized racism in America" (Burkholder, 2011, p. 162). In the 1980s addressing diversity through multicultural education was no longer just a method to focus on the differences between minorities and immigrants compared to White middle-class people. Multicultural education became a tool of resistance within education to critique and dismantle the racist systems previous cultural education models continued to reproduce directly and indirectly. Illumination of difference without an accompanying critique of social inequalities was identified as a problematic way of preparing educators to teach students of color (Burkholder, 2011). Despite these warnings, research on students of color, instead of studies on the systems that continued to fail them, continued to multiply in the 1980s as a way to understand and close the achievement gap between White students and students of color. In the 1980s, a growing number of school districts and university-based teacher preparation programs implemented various forms of multicultural education as required study (McCarthy, 1991). Contemporary cultural competence approaches aim to refine the many missteps of early multicultural education

practices by calling for the examination and critique of systems that actually create disparities and the achievement gap, rather than continue with the antiquated idea that culture is the catalyst for creating the gap.

Some Americans feel we are in a post-racial society, and if we stop talking about race and ethnicity, even in cultural competence training, the world would be a harmonious, tolerant, and socially just place. The reality is America's foundation is steeped in racism, injustice, and inequity. Even in 2020, no matter how we try to avoid oppressing any particular group, it is nearly impossible when systems were intentionally built to benefit one group over another. Regardless of the field, people are working within a racist system. Cultural competence is just one way to begin dismantling these systems by recognizing how various cultures have benefited or been oppressed by said systems. Additionally, culture is rarely a passive part of an individual's life. In fact, it is an integral part of a person's understanding of self, and any injury or insult to this understanding, even one that is unintentional, has the potential for harm (Allen-Meares, 2007). Therefore, it is in the best interest of any practitioner to develop an understanding and an appreciation for different cultures that he or she may work with in order to better understand the people themselves (Allen-Meares, 2007).

Three-Dimensional Approach to Contemporary Cultural Competence Training

Multicultural education has evolved into cultural competence. Modern cultural competence training is an improvement on multicultural education but is not without its shortcomings. Today cultural competence training is grounded in a three-dimensional approach consisting of acquiring knowledge, developing skills/practice, and developing self-awareness.

Knowledge

From a cultural competence training perspective, knowledge is attained through multiple life experiences, interactions with those one perceives to be culturally different from oneself, and educational methodologies (Johnson et al., 2015). Acquiring culturally competent knowledge is about learning to unlearn information perpetuating racist and oppressive practices. A cultural competence model grounded in anti-oppressive practice has the potential to challenge the position of Whiteness in which professionals have historically operated (Iglehart & Becerra, 1995; Jeffery, 2005) and our current knowledge which has historically been founded on exclusion. Adoption of anti-oppressive practices means unlearning not only the biased misinformation on a cognitive level but also the misinformation that has been glued together by painful emotions (McIntosh, 1989). The cultural competence literature encourages academic departments to consider weaving diversity discussions throughout every core course to ensure that all preprofessionals are exposed to diversity materials and receive cultural competence training. In effect, cultural competence training would have to be adopted by the department as a core value, and it would need to ensure all faculty members are aware of this core value to guarantee the department's values permeate the classroom experience (White, 2004). For example, professors in teacher preparation programs who utilize cultural competence discourse through coursework, modeling, and mentoring can help prepare future teachers to gain knowledge so they are able to respond to the needs of a growing culturally and linguistically diverse student population (Milner, 2010).

A culturally competent professional possesses knowledge and understanding of how oppression, racism, discrimination, and stereotyping affects them personally, and in their work

(Constantine & Sue, 2006). Knowledge pertains to how our cultural socialization through family, different institutions, professions, the media, and political machinery shapes our thinking on intolerance and disrespect toward certain individuals and groups (Tomlison-Clarke, 2013). This understanding of knowledge applies to all groups, and for White professionals, it may mean they understand how they may have directly or indirectly benefited from individual, institutional, and cultural racism (Arredondo, 1999). The acquisition of knowledge from unbiased sources contributes to greater cultural competence and can be reinforced through skill development.

Skills and Practice

The second component of the three-dimensional approach is skill-building and practice. Skill-building and practice are developed through interactions with people from different backgrounds within and outside of a work setting to provide opportunities to change stereotypes and overcome biased cultural conditioning (Ponterotto & Pedersen, 1993). People are capable of change if they are willing to confront and unlearn their biased conditioning (Ponterotto & Pedersen, 1993). Cultural competence skill-building provides real-world experiences to help people unlearn their biases, create new realities, and support counternarratives (Ponterotto & Pedersen, 1993). Skill-building is essential because otherwise much of what people learn about other cultures comes through the media, what their families and friends convey to them, and public education texts, and these sources cannot be counted on to give an accurate picture. They can be filled with stereotypes, misinformation, and deficit portrayals (Sue & Sue, 1999; Ridley et al., 2001). Students should be challenged through practice and skill-building activities to explore and evaluate the values and beliefs that stem from their cultural backgrounds (Constantine & Sue, 2006) and to determine how these perspectives might reflect profound cultural biases

toward different populations. Experiential learning is an example of a skill-building approach to test knowledge informed by values, beliefs, and background (Cramer et al., 2012).

Experiential exercises bridge the gap between the academic settings and the field (Land, 1987; Gurin et al., 1999; Cramer et al., 2012). Active forms of learning provide an opportunity for students to deepen their knowledge and prepare to work effectively with clients of diverse social and cultural backgrounds (Langer, 1995). Examples of cultural competence skill development exercises include role-playing, case studies, group activities, and fieldwork (Clarke & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2009). Clarke and Tomlinson-Clarke (2009) found direct ongoing cross-cultural interactions facilitated cultural knowledge and cultural empathy and enable professionals to connect to culturally diverse groups, understand and appreciate the uniqueness of their daily lives, and to recognize universal commonalities that existed between them. Skill-building provides insight into the social and political context in which clients live their lives (Clarke & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2009).

Self-Awareness

It is important for individuals to look within themselves and examine their own concepts of privilege, experiences with racism, and the underlying perceptions of themselves and others they have gathered over time (Allen-Meares, 2007). The process of self-awareness, as an individual and as a practitioner, will evolve with reflection, experience, and continued education (Allen-Meares, 2007). Successful cultural competence training entails a willingness by trainers and trainees to address internal issues related to personal belief systems, behaviors, and emotions when interacting with other racial groups (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1997; Sue, 1999).

The personal journey to overcome cultural incompetence represents a major challenge. Becoming culturally competent means "acknowledging biases and preconceived notions; being open and honest with one another; hearing the hopes, fears, and concerns of all groups in this society[;] recognizing how prejudice and discrimination hurt everyone; and seeking common solutions that allow for equal access and opportunities" (President's Initiative on Race, 1997; Sue, 1999; Ridley et al., 2001). As an individual's experience of cultural difference becomes more complex, their potential to develop intercultural competence increases (Hammer et al., 2003; Davies et al., 2015). The self-discovery model is widely used in cross-cultural learning, particularly to increase students' awareness of their own beliefs and attitudes toward other cultural groups (Cramer et al., 2012).

Latting (1990) used "Identifying Isms" as a phrase to describe a self-discovery model that raises awareness of cultural biases and prepares social work students for culturally sensitive practice. Social work students first discussed the definition and functions of bias and reflected on their own biases (Latting, 1990). The self-discovery model has expanded beyond social work to address faulty beliefs and biased attitudes that foster stigma (Cramer et al., 2012). Instructors will need to create a trusting, safe, and authentic classroom climate prior to introducing self-awareness exercises of this nature (Miller & Garran, 2008). The skills to administer appropriate interventions, strategies, and techniques are dependent on one's ability to acquire and utilize cultural awareness and cultural knowledge (Sue & Sue, 2013). Some studies have indicated that the three-dimensional approach may not fully account for multicultural competence and other components like racial identity, and so recommend that a relationship factor should be added (Ponterotto et al., 1994; Sodowsky, 1996; Vinson & Neimeyer, 2000).

Contemporary Cultural Competence Training Approaches

Undergraduate and graduate programs have incorporated various contemporary approaches to complement the traditional three-dimensional approach in efforts to improve cultural competence training and better prepare future professionals. Some of the approaches have been found to be not just ineffective in developing cultural competence but counterproductive. However, some have improved on the three-dimensional approach and created more effective cultural competence training.

Open-Mindedness

The goal of open-mindedness is to strengthen cultural competence training, particularly in the healthcare field. The open-minded approach aims to produce a new kind of willingness in health professionals to learn about differences but treat each patient as an individual. The open-minded approach means recognizing every person's situation is different (Sellman, 2003). The open-minded approach is not limited to healthcare and can be utilized across fields. This approach also supports the idea that cultural competence cannot solely be implemented at the individual level as that may lead to succumbing to stereotypes. Jenks warns not to stereotype, explaining that a stereotype is superficial knowledge with no further attempt to learn; it is an ending point (2010). A generalization, on the other hand, is a beginning point that indicates common trends but leaves room for individual differences (Jenks, 2011). While open-mindedness is an improvement approach to obtaining knowledge, it has the ability to reinforce behavioral understandings of culture and draw attention away from the social conditions, systemic issues, and power differentials that underlie health inequalities and inform practice (Jenks, 2011).

Colorblindness

The colorblind approach has come in and out of favor throughout the history of cultural competence training and has been a mainstream practice for those who want to prove they are not racist. Scholars such as Margaret Mead taught teachers how to ignore race and eliminate it from their classrooms (Burkholder, 2011). In the modern day, colorblind racial attitudes come with "nice" statements such as "people are people," "everyone is the same under the skin," (Apfelbaum et al., 2008), and "I don't see color" (Sue, 2011). Colorblind racial attitudes are a biased framework that individuals, groups, and systems consciously use to justify the racial status quo or to minimize racial inequalities in the U.S. (Neville et al., 2000). A person's racial, ethnic, and cultural identity has value and should not be ignored (Johnson et al., 2015).

Utilizing a colorblind approach also leads professionals to ignore cultural differences that can inform their practice. Multicultural training reduces colorblind racial attitudes and could be the mechanism through which trainees gain multicultural competencies (Johnson et al., 2015). Chao (2013) found White counselors with high levels of colorblind racial attitudes may be less sensitive to the existence of racism than their racial/ethnic minority counterparts and thus have lower cultural competence, making colorblindness counterproductive to achieving cultural competence.

Racial Dialogue

Scholars have likened race talk and dialogue to storytelling in which the master narrative, created by the dominant White middle class, depicts historical and cultural themes of racial progress, of a fair and just society, of equal access and opportunity, of meritocracy, and of colorblindness (Sue, 2015). For people of color, their tales represent the counternarrative or back

talk that challenges and disputes the stories told by Whites (Sue, 2015). Instead of directly

talking about race in a healthy productive way, often coded language is used instead of directly

referring to race (Castagno, 2014). Terms that indicate race such as "refugee" or referring to a

particular side of town is racially coded language and allows for racist views to be expressed

without the speaker seeming racist (Castagno, 2014). White Americans are averse to

understanding how their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors contribute to the oppression of others

and what it means for them (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Hays et al., 2007), and when asked to

discuss their beliefs and attitudes regarding race, their communications become hesitant,

convoluted, and full of broken utterances that signify anxiety (Utsey et al., 2005).

As difficult as it may be, professionals must not shy away from having racial dialogues,

because race is a significant aspect of someone's culture (Kohli et. al, 2017), because until we

concretely name racism as a problem, we will be challenged to resolve racial disparities (Kohli

et. al, 2017). "Nice" approaches that avoid using the words *race*, *racism*, *White*, or *Black* make it

harder to identify and address inequity (Castagno, 2014). The tendency to avoid difficult

conversations regarding race is why researchers are leery of the inclusive definition of cultural

competence, which includes all aspects of personal identity.

Sue stated it may be only when culture is approached as an apolitical object, separate

from any social context, that it becomes more palatable (Sue, 2015). Culture is a more

comfortable topic than race in these conversations because culture is presented as a neutral set of

beliefs and practices that everyone has and is therefore equivalent (Sue, 2015). Exploring

cultural competence "hurts less" than exploring racism because it ultimately requires providers to

recognize variation and difference but not inequality (Jenks, 2011). Most studies on difficult

racial dialogues focus on the fears and biases of White students while neglecting the perspective of students of color (Sue & Constantine, 2007; Sue et al., 2009). While racial dialogue is essential to improve the social standing of Black people, the conversations and research around racial dialogue are often centered in Whiteness.

Inclusiveness at the Expense of Race

Avoidance of the realities of race has led to superficial acknowledgment of race, as seen in early multicultural education practices that only celebrated the "fun" parts of culture. In Sleeter's 2012 study, one participant, an advocate of multicultural education, emphasized interest in "cultural celebration" as an end in and of itself, and commented that linking culture and academic learning was new to her. One of the major reasons why minority students in general, and immigrant newcomers in particular, "perform poorly in school is that their home cultures[,] while being 'celebrated,' are not sufficiently utilized as a resource for their own learning" (Sleeter, 2012, p. 2).

Once race-based conversations become too uncomfortable, other personal identity traits such as gender, socioeconomic class, even the universities where someone graduated from can become the differences at the center of the conversation, while never addressing the issues that create disparities and injustice regarding race (Sue, 2015). Critics charge that current cultural competence models are largely ineffective and that their tendency to equalize oppressions under a "multicultural umbrella" unintentionally promotes a colorblind mentality that eclipses the significance of institutionalized racism (Ferber et al., 2007). Women scholars of color have faced condemnation for not abandoning their work and efforts on race for projects on gender (Ferber et

al., 2007). While inclusivity is important, there is a trend to use inclusivity to avoid the issues of systemic racism in place of focusing on other marginalized groups.

Recognizing Racial Identity

Scholars note most people do not want to acknowledge personal biases (Sue, 1999; Chao, 2013). The realization of personal bias is difficult because people want to perceive and experience themselves as moral, decent, and fair people (Sue, 1999). Miller and Donner (2000) identify the importance for students to examine their social identity regarding whether they identify with the dominant or marginalized group before entering the field. Both groups often have a distorted view of themselves and others, and must develop a more balanced view of the social order (Miller & Donner, 2000). Developing a strong racial identity is a challenge for White people because they have issues addressing their Whiteness (Johnson et al., 2015). Whiteness refers to structural arrangements and ideologies of race dominance (Johnson et al., 2015). Racial power and inequities are at the core of whiteness. All forms of power and inequity create and perpetuate whiteness (Castagno, 2014). The function of whiteness is to maintain the status quo, and although White people most often benefit from whiteness, some people of color have tapped into the ideological components of whiteness for their own financial and educational benefits (Castagno, 2014). Whiteness maintains power and privilege by perpetuating and legitimizing the status quo while simultaneously maintaining a veneer of neutrality, equality, and compassion (Castagno, 2014).

Cultural competence might depend on different levels of racial/ethnic identity. For example, at lower levels of racial/ethnic identity, racial/ethnic minority school counselors can be predicted to have higher scores on cultural competence than White school counselors (Chao,

2013). White counselors who had more advanced racial identity development had a stronger predictive relationship to self-reported cultural competence (Chao, 2013). This suggests school counselors bring their own racial/ethnic identity into counseling; thus, White school counselors with low levels of racial/ethnic identity have less sensitivity to express emotion and affect toward the victim of racism and oppression (Chao, 2013).

Cultural Competence Training Across Professions

The three-dimensional approach is the common approach within fields where cultural competence training is most prevalent; healthcare, social work, and more recently, education. The shortcomings of the three-dimensional approach and some of the contemporary approaches have shown themselves within these fields.

Healthcare

A focus on the education and training of health providers is one of the most prominent aspects of the cultural competence movement (Graves et al., 2007). In the last several years, professional organizations like the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC, 2009) have issued statements in support of cultural competence training, and an increasing number of states have started to mandate such training for health providers (Graves et al., 2007). However, several studies reveal cultural competence training has had little impact on doctor behavior or racial and ethnic minority health outcomes (Powell-Sears, 2012). The large claims about the value of cultural competence for the art of professional caregiving around the world are simply not supported by robust evaluation research showing that systematic attention to culture improves clinical services (Kleinman & Benson, 2006). This lack of evidence is a failure of outcome research to take culture seriously enough to routinely assess the cost-effectiveness of

culturally informed therapeutic practices, not a lack of effort to introduce culturally informed

strategies into clinical settings (Kleinman & Benson, 2006). The lack of effectiveness may in

part reflect an overreliance on culture in the theoretical and methodological application of

cultural competency (Powell-Sears, 2012). Examples of this overreliance are found in the early

days of the cultural competence movement when "tip sheets" and "pocket guides" with

alphabetized lists of racial and ethnic groups were especially common (Lipson et al., 1996).

In his description of the features of good cultural competence training programs,

Betancourt (2003) argues that a focus on "knowledge" should involve learning about the

attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors of certain cultural groups on the one hand, while

avoiding the simplification of culture and tendency to stereotype on the other (Jenks, 2011).

Contemporary healthcare cultural competence training rejects the "list of traits" approach that

leads to overgeneralization. The "list of traits" comes from obtaining knowledge from biased

sources that create stereotypes (Betancourt, 2003). Culturally competent providers are not seen to

be those who have learned a technical skill or who can recite facts about various cultural groups

or follow a list of dos and don'ts (Betancourt, 2003). Providers are culturally competent when

they recognize that differences exist, welcome more knowledge about these differences, and seek

to treat each patient as an individual (Jenks, 2011). Providers learn to recognize—and to some

extent uncritically accept—individual differences without developing an understanding of the

social and historical conditions in which these differences have been produced or currently

operate (Jenks, 2010). As a result, cultural competence training, while designed to address

socially produced health disparities, can ultimately reinforce a depoliticized understanding of

cultural difference (Jenks, 2010).

Culture in healthcare is often made synonymous with ethnicity, nationality, and language, but scholars encourage cultural competence to be more people-centered and involve a willingness to learn from and hear from patients (Kleinman & Benson, 2006). If there are implicit biases, this willingness may be difficult. Although many arguments for cultural competence training focus on the need to address biases and prejudices among health practitioners (Smedley et al., 2003), the training sessions often acknowledge culture and difference but not necessarily how to work within those differences.

Social Work

Social work is a field where cultural competence has been embedded in the professional standards for decades. Cultural competence is a fundamental tenet of professional social work practice (Abrams & Moio, 2009). The field concluded that one way to combat discrimination in social work practice, as well as in the larger society, is by becoming culturally and racially competent. A cultural competence mandate is contained in both the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards and the National Association of Social Work (NASW) Code of Ethics, and it is promoted in numerous practice textbooks (Abrams & Moio, 2009). Social work cultural competence standards rely on the three-dimensional framework component of knowledge.

Standard 1.05 states:

(a) Social workers should understand culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures.
(b) Social workers should have a knowledge base of their clients' cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients' cultures and differences among people and cultural groups.
(c) Social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex,

sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, and mental or physical disability. (Allen-Meares, 2007, p. 86)

The abovementioned components of this standard, based on the three-dimensional approach, focus on how the individual works toward cultural competence. However, scholars adopting a critical lens toward the cultural competence model believe individual attitudes leave social workers unequipped to deal with institutional racism and oppression on all of the levels where it permeates—individually, structurally, and globally (Pollack, 2004; Razack, 1999; Razack & Jeffery, 2002; Yee, 2005). Critical scholars posit social work strategies and interventions are less effective because they are implemented within structurally racist and oppressive systems and eclipse race as a central mechanism of oppression; moreover, there is student resistance against and unintentional reinforcement of a colorblind lens (Razack & Jeffery, 2002; Yee, 2005).

For skill-building, experiential learning and field experiences are a major component of preprofessional training, particularly in the field of social work. Social work standards for cultural competence skill development exist. Scholars propose that the standards for experiential learning and field experiences should be accompanied by clear guidelines for students (Cramer et al., 2012). The guidelines are to help ensure experiential learning experiences are beneficial, are not insensitive to particular groups, and do not reinforce stereotypes and perceived deficits (Cramer et al., 2012). Self-awareness within social work aims to identify biases and suggest ways to overcome these biases. There is some critique regarding self-awareness development within the field of social work. Scholars state that dialogue to gain self-awareness can remain superficial, depending on the level of risk social work students are willing to take and the perceived safety of the classroom for an honest exploration of these issues without the fear of

retribution (Cramer et al., 2012). Social work has committed to developing culturally competent professionals, but there is significant work to be done to make the profession's cultural competence standards more effective.

Teacher Preparation

The education field focuses heavily on developing the cultural competence skills and practice of its preprofessionals. Researchers developed numerous approaches to culture-centered pedagogy (Au & Jordan, 1981; Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2000; Irvine, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Villegas & Lucas, 2002), all of which are rooted in the belief that the best way to improve educational achievement for minority students "is to ensure that the delivery of all of educational services . . . [be] culturally embedded" (Gay, 1997, p. 224). There are slight differences among approaches, but researchers align in preparing teachers to hold high academic expectations for all students, to value the cultural resources of their students, and adopt a social justice agenda (Buhler et al., 2009). In the education field, cultural competence training was initially focused on preservice teachers. However, more recent articulations call on teachers to continue their cultural competence development once in the field as well. It is not clear if this is because there is a lack of quality training in undergraduate programs or because the field understands that to be truly culturally competent one must always continue to pursue professional development in this area, just as with any other skill that requires constant practice.

To be culturally competent, "educators must have knowledge of children's lives outside of school to recognize their strengths" (Delpit, 1995, p. 172). Culturally competent teachers "must become, in essence, students of the cultures of their students, acquiring thorough knowledge about the cultural values, learning styles, historical legacies, contributions, and

achievements of different ethnic groups" (Gay, 2000, p. 44). Culturally competent teachers "use student culture as a basis for learning" and "promote the flexible use of students' local and global culture" (Ladson-Billings, 2001, p. 98). By learning as much as they can about the families, communities, and cultures of their students, culturally competent teachers can build "bridges of meaningfulness between home and school experiences" (Gay, 2000, p. 29) and serve "as a bridge between student culture and dominant culture" (Nieto, 2002, p. 18). Teachers do not need to try and learn details about the culture of different groups as this is both impossible and dangerous (Schmeichel, 2012). It is impossible because there are too many cultures represented in the classroom; it is dangerous because limited knowledge can lead to stereotypes that impede learning (Schmeichel, 2012).

Villegas asserts teacher education programs that properly develop culturally competent educators have a responsibility to go beyond the promotion and acceptance of cultural differences by also providing preservice teachers with the capacity to analyze the sociopolitical system that gives rise to those differences (2002). She concludes culturally sensitive remedies to the educational problems of oppressed minority students that ignore this political aspect of school are doomed to fail (Villegas, 2002). Ignoring the systemic issues when implementing cultural competence training gives the illusion of progress while perpetuating the academic inequity problem (Schmeichel, 2012).

Substitution of culture for political analysis and macro-level discussions in education result in continuing silence on the conditions of racism and other forms of oppression within the education system. Culture alone will not bring about equity or address issues such as the achievement gaps or alienation from school (Lewis et al., 2008), especially for Black students.

Lewis and colleagues point out that underlying the achievement gap is a "web of interrelated impediments"— ideologies, practices, and policies "that are actively and passively undermining widespread academic excellence among African Americans attending urban schools. Race- and class-based inequalities create and perpetuate the unequal distribution of educational resources, which sustains the Black-White achievement gap" (Lewis et al., 2008, p. 148).

Teachers' construction of minoritized students in deficit terms, with negative consequences for their longer-term academic success (Shields et al., 2005), results from longstanding racialized institutional policies and practices that consistently disadvantage minoritized students (Sleeter, 2012). Teacher preparation programs are victims of the major shortcoming of cultural competence training across academic disciplines and professional fields, which is the inability to address macro-level discussions about systemic racism and oppression that reproduces the status quo, resulting in the continued marginalization and academic struggles of Black students.

A Lack of Acknowledgment of Institutional Racism

Although the three-dimensional approach is the foundation for cultural competence training, it needs an emphasis on systemic and institutional racism to achieve optimal cultural competence. Institutionalized racism is the result of centuries of racism in which racialized oppression was legally and actively practiced (Briscoe & Khalifa, 2015). These biases infiltrated the practices and policies of institutions such as schools and are sometimes hard to recognize because they are not overt but more covert (Briscoe & Khalifa, 2015).

Developing more effective culturally competent professionals means addressing the shortcomings of the current academic programs intended to train them. The willingness to

address systemic and institutional racism is not without its challenges. Most faculty members lack preparation to facilitate classes that engage in racial dialogue, address Whiteness, and systemic oppression (Sue et al., 2009; Pasque et al., 2013). They often feel as if there is a loss of classroom control when conversations become tense (Pasque et al., 2013; Sue, 2013). Teachers are responsible for managing these complex emotions in the classroom, enfranchising all students to explore their feelings to move toward a more critical understanding of their own views and assumptions (Ferber et al., 2007). It is imperative that faculty obtain the preparation and tools needed to address emotional, sometimes volatile topics in the classroom (Ferber et al., 2007). Unfortunately, there are possible consequences for engaging in effective cultural competence training that centers on race, institutional racism, and oppression. A growing body of research suggests women, faculty of color, as well as anyone teaching socially sensitive subject matter regularly receive lower student evaluations, face more student resistance, and deal more often with emotionally charged classroom situations than those teaching less controversial subjects (Ferber & Storrs, 1995). Centering the topic of race can be divisive, cause resentment, and even stigmatize people of color (Ferber et al., 2007). Some scholars and students call it reverse racism and believe diversity discussions and initiatives are anti-American, racist, and anti-assimilationist (Ferber et al., 2007).

Another barrier to addressing systemic and institutional racism is that empirical reality is valued over experiential reality (hooks, 1994; Bell, 2003), meaning when discussing racism at the individual or institutional level, those who have experienced racism present experiential reality, which can be discredited (Bell, 2003). However, if racism, sexism, and homophobia are the result of process socialization, then mounting a public argument for equality and social

justice from a forum such as higher education programs can theoretically challenge students' racist, sexist, and homophobic attitudes and potentially evoke individual transformation (Ferber et al., 2007). Hopefully, the transformed individuals will then use their newfound knowledge, skills, and awareness to change racist and oppressive systems.

Cultural Competence in Higher Education Academic Programs

According to the cultural competence literature, most academic programs, with the exception of teacher preparation programs, do not offer cultural competence training until graduate school, and it is still limited even at that level. Carter (1995) maintained, for instance, that a two-year master's degree training program might require 60 credits or about 20 courses. At the doctoral level, a degree program could require as many as 90 credits or some 30 courses. Of these, there may be one or two courses that have an explicit cultural focus. Even when more cultural courses are offered, the traditional "Euro-centric perspective" is still present in the other courses (Carter, 1995). There is also a significant gap in research of cultural competence in undergraduate programs. I conducted a literature search through the Loyola University Chicago library, Google Scholar, and Google using the key search phrases "cultural competence in undergraduate programs" and "cultural competence in academic programs." The searches resulted in limited research outside of healthcare-related undergraduate programs. An overwhelming amount of cultural competence literature exists in the nursing field, but healthcare-related fields such as dietetics (Andrade, 2019) and athletic training (Liesener, 2017; Volberdig, 2013) also held some relevant examples. When addressing cultural competence in undergraduate students, the research was not on training within academic programs but experiences like study abroad (Phillion & Malewski, 2011; Salisbury & Pascarella, 2013),

cultural immersion (Roller & Ballestas, 2015), and service-learning (Meaney et al., 2008; Vargas & Erba, 2017; Cupelli, 2016), which may not be available to all students. This is concerning because while there is a need for culturally competent professionals, most are receiving little to no training if they do not go to graduate school or if they enter the workforce before going to graduate school.

The majority of the cultural competence training literature is within healthcare, social work, school counseling and psychology, and teacher preparation programs. However, there is some cultural competence research in academic programs aimed at macro-level action, including public administration and policy. The literature shows there is a lack of cultural competence training among these programs. A 2004 study suggests that fewer than half of the top-ranked schools cover diversity or cultural competency in their Master in Public Administration curricula (White, 2004). Myers' 2002 study examined the top 50 graduate programs in public affairs. Among these programs, 11 schools had at least one course with race or race-related words in a course title; among the 11 schools, there were a total of 26 race-related courses out of 1,222 total courses offered. In short, the share of courses on race-related topics was a mere 2.13 percent (Myers, 2002).

There is notable a gap in the literature regarding education policy. Public policy, public affairs, and public administration can include education policy, but considering education policy can also be its own academic program, more research could be done specifically on education policy/studies academic programs and how they address cultural competence. The difficulty finding literature specifically on education policy programs was not just in regard to cultural competence but overall research. The literature search results were specific education policies,

evaluation of policies within schools, and not research on educational policy academic programs (Gillborn, 2006; Evans & Hornberger, 2005; Holstead et al., 2010). Considering education policy graduates work in government, youth and education nonprofits, research institutions, policy think tanks, and schools outside of the classroom, they have a significant impact on education, and more research related to education programs beyond teacher preparation programs would be beneficial to the education field.

My research is intended to encourage more research on optimal cultural competence, which scholars believe includes addressing systemic and institutional racism and oppression. My research will also increase the literature in education disciplines that extend beyond professionals that work exclusively in school settings. The issues within the education system are not solely due to teachers' actions and abilities, nor are they solely based on what happens within a school building; therefore, the research on higher education academic programs could benefit from being more robust and inclusive. To make a change within the education system that will benefit students, especially Black students, improvements in cultural competence for all education professionals, including those who work in educational organizations, policy organizations, and government are essential.

Theoretical Framework: Critical Race Theory

To conduct my research, I utilized a CRT framework. CRT provides a framework to help me analyze inequities and systemic issues. For this study, CRT provides a lens to highlight one of the major shortcomings of cultural competence training, which is the failure to address systemic and institutional racism. Cultural competence training traditionally focuses on individual development of knowledge, skills, and self-awareness. However, scholars believe to

be truly culturally competent means to understand that racism is embedded in the foundation of the United States and the systems in which we operate. To be an effective professional in a helping profession such as education, understanding and dismantling racist systems are imperative. Abrams and Moio (2009) argue that CRT can be used to address some of these noted shortcomings associated with the current cultural competence training models.

There are various components of CRT. One is the acknowledgment that racism exists in the daily experiences of people of color and is not unusual but normative (Taylor et al., 2009; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Second is the idea that race is a social construction or result of thought and behavior rather than attributable to physical or biological factors (Taylor et al., 2009; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Third, a colorblind perspective minimizes the contextual conditions of historical and current racist practices (Taylor et al., 2009). Colorblindness not only makes subtle forms of discrimination harder to combat but also perpetuates racialization to advance the interests of the dominant group (Taylor et al., 2009). A fourth key component of CRT is the concept of intersectionality or the idea that human beings have multiple identities that cover a broad range of race, gender, class, ethnicity, or other frames of reference (Taylor et al., 2009). Lastly, CRT embraces the importance of personal narrative. People of color experience oppression, and this lived experience presumes competence to speak about race and racism from a unique perspective that those from dominant groups cannot fully understand (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Kolivoski et al., 2014).

Critique of Liberalism

CRT involves the following tenets: (a) counter-storytelling (Matsuda et. al, 1993), (b) the permanence of racism (Bell, 1992, 1995), (c) Whiteness as property (Harris, 1995), (d) interest

convergence (Bell, 1980), and (e) the critique of liberalism (Crenshaw, 1988). Educational

researchers have commonly focused on counter-storytelling and the permanence of racism

(Parker & Lynn, 2002). The other tenets have received less attention within education research.

However, for my research, the critique of liberalism is most relevant. CRT scholarship as a

whole challenges liberalist claims of objectivity, neutrality, and colorblindness of the law, and

argues that these principles actually normalize and perpetuate racism by ignoring the structural

inequalities that permeate social institutions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). CRT draws from

diverse disciplines such as sociology, history, feminist and postcolonial studies, economics,

political science, and ethnic and cultural studies. Its general mission seeks to analyze,

deconstruct, and transform for the better the relationship between race, racism, and power

(Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

Liberal legal ideology encompasses a notion of colorblindness, the neutrality of the law,

and incremental change (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). Colorblindness and neutrality of law are

possibly desirable goals to pursue as colorblindness and neutrality perpetuate the idea of equal

opportunity for all (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). However, colorblindness, as Williams (1998)

suggests, has made it nearly impossible to interrogate both the ways that White privilege is

deployed and the normalizing effects of whiteness. Hence, "difference" in the colorblind

discourse almost always refers to people of color because being White is considered "normal"

(Williams, 1998). CRT scholars argue that colorblindness has been adopted as a way to justify

ignoring and dismantling race-based policies that were designed to address societal inequity

(Gotanda, 1991).

The promotion of a colorblind society ignores the fact that inequity, opportunity, and oppression will not easily be remedied by ignoring race in contemporary society. Colorblind ideology does not eliminate the possibility that racism and racist acts will persist (Gotanda, 1991). Colorblindness also offers remedies based on equality assuming that citizens have the same opportunities and experiences. Race and experiences based on race are not equal, thus, the experiences that people of color have with respect to race and racism create an unequal situation. Equity, however, recognizes that the playing field is unequal and attempts to address the inequality. The ideologies of sameness and colorblindness contribute to the belief that the law is neutral. From an educational standpoint, colorblind educational policies and practices that inform resources, curriculum, and even how discipline is administered favor White students, therefore, difference is a factor in education.

CRT unequivocally states that analysis of the law cannot be neutral and objective, and stresses that recognition of and voices from the nondominant culture and race consciousness are essential to radical racial reform (Crenshaw et al., 1995). Because race is the scaffolding that structures American society, there can be no "perch outside the social dynamics of racial power from which to merely observe and analyze" (Crenshaw et al., 1995, p. xiii). CRT integrates key concepts including structural racism, social identity, and its relationship to power and privilege, and to oppression. These concepts provide essential building blocks for a developmental approach to teach and support antiracist practice. CRT and anti-racist scholars adhere to the view that structural or institutional racism is the primary cause of racism today, and the only way to combat racism is to dismantle racist systems. This view holds that every institution in the U.S. was developed and structured to meet the needs of White citizens and that inequality continues

through institutional practices and policies that provide advantages to White people (Omi & Winant, 1994). Miller and Garran (2007) refer to a "web of institutional racism" or systematic oppression that prevents people of color from accessing economic, social, and political resources while providing advantages to White people that allow them open access to jobs, bank loans, higher education, or medical care without fear of discrimination. A critical race lens aligns with the literature's identified shortcomings of cultural competence training practices and the need for effective cultural competence practices.

Lastly, an incremental change approach to racial justice is another component of liberal ideology. Incremental change is the belief that small wins and moves toward justice and equity take time, but will eventually happen. They benefit those who are not directly and adversely affected by social, economic inequities as they can wait for change to come. However, those most adversely affected look for large sweeping systemic change for equity and justice to truly be experienced, because while they wait for the small wins, their lives and livelihood are at risk. As we sit in 2021 during a time of social unrest, we see that the years of small wins within society have not curbed the larger issues of systemic racism.

A larger critique of liberalism is characteristic of CRT. According to Ladson-Billings (1999), "The liberal discourse is deeply invested in the current system. It relies on the law and the structure of the system to provide equal opportunity for all" (p. 231). CRT calls into question this faith in the system as an instrument of justice. Duncan's (2002) CRT analysis of his experiences teaching an undergraduate teaching methods course also provides an example of a critique of liberalism. Duncan argues that the students in his class (who were all White) demonstrated a "false empathy" for the Black children they worked with at their field site. False

empathy occurs when "a white person believes he or she is identifying with a person of color, but in fact is doing so only in a slight, superficial way" (Delgado, 1996, p. 12). According to Delgado (1996), this paternalistic form of empathy is a common characteristic of White liberals. White liberals understand their work as helping a group of unfortunate, underprivileged children take advantage of the offerings of a fundamentally just society. The issue is liberals ignore that society is extremely unjust. Therefore, they are teaching children to simply work within a system designed in most cases to work against them instead of pushing for a system that favors them as it does White children. Cultural competence training can be more effective by embracing the tenets of CRT, particularly the critique of liberal ideologies that have been shown to contribute to the shortcomings of cultural competence training, including uplifting the idea of "sameness," equality within systems, and failure to address systemic issues that disproportionately impact Black people negatively.

CRT in Education

CRT scholars in education typically engage CRT constructs to analyze an educational issue, policy, practice, or event to understand and/or theorize on why racialized educational inequities persist; the ultimate end, whether realized or not, is the fight for social change (Dixson, 2018). Within education, cultural competence is most closely related to culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) or culturally relevant teaching. Critical Race Pedagogy centers intersectionality of race and racism, challenges dominant ideology, commits to social justice, focuses on experiential knowledge, and uses interdisciplinary perspectives (Lynn & Dixson 2013; Dixson & Rousseau-Anderson, 2016)

Scholars who believe CRT should be used to improve educational outcomes have critiques of CRP and critically relevant teaching that mirror the shortcomings of cultural competence, such as avoiding racial dialogue and deferring to less "controversial" aspects of difference. Teachers may concentrate on only "safe" topics about cultural diversity such as cross-group similarities, intergroup harmony, and ethnic customs, cuisines, costumes, and celebrations while neglecting more troubling issues like inequities, injustices, oppressions, and major contributions of ethnic groups to societal and human life (Dixson, 2018). Dixson and Rousseau (2005) found that teachers denied that race-related differences in achievement existed in their classrooms or asserted that the reasons for any differences were related to socioeconomic status rather than the impact of systemic racism in the school and school district.

These critiques of CRT in education are in part due to the continued connection to CRT's roots in multicultural education. As I outlined in Chapter 2, multicultural education was riddled with flaws including assimilation practices, cultural celebration and the exclusion of Black students. Within schools, culture was taught through visible aspects in isolation, such as food, holidays, folklore, and dance (Hoffman, 1996). Multicultural education still places limits on the effectiveness of cultural competence as current MCE practices seem more appropriately rooted in the intergroup education movement of the 1950's (Dixson et al., 2006). MCE has been conceptualized as a reform movement designed to effect change so students from diverse racial ethnic and other social class groups will experience educational equality (Dixson et al., 2006). In recent iterations MCE has also been replaced with the term multiculturalism but multiculturalism does not represent an actual education reform or scholarly tradition and is more of a political philosophy of many cultures existing together in an atmosphere of respect and tolerance (Dixson

et al., 2006). Even more recently multiculturalism has become interchanged with diversity to explain all types of difference not deflecting from race and ethnicity.

Multicultural paradigm follows traditions of liberalism allowing a proliferation of difference and assuming all differences are analogous and equivalent (Dixson et al., 2006). Therefore, while counter-storytelling is the dominant tenet of CRT within education, critique of liberalism can address the systemic issues within education by addressing the traditions of liberalism embedded in systems that allow for the issues of race to be overlooked. For instance, within higher education, it is neo-liberalism that has pushed for higher education to be a private good causing an increase in tuition while reducing the amount of state and federal aid given to educational institutions and students (Dixson et al., 2006). The rising costs and reduced financial support have the biggest implications for Black students and other students of color. Liberalism promoted standardization of the admissions process which was supposed to provide systematic order but was ultimately a way to ensure homogeny of student body which continues within the higher education system today (Dixson et al., 2006). Racism is built into the system of higher education from the fact the curriculum indoctrinated students with racist ideas and it was slave labor that built the infrastructure and serviced these academic institutions from their inception. Therefore, it is not enough to for CRT scholarship or scholarship on race to be limited to simple difference in experience or achievement which William Tate found to the be the norm in education (Dixson et al., 2006). It is imperative to address the historical, institutional, and systemic issues within education. The call to address systemic and institutional racism within education and every other American system is agreed upon by most CRT scholars (Matsuda et al., 1993; Feagin, 2006). However, scholars such as Ladson-Billings suggest CRT scholars in

education should read the legal readings that set the foundation for CRT as the literature to address macro-level issues (1999). Scholar Lorenzo Baber states there is narrow attention paid to CRT scholarship that emerged from legal studies (Dixson et al., 2006). It is the laws and policies that can change the system and move education CRT literature beyond the classroom setting and individual experience. For example, in 2004 Alabama opposed Proposition 2 which would have removed educational laws that were developed during Jim Crow and without question steeped in racism. However, the argument not to remove these racists laws were due to possible economic implications. This is neoliberalism at play as legislators put economic interest over the need to achieve justice and equality (Dixson et al., 2006) and the liberal ideals that must be dismantled.

To address issues of racism, oppression, discrimination, inequity, and injustice within education and any aspect of society, racial and ethnic differences cannot be ignored. Change can only come from bringing attention to and addressing issues at the systemic and institutional level. CRT in education could improve its effectiveness in building cultural competence by moving further away from its multicultural education foundation. Critique of liberalism and its roots in the legal system is beneficial due to its ability to focus on macro-level issues within society that have formed due to liberal ideology and shaped education. Therefore, CRT, particularly the critique of liberalism helps me frame my research questions, which seeks to understand how and if educational policy programs offer training to help produce culturally competent graduates that can address systemic and institutional racism.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Chapter 3 introduces the research methodology for my qualitative study examining the extent to which undergraduate education policy and similar programs develop the cultural competence of their graduates. The chosen methodology allowed for the identification of courses and program requirements that can contribute to improved cultural competence and to what extent their training and development align with what cultural competence scholars have found to be the most effective approaches. Within this chapter, I outline why the critical social research approach and a document analysis methodology are appropriate in addressing my research questions.

Research Questions

My research aimed to answer the following questions:

- How do undergraduate education policy programs address cultural competence and prepare graduates to be culturally competent professionals?

- How do these undergraduate programs prepare students for the most effective cultural competence development approach, which encourages attention to systemic and institutional racism in addition to individual cultural competence development?

Critical Social Research Approach

I utilized a Critical Social Research (CSR) approach in my study. CSR involves a perspective that sees social structure as an oppressive mechanism of one kind or another

(Harvey, 1990). CSR assumes the world is changed by reflective practical activity and is thus not content to simply identify the nature of oppressive structure (Harvey, 1990). CSR in document analysis locates the document historically, socially, and politically, and explores how the content reveals the nature of society by digging beneath the surface appearance of the document (Harvey, 1990). For my study, I am looking at undergraduate education policy programs that claim to want to develop culturally competent professionals, but I looked for evidence beyond just a statement, to what extent they are meeting that goal through practice.

Document Analysis

Entire studies can be conducted with only documents (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Pandit (1996) conducted one such study, using existing literature and documents. Document analysis requires data to be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Rapley, 2007). As a research method, document analysis is particularly applicable to qualitative case studies—intensive studies producing rich descriptions of a single phenomenon, event, organization, or program (Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994). Nontechnical literature, such as reports and internal correspondence, is a potential source of empirical data within which the participant operates (Mills et al., 2006). Furthermore, as Merriam (1988) pointed out, "Documents of all types can help the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem" (p. 118). Additionally, document analysis can also be used to verify findings or corroborate evidence from other sources. Sociologists, in particular, typically use document analysis to verify their findings, and if the documentary evidence is contradictory rather than corroboratory, the researcher is expected to investigate further (Angrosino & Mays de Pérez,

2000). In the case of my research, the documents' text provided answers and insights as opposed to contradicting or corroborating a predetermined belief or hypothesis.

I also analyzed the visuals within my chosen documents: college websites. Through my analysis, I aimed to find out how educational policy undergraduate programs represented the cultural competence in their curricula through the images on their websites. The use of images is a core component of communication in academic marketing materials distributed by admissions and recruitment offices from colleges and universities (Anctil, 2008; Askehave, 2007; Hartley & Morphew, 2008; McKnight & Paugh, 1999; Poock & Lefond, 2001). In an increasingly visual culture, images are employed to communicate a myriad of actions, ideas, information, emotions, expressions, events, rules, regulations, and symbols (Fairclough, 2001; Kress, 2000; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Through the use of photographs and images, we can discover and demonstrate relationships that may be subtle or easily overlooked, communicate feelings, or suggest the emotion imparted by activities, environments, and interactions (Prosser, 1998). In some cases, images capture what words cannot express (Fairclough, 2001). My goal was to analyze the images of the program websites to see if they aligned with the text as it related to developing culturally competent graduates.

Document analysis has several advantages. One primary advantage is that document analysis is less time-consuming and therefore more efficient than other research methods. Availability is an additional advantage as many documents are in the public domain, especially through the internet, and documents are obtainable without the authors' permission (Bowen, 2009), making it an attractive option for qualitative researchers. Document analysis is also less costly than other research methods and is often the method of choice when the collection of new

data is not feasible (Bowen, 2009). Documents are "unobtrusive" and "non-reactive," meaning they are unaffected by the research process (Bowen, 2009), and the researcher's presence does not alter what is being studied (Merriam, 1988). Documents, then, are suitable for repeated reviews with minimal change to responses (Merriam, 1988). Exactness due to the inclusion of exact names, references, and details of events makes documents advantageous in the research process (Yin, 1994). Compared to other methods, document analysis is not affected by issues such as low response rates on questionnaires or challenges with gathering a sample population (Yoon & Hemlo-Silver, 2017).

Document analysis is not always advantageous. Several limitations are inherent in document analysis. Documents are usually produced for some purpose other than research; because they are created independent of a research agenda, consequently, they may not provide sufficient detail to answer a research question (Bowen, 2009). The absence, sparseness, or incompleteness of documents is a possibility, and depending on the source, certain matters have been given little attention or certain voices have not been recorded (Webb et al., 1966; Hodder, 2000). The researcher should be prepared to search for additional related documents, which could fill gaps in the data and shed light on the issues being investigated (Bowen, 2009). Low retrievability is also a possible issue. Documentation is sometimes not retrievable, or retrievability is difficult due to documents being deliberately blocked or restricted (Yin, 1994). Researchers should be concerned with whether a document was "written as a result of firsthand experience or from secondary sources, whether it was solicited or unsolicited, edited or unedited, anonymous or signed" (Webb et al., 1966; Hodder, 2000, p. 704).

The advantages of document analysis outweighed the disadvantages for the purpose of my research. Because I utilized college and university websites, it was easy to determine the validity and reliability of the source. I researched academic programs, and the coursework and program overviews were readily available. I also reviewed the syllabi for major course requirements. I was not able to retrieve the syllabi for every major course, but most of them were fairly easy to obtain. During my research, we were at the height of and are currently still experiencing a worldwide pandemic, with the United States leading the world with COVID-19 cases. Conducting in-person interviews was not safe, and while there are virtual applications that could be used to safely conduct interviews, recruiting participants for virtual interviews was a challenge and may have also altered responses. Also, colleges and universities were in the process of structuring what learning would look like for the 2020–2021 academic year. Research that required contact with colleges and universities was going to be an additional challenge as responding to an email and carving out meeting time for assistance on my research was without question a low priority for most professors and would have delayed my progress. The professors that did respond to my request for syllabi took from 3 days to 6 weeks to respond. One professor did not respond to my either of my requests. Thus, for the sake of being mindful of people's stress levels and obligations right now, I thought it best to limit requests of people's time during the pandemic.

Participant Selection

Eligibility Criteria

My research aimed to study cultural competence within education policy programs with a focus on professionals trained to work in aspects of education outside of the school setting. My

initial criterion was that each academic program used for the study had to be within a 4-year nonprofit university. I sought out undergraduate programs with the title of education policy, education studies, and various social policy and urban studies within schools of education due to a known lack of undergraduate education policy programs. Because my focus was on professionals who planned to work in out-of-school and nontraditional educational settings, the programs I selected were not part of teacher preparation program or those that had a focus on curriculum and instruction.

Table 1. Eligibility Criteria

Education policy or related education program
Program at a 4-year nonprofit college or university
Program not part of a teacher preparation program or focused on curriculum and instruction or administration
Program with a focus on social, political, economic, and historical factors of education
Undergraduate program
Program offered as a major not just a minor

Selection Process Phase I

The selection of the college and university programs in my study was a multistep process. I initially wanted to research undergraduate education policy programs; therefore, my first step was to do a Google search for "undergraduate education policy programs." The results were links to graduate education policy programs. I knew that undergraduate education policy programs

were limited, but thought I would be able to find at least 20 programs for my study. Several schools had education policy minors at the undergraduate level, which I chose not to focus on because minors require a limited number of required courses that may not allow for time and space to incorporate significant cultural competence training. Also, many courses for minors are electives, therefore the courses and access to cultural competence training can range too greatly from student to student within the same program. This was a factor with majors as well, but students majoring in education policy and similar programs will have more of the same classes than those simply coming in for a minor. When I was unable to find a sufficient number of education policy undergraduate program majors through a simple Google search, I then decided to review school websites individually to determine if they had an undergraduate education policy major.

To ensure I had a diverse list of schools, I developed a list of the 20 largest public universities, 20 largest private universities, and the 10 largest Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) by enrollment on a single campus. I went to each college and university's School of Education website to review their academic program offerings. I then looked to see if an undergraduate education policy program was offered. If there was not an education policy program offered, I looked for similar programs focused on social, political, and historical aspects of education and/or those that mentioned policy in the program overview as opposed to a focus on teacher preparation or education confined to actions within a school setting. I found after reviewing a few websites that education studies programs at some colleges and universities had similar goals and descriptions to education policy programs, which is how I came to use them in my study. For example, Spelman College identified its education studies program as a

nonteaching certification program. Spelman College stated its program's focus was developing a deep understanding of how "education intersects a broad range of social, cultural, political, economic systems." The program also specifically identified developing cultural competence as a program goal. While there was mention of an option to attend graduate school for a school counseling or teacher certification, this college's program webpage highlighted careers that education studies program undergraduates can pursue upon graduation. Thus, I included education studies programs in my selection as those programs were much more prevalent than education policy at the undergraduate level. I did not include academic programs that were titled education studies but focused on developing professionals to work in school settings. Some of the education studies programs were very similar to teacher preparation programs but did not result in a teacher certification. The program overview for those programs mentioned preparing undergraduates for graduate teacher certification programs and for teaching in private schools that do not require state licensure. There was also more emphasis on curriculum and instruction, education technology, and specific grade-level concentrations, which made those education studies programs closer to teacher preparation programs than education policy programs.

The review of my first 50 schools did not include smaller schools and liberal arts colleges because my initial thought was many liberal arts colleges have a limited number of academic programs and often do not have education schools. However, to create a more diverse group of schools, I eventually added a search for liberal arts colleges. My first search for liberal arts schools used the search phrase "10 largest liberal arts colleges" to align with my first round of "undergraduate education policy program" searches. The results for the liberal arts college search kept coming up as "best liberal arts colleges." I initially avoided using this list as it did not align

with my previous searches. Unfortunately, when I finally found a list of liberal arts colleges, they were not accurate and included schools that simply had a liberal arts college within the larger university, which were not the schools I wanted to include. I went back to the list of "best liberal arts colleges" to diversify my own list. Instead of using the top 10 or 20, I used the top 50 in hopes of getting a more diverse sample of schools that extended beyond the elite East Coast liberal arts colleges, which are usually ranked as "the best." I went through each of the 50 schools and was surprised at how many schools had education studies programs. This search added smaller schools to the list and a different type of curriculum because of the liberal arts requirements. I wanted to include at least one HBCU in my study as I believed such schools might provide a different perspective on cultural competence development within education policy programs. In my initial search of the 10 largest HBCUs, I did not find an educational policy or studies program, and so I expanded my search to the 50 largest HBCUs, which resulted in two with education studies programs to add to my study. After reviewing the academic programs at 140 colleges and universities, I conducted one more Google search using the search term "education studies programs." I found a list of the "30 best education studies degrees." I used this list as more of a cross-reference to catch any programs I may have missed in my other searches and could add to the diversity of my list.

My first-round selection included some programs that were not education policy or education studies but had similar program goals and a similar program overview. I kept these programs in my first list in case I was unable to find at least 20 education policy/studies programs. My series of searches resulted in a list of 31 colleges and universities with undergraduate educational policy, educational studies, and other related programs. I removed all

programs that did not have policy or studies in the title, which left me with 19 academic

programs on my list so I decided to keep one school that had a B.A. in education with an

education policy concentration to reach my goal of 20 schools. However, I eventually replaced

the B.A. in education program for another education studies program I found in my last cross-

reference search. There were additional schools that showed up in my cross-reference search

using the search term "education studies programs," but I only included one of them because the

rest did not add to the diversity of my list in regard to the type of school, enrollment, location, or

geography.

Participant Description: Phase I

My initial list included seven public and 12 private colleges and universities. Of the

colleges and universities selected, 11 had a small enrollment with an undergraduate population of

less than 5,000 students, two had a medium-sized enrollment with a population between 5,000

and 15,000, and seven had a large enrollment with an undergraduate population of over 15,000.

Nine of the colleges and universities were located in small towns with populations less than

50,000, six of the colleges and universities were located in medium-sized cities with populations

between 50,000 and 250,000, and five were located in large cities with populations over 250,000.

Regarding geography, six of the colleges and universities were located on the East Coast, three

were in the western part of the United States, seven were located in the Midwest, and four were

in the southern part of the United States. I aimed to create diversity within the selected schools,

including public and private schools, HBCUs, those from various geographic regions of the US,

and those with various enrollment size. While I was not sure if any of these factors would affect

the data collected, it was my goal to have representation from a variety of types of schools that produced education policy/studies graduates.

The following colleges and university programs were included in my initial list:

1. Pennsylvania State University – Education and Public Policy

2. University of Florida – Education Sciences Schools Society and Policy

3. University of Illinois – Learning and Educational Studies, Educational Equality & Cultural Understanding

4. University of Washington-Bothell – Education Studies

5. University of Los Angeles – Education Studies

6. University of Wisconsin – Education Studies

7. Arizona State University – Education Studies

8. Northwestern University – Social Policy (with a major in the School of Education and Social Policy)

9. Washington University – Education Studies

10. Macalester College – Educational Studies

11. Swarthmore College – Educational Studies

12. Wellesley College – Education Studies

13. Carleton College – Education Studies

14. Colby College – Education Studies

15. Vassar College – Education Studies

16. Dickinson College – Educational Studies

17. DePauw University – Education Studies

18. Furman University – Education Studies

19. Spelman College – Education Studies

20. Clark Atlanta University – Education Studies

Selection Process Phase II

 I narrowed down this list of 20 to 10 to conduct a more in-depth and robust study (see Table 2). From the initial list, I retained the academic programs at Northwestern University and Penn State University because they were actual education policy programs. Because of my focus on cultural competence in education programs as a means to improve the educational experience and success of Black students I retained the two HBCUs on my initial list. However, Clark Atlanta University was removed from the final list because the education studies program changed in the current academic year and did not align with my initial eligibility criteria as it did when I started my selection process the previous academic year. I replaced Clark Atlanta with Furman University as my other southern private school. I chose a public school from each geographic region of the country. I decided on Wisconsin over Illinois because I already included an Illinois school with Northwestern. I chose two from the western part of the United States because the University of Washington-Bothell is a medium-sized school compared to the other public schools in the study, which are larger with each having over 20,000 students. I chose Arizona State University over UCLA because Arizona State was more aligned with my selection criteria after I looked more into each program. For the private schools, I chose to include DePauw to represent the Midwest due to the other schools (i.e., Washington University, Macalester, and Carleton) having a highly selective demographic similar to Northwestern, which is already included. I chose Colby College for its more isolated location in Maine versus

Swarthmore or Dickinson which are both in Pennsylvania, because I already had a Pennsylvania school as I was already using Pennsylvania State University in my study. Vassar is in New York and has a geographic area similar to Swarthmore and Dickinson as well as a similar culture as an elite East Coast liberal arts college. Lastly, I did not choose Wellesley because it is a single-sex school, which I have represented with Spelman College. Wellesley also falls into the elite East Coast liberal arts school category, so it did not provide any diversity to the sample.

My final list included five public and five private colleges and universities. Of the colleges and universities selected, four have a small enrollment with an undergraduate population of less than 5,000 students, two have a medium-sized enrollment with a population between 5,000 and 15,000, and four have a large enrollment with an undergraduate population of over 15,000. Regarding geography, two of the colleges and universities are located on the East Coast, two are in the western part of the United States three are located in the Midwest, and three are in the southern part of the United States.

Table 2. Program Selection Criteria Guide[1]

Geography	Public	Private
West	Washington-Bothell*, UCLA, Arizona State*	
South	Florida*	Furman*, Clark Atlanta, Spelman*
Midwest	Illinois, Wisconsin*	Wash U., Macalester, Carleton, DePauw* Northwestern*
Northeast	Penn State*	Swarthmore, Colby*, Vassar, Dickinson, Wellesley

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[1] Schools in Table 2 marked with an asterisk were those with education policy and studies program included in my final study list.

The following colleges and university programs were included in my study:

1. Pennsylvania State University – Education and Public Policy

2. University of Washington-Bothell – Education Studies

3. University of Florida – Education Sciences Schools Society and Policy

4. University of Wisconsin – Education Studies

5. Arizona State Education Studies

6. Northwestern University – Social Policy (a major in the School of Education and Social Policy)

7. Colby College – Education Studies

8. DePauw University – Education Studies

9. Spelman College – Education Studies

10. Furman University – Education Studies

Data Collection

I utilized the education policy and studies program websites to collect my data. Swan and Carr (2008) state that the internet is critical to universities and colleges for establishing a strong presence in the public through its communication of information about the institution's products, values, goals, and unique characteristics. The internet has also been supported as a medium for content-analysis research (McMillan, 2000; Neuendorf, 2002; Weare & Lin, 2000). Textual data collection was done in three stages for each education policy and studies program. The first step was a review of the program overview and goals, step two was a review of the major course requirements and their descriptions, and step three was a review of the major required courses syllabi. Visual data was collected in one phase by reviewing the education policy and studies

program webpages and all other page links from the education policy and studies programs' main webpage.

I began my data collection by reviewing the program overviews and goals that were displayed on each program's main webpage. I found these webpages through a Google search combining the school name and education policy program. I also navigated the schools' education department websites if the Google search did not take me to the education policy program's main page. I did not review the general education program webpages as I was specifically focusing on cultural competence within education policy and studies programs. My goal was not just to determine whether there was evidence of cultural competence training but to identify how cultural competence was incorporated into programs if producing culturally competent graduates did not appear to be an explicit program goal. Prior to starting my data collection, I developed a codebook in the proposal stage of my research, using the words, phrases, and themes (see Table 3 and Table 4). within the literature that scholars state is needed for effective cultural competence training (see Table 5). I also included words, phrases, and themes that indicate shortcomings to producing effective cultural competence. The codebook guided my review of the program overviews and goals that I would later analyze. I created a spreadsheet for this phase of my data collection, which I named "text data" and where I organized the key terms and phrases from the overviews and goals for each program.

Table 3. Thematic Codes

Theme	Codes
Three-Dimensional Approach	Knowledge, Skills/Practice, Self-Awareness
Cultural Competence Training	Cultural Competence, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Multicultural, Urban

Institutional Racism	Systems, Historical, Political, Economic, Inequity, Racism, Critique of Systems and Institutions
Shortcomings	Colorblindness, Cultural Celebration, Inclusiveness, Compliance Checklists

Table 4. Thematic Codes Definitions

Themes	Definitions
Three-Dimensional Approach	Mention of acquiring knowledge, developing skills, and developing self-awareness in regards to a particular demographic or setting
Cultural Competence Training	Classes, workshops, internships, or experiences to build cultural competence
Institutional Racism	Reference to racism within an institution or system and not as a direct individual act
Shortcomings	Mentions of the shortcomings of cultural competence as identified in the cultural competence literature

Table 5. Deductive Codes and Definitions

Codes	Definitions
Knowledge	Mention of acquiring knowledge or gaining a deeper understanding of a particular group or experience
Skills/Practice	Mention of developing skills/practice generally or a specific skill or practice to develop cultural competence or understanding of a group or experience different than their own
Self-Awareness	Mention of developing self-awareness, self-identity, racial-identity, or recognizing Whiteness
Cultural Competence	Mention of cultural competence or reference to learning about people from varying backgrounds, experiences, or geographies
Diversity	Mention of diversity or reference to working with or interacting with people from varying backgrounds, experiences, or geographies

Equity	Mention of equity or the goal of achieving fair and just administering of policies, processes, access, and resources
Inclusion	Mention of inclusion as it relates to racial identity
Multicultural	Mention of multiculturalism or reference to a particular race, ethnicity, or nationality, and their place and experience within the context of the United States
Urban	Settings and locations within a major metropolitan U.S. city
Systems	Reference to a particular social entity that provides structure to how the United States and its citizens operate in society
Historical	Past actions and policies impacting education in the United States
Political	Political actions and policies impacting education in the United States
Economic	Economic actions and policies impacting education in the United States
Inequity	Unfair or unjust administering of policies, processes, access, and resources
Racism	Mention of the racism or mention of unfair and unjust treatment or practices based on race
Critique of Systems and Institutions	Mention of the need to critique, reform, transform, or dismantle a system or institution, or highlighting examples of unfair, unjust practices or policies withing a system or institution
Colorblind	Mention of colorblindness or highlighting sameness in the experiences of people from different racial backgrounds
Cultural Celebration	Framing cultural in regards to objects such as food, clothing, music
Inclusiveness	Centering various aspects of identity besides race
Checklists	Checklists used to confirm actions related to cultural competence training and/or diversity, equity and inclusion are being administered, or checklists as a way to generalize a specific racial, cultural, or ethnic group
Race	Mention or reference to a specific racial group

For phase two of my textual data collection, I reviewed course titles for the required courses in each program. I created a column on my "text data" spreadsheet titled "required major courses" for each program, with the course title and course number. I was able to retrieve the course requirements for each program from the programs' websites. I then reviewed each course description to determine if there was any subtle or direct reference to cultural competence. I used the schools' course catalogues and program websites to collect the course descriptions. From that review, I developed a list of courses that demonstrated some aspect of cultural competence and added the course titles and course numbers in a new column on the "text data" spreadsheet titled "required major courses notes." This column only included courses that appeared to have some cultural competence component, not all major required courses. I also included in my "text data" spreadsheet a column for elective courses. I did not do an in-depth review of elective courses because students are not guaranteed to take them. However, I did add to my spreadsheet information on how many electives were required for each program, the number of elective options, and notes on the elective options that were relevant to cultural competence.

The courses in my "required major courses notes" column informed the syllabi I needed to request from each program for the third phase of my textual data collection. The course titles may not have provided the best insight into the course, so the course description and syllabi provided the detail needed to assess if the course could contribute to cultural competence. In the syllabi, I was able to view course assignments, course texts, readings, and other media required for the course that demonstrated or represented an aspect of cultural competence. I requested 56 syllabi from 10 programs. I was able to obtain 43 syllabi from 7 programs. All of the programs that agreed to provide their syllabi provided all of the syllabi that were requested. DePauw,

Colby, and Spelman's programs did not provide their syllabi for this study. I created another spreadsheet titled "syllabi." For each program, I had a column for each of the required major courses to organize the keywords, phrases, assignments, and texts from my syllabi for analysis. This concluded my textual data collection, so then I began my visual data collection.

Visuals are often open to a variety of interpretations, so researchers should align their methodology to best address their research questions (Hodge & Kress, 1988). I used selected aspects of the Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) rubric to guide my data collection similar to how I used my codebook for my textual data collection (see Table 6). I reviewed the webpages for each program and recorded the images that I saw related to each descriptor in my spreadsheet. I also viewed videos embedded in program webpages. I reviewed each frame of the videos and developed a summary of each video based on the descriptors and attributes. I created a spreadsheet titled "visual data" to organize what I saw on each webpage and in each video. I had a row for each school and a column for each descriptor and attribute.

Table 6. Kress and van Leeuwen Visual Analysis Rubric Visual Feature Explanation Data

Descriptors	A basic description of the visual elements, such as actors and carriers, angle, colors, graphics, font, page design, perspective, settings, spatial relationships
Actor	The active participant(s) in an action process is the participant(s) from which the vector emanates or which is fused with the vector
Goal	The passive participant in an action process is the participant at which the vector is directed
Interactors	The participants in a transactional action process where the vector could be said to emanate from, *and* be directed at, both participants
Reactor	The active participant in a reaction process

	is the participant whose look creates the eyeline
Transactional reaction	An eyeline vector connects two participants, a Reactor and Phenomenon.
Nontransactional reaction	An eyeline vector emanates from a participant, the Reactor, but does not point at another participant
Setting	The setting of a process is recognizable because the participants in the foreground overlap and hence partially obscure it (e.g., soft focus, over/under color saturation, overall darkness or lightness between foreground and background)
Means	A process used to create an image (e.g., photograph, graphic, logo)
Symbolic Attributes	Symbolic Attributes are made salient in the representation in one way or another (e.g., by being placed in the foreground, through exaggerated size, through being especially well lit, through being represented in fine detail or sharp focus, or through their conspicuous color or tone)
Symbolic Suggestive	Symbolic Suggestive depictions are represented as a general essence rather than a specific instance. Visuals of this nature may use soft focus, blending of colors, outlines, or silhouettes
Sequencing of information	Sequence sets up cause and effect, placement of images on a page (e.g., high, low)

Source: Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (2006). *Reading images: The grammar of visual design.* London, UK: Routledge.

Data Analysis

Textual Data Analysis

Johnny Saldaña (2009) defines a code in qualitative inquiry as a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data. The codes I used were not based on a singular

definition of cultural competence as that is somewhat fluid. I based my codes off of key components of cultural competence as supported by the literature. My key theme was the three-dimensional approach. While the three-dimensional approach possesses some shortcomings, it is the foundation of cultural competence training and still relevant as the initial step in becoming culturally competent. Addressing institutional and systemic racism and inequities, shortcomings, and cultural competence training were additional themes, each with their own set of codes.

Thematic analysis is used in qualitative research and focuses on examining themes or patterns of meaning within data (Daly et al., 1997). This method can emphasize organization and rich descriptions of the data set, as well as theoretically informed interpretation of meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis goes beyond simply counting phrases or words in a text and explores explicit and implicit meanings within the data (Guest et al., 2012). Coding is the primary process for developing themes by identifying items of analytic interest in the data and tagging these with a coding label (Boyatzis, 1998).

When I completed collecting my data from each source (e.g., program overview and goals, course descriptions, and syllabi), I created a separate spreadsheet for each program, which I titled by the school name. For each program (school) spreadsheet, I made a row for each data source and a column for each code in my codebook. I then coded the data from my textual data and syllabi spreadsheets for each program. For each code, I made notes in a word document of themes and patterns I observed across programs. Thematic analysis of my program spreadsheets, along with my themes and patterns document, helped to craft the overarching themes that informed my findings. Lastly, I was quantified the number of references within each program for each code as well as across all of my data sources. There was a total of 10 programs and 109 data

sources consisting of 10 program overviews, 56 course descriptions and 43 course syllabi. I

developed a table (Table 7) to show how often a code was referenced to support the patterns I

identified in my analysis (Table 8).

Table 7. Number of Code References Across Programs and Data Sources

Inductive Code	Number of Programs	Number of Data Sources
Knowledge	5	6
Skills/Practice	10	13
Self-Awareness	8	12
Cultural Competence	8	9
Diversity	7	10
Equity	7	13
Inclusion	4	4
Multiculturalism	8	10
Urban	2	3
Systems	6	10
Historical/Political/Economic	9	17
Racism	5	5
Inequity	6	11
Critique of Systems	8	15
Colorblindness	2	2
Cultural Celebration	2	2
Inclusiveness	10	12
Race	9	11
Global	6	7

Table 8. Themes from Codes

Theme	Codes	Theme Summary
Three-Dimensional Approach	Knowledge, Skills/Practice, Self-Awareness, Cultural Competence	The Tradition of Three-Dimensional Approach Continues Each program demonstrated all three components of the three-dimensional approach. The components were more robust and more closely align to what

		scholars would identify as effective cultural competence
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Multicultural,	<u>Diversity Is Not Enough: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion</u> Education policy and studies programs have a heavy focus on diversity, attempt to encourage equity, and are less focused on inclusion
Race and Racism	Race, Multi-culturalism and Racism	<u>Ready for Race and Culture…Not Racism</u> Racism was not explicitly referenced in majority of the programs, and when it was referenced, it was most often in a historical context. The topic of race, culture and multiculturalism was prevalent in assignments, readings, and course descriptions.
Critique of Systems	Systems, Historical, Political, Economic, Inequity, Critique of Systems and Institutions	<u>Fight the Power and Reform the System: Critiques of Systems</u> For students to understand and critique systems, programs encouraged them to connect the historical, political, and socioeconomic implications of education.
Shortcomings	Colorblindness, Cultural Celebration, Inclusiveness, Global	<u>Shortcomings</u> There were subtle instances of historical shortcomings of cultural competence within most programs.

Visual Data Analysis

I utilized Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to analyze visual evidence on the education policy and studies program website pages in my study. Fairclough and Wodak (1997) presented several aspects of CDA. The aspects most pertinent to my research included discourse that addresses social problems, discourse that acknowledges power relations, a discursive discourse as historical, and CDA as a socially committed paradigm. These aspects aligned closely with effective cultural competence as defined by the literature and CRT, such as looking at power relations and social problems at a macro-level and understanding how historical actions impact

and set the foundation for present-day systems and institutions. Rogers and her colleagues (2005) conceptualized CDA as a focus on "how language, as a cultural tool, mediates relationships of power and privilege in social interactions, institutions, and bodies of knowledge" (p. 367). Within Fairclough's (2001) approach, there are three dimensions:

- descriptive analysis, where the intent is to describe the properties of the textual and visual elements;

- interpretive analysis, where the goal is to examine the contents of language and its functional parts to understand and interpret the connections between the role of language and the greater social structures it reflects and supports; and

- societal analysis, which focuses on explanations of larger cultural, historical, and social discourses surrounding interpretations of the data.

CDA is an effective method of analysis for my study as there is a focus on the larger societal impact. This can counteract the shortcomings of cultural competence training that often fails to acknowledge and address the issues of power, privilege, racism, and oppression within larger systems and institutions.

To analyze my visual data, I used my visual spreadsheet to create a Word document of patterns and themes for each descriptor and attribute from Kress and van Leeuwen's rubric. The themes and patterns informed my visual findings. I then used the themes and patterns to determine if there was any connection between the themes in my visual data and textual data to directly address my research questions.

Positionality Statement

My research interests stem from my experiences of racism and oppression within my personal and professional life as a Black person in America. Personally, my experiences with racism have not been anything exceptional, but they have played a role in how I view the world. Professionally, I have worked within the nonprofit sector for over 10 years in the field of education, advocacy, housing, and biotech. In my career, I have seen how systemic and institutional racism has contributed to the issues I have worked to alleviate in my nonprofit work.

I am also a doctoral student in the Cultural and Educational Policy Studies (CEPS) program at Loyola University Chicago. The masters and doctoral students in the CEPS program work in various fields, including community-based organizations, philanthropic foundations, K-12 schools, school boards, government, higher education, and advocacy organizations. Aside from my own professional experience, I was able to see how many different aspects of education CEPS students touch and thus have a significant impact on the entire education system. When most people think of education they think of teachers, principals, and possibly counselors. However, the professionals that make decisions and impact educational opportunities for students are not just in the schools. Although I have worked in schools and taught at the high school and college level, my biggest impact on education was my 8 years working at an educational nonprofit and my work drafting education policy for homeless students in the Chicago Public School system.

I was the primary and sole person responsible for the research, data collection, and data analysis for this study. I will be utilizing memo notes to record my thoughts and reactions throughout the process to expose any potential biases. As a Black woman in the United States in

2021 I can attest that discussions of race and oppression are extremely sensitive during this time, even more than usual. I believed I needed to be more mindful of these feelings to ensure the data from the study sample was properly reflected, untainted by my own personal beliefs. I relied on my memo notes to allow for my first reaction to be captured but waited to code and analyze any words, phrases, images, assignments, and texts that may have caused a triggered reaction, giving such a reaction the chance to subside. My ultimate goal is for educational policy and education studies programs to graduate professionals ready to dismantle systems of racism and oppression because they then have the power to improve the trajectory of a student's, particularly a Black student's, academic success before they even step into a classroom.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Findings Overview

Cultural competence is not explicitly stated as a goal of the education policy and studies

programs in my sample, except for Spelman College, which is an all-women's Historically Black

College and University (HBCU) in Atlanta, Georgia. However, through the review of program

overviews, course overviews, and syllabi, I was able to identify evidence of cultural competence

training in every program. Cultural competence training was consistently implemented from

program to program based on readings with a focus on topics such as diversity, equity, culture,

race, and to a lesser extent, inclusion, racism, and social justice. Class assignments and field

experiences were additional ways the programs developed students' cultural competence.

Further review of course descriptions and course syllabi revealed some course

assignments and readings that demonstrated historical shortcomings in attempts to teach cultural

competence, including colorblind theory, through highlighting sameness and inclusiveness,

which can deflect from issues of race. However, though the shortcomings were present, they

were not so overwhelmingly present that they counteracted the effective cultural competence

training that was taking place within the programs. The major gaps in effective cultural

competence development were found in examinations of culture with a heavy emphasis on

diversity and referencing race but limited discussions on racism. The foundation for effective

cultural competence was evident within each program, but was limited in its ability to truly

address institutional racism within a contemporary context in ways that would allow for a level of cultural competence that could positively reform systems and thus improve the educational success of marginalized students, in particular Black students.

Lastly, I reviewed each program's webpages. Images do not necessarily connect to text and can present and message independently (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). My research aimed to find a connection between the images on the program's website and their curricula related to cultural competence training. In most cases, the program webpages did not closely align with factors of cultural competence found in the required courses, texts, and assignments of the programs. Even programs with extremely progressive ideas associated with effective cultural competence training expressed in text on the webpage did not have images that aligned with the text. The webpages represented traditional educational images, such as teachers working with students, classroom images, and generic college website images such as campus landscapes and educational building photos.

The Tradition of the Three-Dimensional Approach Continues

The three-dimensional approach is the foundation of cultural competence training (Sue & Torino, 2005). Each program demonstrated all three components of the three-dimensional approach. The approach consists of knowledge, skills/practice, and self-awareness. The presence of the three-dimensional approach signifies that the basic tenets of cultural competence are being implemented within education policy and studies programs. References to knowledge found in syllabi, program descriptions, and program course descriptions focused on sources of knowledge and acknowledging that knowledge can come from a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and

cultures. Arizona State[2] used the concept of "funds of knowledge," which is the premise that people are competent, have knowledge, and their life experiences have given them that knowledge. In the same respect, all people are incompetent when it comes to certain knowledge because it is not part of their background, experience, or culture (Gonzalez et al., 2006). Wisconsin encouraged community-based learning/knowledge to promote the idea that knowledge does not only come from textbooks and a singular point of view. Northwestern has a course titled *Understanding Knowledge,* which questions how knowledge is produced and how the sources and production of knowledge interact with "socio-political and cultural constructs." The programs identified various sources where students could acquire knowledge outside of course text. Arizona State encourages self-reflection as a source of knowledge, and Spelman refers to professional settings as a source of knowledge. The knowledge the programs aimed to provide was not just related to schools, students, or teaching but also societal issues such as diversity, urban issues, and social justice.

Skills and practice came in a variety of forms, including field experiences, internships, volunteer projects, service learning, classroom observations, study aboard, and off-campus trips. Field experiences and internship requirements ranged from 20 to 50 hours per course. Furman's required field experience consisted of tutoring a middle school student in a Greenville, South Carolina, public school. Colby required their field experience to be conducted in a local public-school classroom, but the designated task at the school is not specific. Field experiences and internships at other programs allow for students to choose a community-based organization or any learning setting as opposed to strictly school settings. The main purpose of the field

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[2] When referring to a specific education policy or studies program, I will refer to the program by the school name for the purpose of brevity and clarity between programs.

experience and internship as stated by most programs is to allow students to work with youth

from diverse backgrounds. For example, Florida's *Teaching Diverse Populations* syllabi states

their volunteer project has to be within a setting that "provides learning opportunities to a diverse

range of children and youth." Other purposes for the field experience and internships were to

help students learn how "educational institutions operate," as stated in Furman's *Perspectives of*

American Education course overview, and how to "navigate systems" within education, which is

a goal of Spelman's required field experience of observing a teacher in a school setting. All of

the academic programs in the study highlight that their programs allow graduates to work outside

traditional academic settings. However, four programs out of 10 required a field experience

within a school setting, specifically in classrooms.

Some unique skills and practice activities included attending school board meetings,

which was a requirement at Furman. Arizona State required students in their *Community Context*

course to serve as a consultant for a community-based organization. The students work with the

organization to identify a problem the organization is required to address through its mission and

develop innovative plans of action to address the identified problem. Arizona State used the

consultancy project to "address community-identified concerns and develop skills as a change

agent." Arizona State states in its *Navigating Change in Educational Innovations* course syllabi

that the consultancy is a "real-world exercise in inclusion." Wisconsin was the only school that

identified study abroad as part of its program, which used to be a common activity associated

with cultural competence. Although study abroad is not a requirement, it is grouped with skill

and practice opportunities along with community-based learning and internships in the program

overview.

Self-awareness, as a major tenet of cultural competence, was prominent within each program. Self-awareness served two purposes. The first purpose was for students to gain an understanding of how their personal identity could impact their beliefs and expose their biases. The second purpose was for students to develop their professional identity in ways that included "developing a working philosophy of education," as stated by Arizona State in its *Exploration of Education* syllabi. The programs that had more focus on school settings had students do more work around developing their professional identity through self-awareness. Assignments and activities that promoted self-awareness included autobiographies, poems, visual projects, and a semester-long reflection journal, which was the most common assignment. Reflection journals were used to get immediate thoughts and reactions about course topics and field experiences. Northwestern's *Introduction to Community Development* course required a "critical engagement journal," which is a reflection on each week's topic. Other reflection assignments included a literacy reflection that asked how students' culture impacted their literacy development and a reflection on students' most memorable educational moment at Arizona State. Furman required a tutoring reflection that included highlighting how their personal experience and identity differed from the middle school student they were required to tutor. Wisconsin asked students to write a post about how their background influenced their education trajectory and experiences, and to answer the question, "Do you hold any values and ideas about education that are unique to your community or culture?" Furman also had a movie reflection assignment to help students develop their professional identity through understanding their teaching style. Students are required to watch *Ferris Bueller Day's Off* (Hughes, 1986) and *Dead Poets Society* (Weir, 1989) to see with which teaching method they were most closely aligned. Both of these films are set in affluent

communities with limited diversity in regards to culture, race, and socioeconomic status, which may hinder its goal to identify personal connections related to diversity.

Autobiographies allow students to become aware of their worldviews, biases, and how their perspectives were developed. Florida's program required students to write a cultural autobiography for their *Teaching Diverse Populations* course. Penn State had students write an educational autobiography. However, an educational autobiography could exclude racial and ethnic identity, depending on one's educational experience. Penn State was the only program that explicitly required students to reflect on their racial identity and discuss racial identity as an objective in their *Foundations of Civic Engagement* course. Making students more aware of their racial identity may have them include that as a factor in their educational autobiography. While racial identity was not explicit within programs other than those of Penn State, there were opportunities for race and ethnicity to become integrated into the conversation of self-awareness development. DePauw encouraged students' awareness of their personal power and agency in their program overview. Arizona State brought culture into its students' "pathway to self-discovery" and required them to "analyze cases of equity and social justice to become aware of one's personal perspective worldwide and biases." Florida wants students to self-reflect on their individual views on issues of diversity.

All the academic programs within the sample incorporated some aspect of cultural competence training. Spelman College was the only school whose program explicitly mentioned the actual phrase "cultural competence." Spelman's program overview stated that its goal is to "develop culturally competent skills and dispositions to be leaders within educational institutions and among children and youth." Culturally relevant teaching was highlighted in programs at

Arizona State, Florida, and Wisconsin. Culturally relevant teaching includes cultural competence within the education field, particularly in teacher preparation programs. Arizona State wants its students to understand what it means to be a culturally responsive educational leader and to become culturally proficient, as outlined in their *Culture and Schooling* and *Exploration of Education* syllabi, respectively. Arizona State also had students reflect on "culture as a disability" and the idea that a lack of understanding of other cultures, backgrounds, and experiences is a disability because it limits one's ability to be an effective educational leader. Programs presented topics that center on the importance of cultural understanding even if the term "cultural competence" was not mentioned. Northwestern included readings such as *Widowhood and Race* (Elwert & Christakas, 2006) and *Demographics of the Sandwich Generation by Race and Ethnicit*y (Cravy & Mitra, 2011) to investigate the cultural differences and impact on human development in adolescence and as they age. Furman has a key disposition statement in their syllabi that lists several characteristics for students possess, and states that "undergraduate and graduate candidates are expected to demonstrate the following key "dispositions," including "sensitivity to culture and individual difference."

Assimilation, deculturization, and acculturation were approaches used to erase the cultural identity of students in schools. Programs incorporated readings and assignments to demonstrate why these approaches to cultural competence were not effective. Florida and Furman referenced some historical approaches related to cultural competence, such as assimilation, deculturization, and acculturation, that were popular approaches in multicultural education. Florida has a deculturization project that has students give a presentation on a chapter in the text *Deculturalization and the Struggle for Equality* (Spring, 2016). Furman included these

historical approaches within the "Social Foundations of Education" module of its *Perspectives of American Education* course. The book is a concise history of how Anglo American racism and school policies affected dominated groups in the United States and how the dominant Anglo class has stripped away the culture of minority peoples in the US and replaced it with the dominant culture. The historical context helps set the foundation for conversations on why acknowledging culture and its impact on education and learning is important. Wisconsin's *Comparative Education* course discussed how liberalism and assimilationist views are ineffective in the reading *Diversity, Group Identity, and Citizenship in a Global Age* (Banks, 2014), which supports a critical race theory view of cultural competence. Wisconsin asked students to reflect on the purpose of school and if it is meant to foster a shared culture and therefore support that liberalism and assimilationist views had a positive purpose as opposed to systematically stripping immigrants of their culture.

Diversity Is Not Enough: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Education policy and studies programs seem to be following the trend of corporate America's focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion. In the same vain, education policy and studies programs are heavy on the focus of diversity, attempt to push equity, and are less focused on inclusion. All of the programs in the research sample had a goal of preparing students to work in diverse environments and with diverse populations. Penn State wants students to "value different communities," Florida's program helps students understand … diversity in the classroom," and Furman has an objective for students to be "aware of and sensitive to community and cultural diversity." Spelman highlights learning issues as they relate to cultural diversity and working effectively with students from a culturally diverse society. DePauw has a

goal that students will "understand … human diversity." Florida, Furman, and Arizona State have diversity statements on their syllabi. Florida's diversity statement notes that discussions on diversity "may cause … discomfort." Furman's statement focuses on the role school leaders play in "fostering acceptance and celebration of diversity." Arizona State's statement is a vision statement that calls for students to develop "a mindset of diversity" that is essential to their success.

Topics surrounding diversity were woven through each program to various extents. Arizona State students in its *Designing Learning Environments for Inclusion* course were required to research a leader and a company that has been recognized for improving diversity. Readings were the most common way to facilitate conversations on diversity with critical analysis of readings and their relation to diversity. Texts used by the programs such as *Human Diversity in Education: An Intercultural Approach at Florida* (Cushner et al., 2015) provide a look at diversity within the context of education and what that means within society. These texts supplement course topics such as "School and Social Diversity" and "Teaching Diverse Populations." Students at Arizona State and Northwestern are required to read case studies on diversity as one way to spark discussion. Programs do not just want students to understand diversity but also to develop solutions to the issues and barriers to diversity in schools and within the larger society. Wisconsin acknowledged that diversity is not as simple as a quota or an answer to social ills. Wisconsin students were required to watch *Why Diversity Is Not Enough to Reach Real Integration in Schools* (TED, 2014) and had a learning module titled "Education Democracy and the Challenges of Diversity." The video and learning module provide a more realistic view of diversity because they extend the conversation beyond meeting a quota. This

assignment provides examples of challenges to diversity and explain why diversity is not a singular solution to issues of race, racism, disparities, or oppression. This video and module also highlight that diversity is also not limited to celebration.

Equity was referenced by several programs as a goal for the education system, as a type of reform, and as a teaching practice. Penn State graduates should "advance the mission of equity," and UW-Bothell strives to produce citizens who "promote equity." A learning objective for Furman students is to "treat students fairly and equitably." DePauw focused on existing definitions of equity and how they relate to the distribution of power as stated in the overview of its *Deconstructing Education, Difference, and Society* course. UW-Bothell is the only program that had a course that was specifically about equity. The course is *Education Equity in the U.S.,* which introduces historic and contemporary struggles over issues of equity. Readings and assignments push the discussion of equity and weave it throughout courses in the program. Penn State's *Education and Politics* course required reading a chapter on "Equity and Critical Race Theory" and one on "Equity-based Reform," and one of the weekly course topics was "Equity and School Integration." Arizona State had students "explore issues of equity," "demonstrate how inquiry is a form of equity building," and analyze fundamental questions about "justice, equity, opportunity, and fairness in education." Arizona State places equity in specific contexts, such as equity within literacy and for diverse learners.

Equity and equality have different meanings. Equality means providing everyone the same resources, whereas equity means providing people with different or additional resources based on what they need to be successful and thrive. These terms were often used interchangeably by the programs to articulate that educational opportunities should be offered to

all students within the education system. While not speaking of equity specifically, Wisconsin's program had students examine educational debates, including those concerning education-related social disparities and the pursuit of "equal educational opportunities for all." Within Wisconsin's *Comparative Education* course, there was an "Equity/Equality" module. In the *Comparative Education* course, students were required to write a paper answering a prompt on whether education is really the "great equalizer." COVID-19 has added an additional factor in achieving equity. Wisconsin students had to read *10 Questions for Equity Advocates to Ask About Distance Learning* (Education Trust and Digital Promise, 2020), which addressed equity directly, but the overall module was "Equity and Equality." Northwestern also did not specifically talk about equity, but through their *Social Policy* course aims to help students develop policies to "secure equal opportunity for all Americans," and Florida's *Social Foundations* class has students study the struggle America faced trying to achieve equality for all people. Interchanging the use of equity and equality is common in education, even though they have two different meanings. However, when addressing equity and equality, all the programs did speak to the greater issue of disparities within education and the notion that acknowledging the disparities within the system is necessary in order to address those disparities.

Inclusion, which means not just providing someone access to a space or opportunity but providing a comfortable, respectful, and accepting environment once someone is in a space, or providing an opportunity that was not previously a prominent focus within the programs. Inclusion is often connected to diversity and equity, but diversity and equity were more prevalent than inclusion. There was discussion about creating diversity and equity within schools, the workplace, and society, but not as much about inclusion. Penn State wants students to advance

the mission of equity and inclusion. DePauw wants students to understand existing definitions of inclusion. Arizona State was the only program that referenced inclusion but also discussed inclusive actions such as "creating inclusive learning environments" and "promot[ing] inclusivity in learning environments." Arizona State students were also encouraged to understand what inclusion looks like in corporate and noneducation settings as well. It was the only program that had a course specifically about inclusion titled *Designing Learning Environments for Inclusion*.

Ready for Culture and Race … Not Ready for Racism

All of the programs referenced culture and race in at least one of their course descriptions or course syllabi. However, racism was not explicitly referenced in the majority of the programs, and when it was referenced, it was most often in a historical context. The topic of culture and multiculturalism was prevalent in assignments, readings, and course descriptions. Culture showed up in education policy and studies programs not to just acknowledge individual cultures but also how these cultures interact with one another and how that interaction impacts education and educational experiences. Florida's *Schools on Screen: Education in Pop Media* course explores how film and TV are shaped by cultural conditions. The media shown in the course are supposed to address various societal issues, and students are asked to pay special attention to how culture has contributed to those societal issues. References to multiculturalism show up in several of Florida's required course syllabi and descriptions. In its *Introduction to Education* course, one objective was to understand how multiculturalism impacts schools and learners, and to identify cultural factors that impact education. Florida also had a *Teaching Diverse Populations* course that discussed multicultural education and a *History of Education* course that discussed the cultural contributions of cultures in Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and Asia.

Spelman's program overview stated its instructional focus is on "appropriate multicultural strategies used in the classroom and multicultural environments." UW-Bothell has a course called *Teaching and Learning in Multicultural Society* that explores how culture and identity are tied to learning. The vision statement of Arizona State's program called for students to learn about components of culture, the importance of multiculturalism, how to apply examples of multiculturalism, and how to "imagine what being culturally aware" looks like in their professional careers. Arizona State's required text for the *Schooling and Culture* course, *Black Ants and Buddhists: Thinking Critically and Teaching Differently in the Primary Grades* (Cowhey, 2006), explores what education would look like if we centered various cultures, race, and beliefs in education. Arizona State students had assignments that helped develop their understanding of multiculturalism, including a learning audit that asks students to "take inventory on their learning prior to the course and near the end," answering questions that evaluate what they are committed to doing to further their knowledge in various areas, including multiculturalism. Students were also required to attend and reflect on a multicultural event in their community that "relates to a cultural, ethnic value in identity issues." The programs used other terms to reference multiculturalism, including "cultural difference," "intercultural approach," and "cross-cultural" investigation. Wisconsin's *School and Society* course centers discussions of culture, and one of the required readings is *Multiculturalism and the Expanding Community* (Greene, 1993).

Discussion of race was a central theme throughout each program. Program overviews do not highlight race as a central theme; however, each program had at least one course where the factor of race was used to discuss larger themes such as politics, educational achievement and

experience, public policy, and human development. Only Spelman College had a course where the title indicated race was the centering theme of the course. The course is titled *History & Philosophy of African American Education,* which explores the cultural, economic, racial, regional, and sociopolitical factors that have shaped the history and philosophy of African American education. Penn State's *Foundation of Civic Engagement* course has students focus on racial identity formation and racial inequalities in their *Social Problems* course. Readings in these courses include *African Americans Should Not Trust Devilish White People* (Wilson, 1992) and *Government Gives Native Students Inadequate Education and Gets Away With It* (Woods, 2020). Students were also required to read the *2020 Vought Memo* (Vought, 2020), which bans critical race theory, in addition to several works by critical race theorist Gloria Ladson-Billings. Students in Penn State's *Educational Reform* course are required to listen to the *Nice White Parents* (Snyder, 2020) podcast. *Nice White Parents* is significant because it presents Whiteness as a racial identity instead of Whiteness as the default and non-White people as the only ones with racial identity. Florida's *Schools on Screens* course had a topic titled "Representation of Schools, Teacher and the White Savior Narrative" that had students view the film *Dangerous Minds* (Smith, 1995), which is often seen as the quintessential "White Savior" movie. Florida students were also required to watch *Lean on Me* (Avildsen, 1989), which demonizes a Black administrator for trying to improve the educational experience of Black students. *Lean on Me* (Avildsen, 1989) seems to be a counternarrative to the White savior narrative. It also shows how the White district administrators and superintendent believed they knew what was better for the Black students, even when the Black principal proved to be successful. The last film in the "Addressing White Savior Representation" film series is *Kindergarten Cop* (Reitman, 1990).

Although it is less dramatic than the other two films, it still addresses the image of White teachers going into classrooms and changing lives and "saving" students.

In Florida's *Social Foundations of Education* course, students are assigned a book report. Several of the book options for the report center on race and feature authors that center race in their writings. Some of the options include: Gloria Anzaldua's *Borderlands/LaFrontera* (1999), Ta-Nehisi Coates's *Between the World and Me* (2015), *Teaching and Transgress* by bell hooks (1994), and Bettina Love's *We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching* (2019). The *Social Foundations* course also had an entire module dedicated to race and schooling, including "The White Man's Image," "Education in North American Before European Contact," "Natives and Education," and readings by Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois.

Northwestern's *American Government and Politics* course included the topic of race and politics in its course description. Black politics is specifically discussed in Northwestern's *Introduction to Community Development* course. This class also incorporated race through the required reading of Barack Obama's *Dreams of My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance* (2004). A course topic in Northwestern's *Social Policy* course is educational reform that will close the Black and White achievement gap. "Racial and Ethnic Socialization" is course topic in Northwestern's *Childhood and Adolescence* course. Wisconsin incorporated a significant number of readings that center race through all of their required courses. Wisconsin included a course module on "Inequality and Education" and a discussion on "How Has Schooling Been Used to Oppress Indigenous People?" in their *Comparative Education* course, and read *What Do We Have to Lose: Toward Disruption Agitation and Abolition in Black Education* (Love & Muhammad, 2020) in their *Schools and Society* course. Wisconsin students were required to read

Landing on the Wrong Note: The Price We Paid for Brown (2004) and *From the Achievement Gap to the Education Debt: Understanding Achievement in U.S. Schools* (2006) by Gloria Ladson-Billings. It is important to note that Ladson-Billings was a professor at Wisconsin's College of Education, and that could have prompted the incorporation of race into several discussions, especially regarding the educational experiences of Black students. Wisconsin also included recent articles centering race, such as articles about the disproportionate impact of coronavirus on Black people and the challenges of distance learning on immigrant students.

Some programs took a less direct approach to race. UW-Bothell used a more intersectional approach in both its *Education and Equity* course and *Multicultural Society* course. The program overviews highlight how race and ethnicity intersect with other aspects of identity such as gender, sexual orientation, language, disability, and citizenship. Colby took a more inclusive approach and included race as a factor along with gender, sexual orientation, and class in the broader course topics in their *Schools and Society* and *Children and Adolescents* courses. Colby's *Current Policy in U.S. Education* course does not mention race in the description, however, the topics discussed usually have a racial aspect to them, such as affirmative action, achievement gaps, and college completion rates.

While race is prevalent within most of the programs in my research sample, explicitly calling out and identifying racism was less prevalent. Within the education policy and studies programs, racism was often discussed in a historical but not in a contemporary context. Penn State included a reading titled *Government Gives Native Students an Inadequate Education and Gets Away With It* (Woods, 2020) in their *Education Reform and Public Policy* course. This reading addressed the systemic aspect of racism as it involves government policy, intentional

disparities, and actions within a system to impact a specific race. This is a recent article, which demonstrates that racism is not just a part of American history but part of America's present. Penn State also has students watch *Eyes on the Prize* (Bagwell, 1987), which is a documentary about the Civil Rights Movement. While this film is a way to discuss racism, it still focuses on historical racism during a short period of time in history. Florida was one of the programs where explicit references to race were in a contemporary context. Students were required to watch the movie *Higher Learning* (Singleton, 1995), which highlights racism within higher education. A required text for Florida's *Teaching Diverse Populations* course was *Is Everyone Equal? Intro to Key Concepts in Social Justice* (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012). This text uses terms like "Whiteness," "White supremacy," and "structural racism," which brings in modern ideas of racism that extend beyond historical and simplistic images of the KKK or Bull Connor. This course also includes topics on "Oppression and Power" and "Race, Ethnicity, and Privilege." These readings and course topics lead to larger discussions on the systemic impact of racism today.

Wisconsin's *School and Society* course required reading *Against the Dark: Anti-Blackness in Education Policy and Discourse* (Dumas, 2016). Anti-Blackness is a contemporary concept within the discussion of racism and addresses systemic racism. However, the rest of Wisconsin's discussions on racism as stated in the syllabus were historical, including reading *Greater Crossing Indians*, *Settlers and Slaves in the Age of Jackson* (Snyder, 2017); a course module on "African American Education in the North in the 19th Century"; and readings by Fredrick Douglas and Booker T. Washington. Northwestern also had more historical readings from Martin Luther King Jr. and on Civil Rights Activism in the North. Northwestern also had a

guest speaker in their *Introduction to Community Development* course who was active in the

Civil Rights Movement. Northwestern had one modern reading that discusses racism, *The Case*

for Reparations (2014) by Ta-Nehisi Coates. Arizona State focused on historical racism by

having students attend an exhibition of racist memorabilia.

Shortcomings

Even programs that had sound cultural competence content also had shortcomings that

stood to impede their content's effectiveness. Some common examples of shortcomings found

within cultural competence literature include cultural celebration, colorblind theory, and

inclusiveness. Cultural celebration was used in historical multicultural education approaches to

acknowledge various cultures in classrooms but in a superficial way. Every program in the study

made an effort to discuss how culture plays a major role in how students learn and experience

society. However, there were several references in the course overviews and syllabi as to why

the acknowledgment of culture should be appreciated. Culture was presented in a positive

context. While culture is a positive aspect of identity, culture of people of color has not always

been celebrated or deemed as positive. Based on programs highlighting cultural competence,

race, and equity that accompany cultural difference, it seems cultural celebration is much less

prevalent in the curriculum, even though we may frequently see it show up in society where

culture is only recognized through food, attire, music, and other "festive" aspects. There was

only one blatant reference of cultural celebration, which was at Arizona State in its *Community*

Context course. Students were required to attend a multicultural event or ritual. They were then

supposed to write a reflection paper on the event. Because students are allowed to choose their

event or ritual and because of people's instinct to avoid uncomfortable situations, there is a

higher probability of students choosing something fun, welcoming, and easily accessible like a food festival or concert (Burkholder, 2011; Sleeter, 2012). Cultural competence is not just celebrating or accepting someone's culture. Effective cultural competence as expressed by scholars is about understanding how culture dictates the way someone experiences the world, the positive and negative experiences (Sleeter, 2012; Fass, 1989; Dixson, 2018).

The colorblind approach is an ideology that posits the best way to end discrimination is by treating individuals as equally as possible without regard for their race, culture, and ethnicity (Sue, 2011; 2013), which served as another historical multicultural education shortcoming. Ignoring someone's "color" is to ignore a piece of their identity, and most of the programs in the research sample have promoted self-awareness and encouraged students to develop their identity as a program objective or goal. However, there were instances of a subtle colorblind approach. There was the use of the word "sameness," which could convey a colorblind mentality. An overwhelming focus on "sameness" may result in the differences that impact a child's education and how they experience society being deemed less relevant or ignored completely. For example, Florida's *Teaching Diverse Population* course's required text starts its chapter on race and ethnicity with a story of how European immigrants such as the Italians and Irish were also discriminated against and oppressed, just like Black Americans and Native Americans. In an attempt to create commonality and sameness, the text fails to fully discuss the differences that resulted in a different experience for Black and Native Americans compared to their Italian and Irish counterparts within the educational system and within society.

Northwestern inadvertently promotes the idea of sameness by presenting a single image of education and adolescence. In Northwestern's course *Childhood and Adolescence*, students

were asked to analyze a movie and discuss if the movies realistically represent childhood and adolescence, or if they represent myths. However, the films used for analysis lacked all aspects of diversity. The film options to analyze were *Boyhood* (Linklater, 2014)*, Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (Hughes, 1986), *Breakfast Club* (Hughes, 1985), and *Homeless to Harvard*: *The Liz Murray Story* (Levin, 2003). Aside from there being no racial or ethnic diversity in these movies, there is also a lack of educational experience. Even in *Boyhood* (Linklater, 2014), and *Homeless to Harvard* (Levin, 2003), where both of the protagonists start in lower socioeconomic situations, they end up in very privileged situations. In *Boyhood* (Linklater, 2014), one of the main characters ends up at the University of Texas Austin, one of the top-ranked public colleges in the country, and the other gets a photography scholarship to another four-year college. Liz Murray ends up getting into Harvard but then and becomes a national public speaker, making enough money to be able to drop out of Harvard. The films show various images of teen angst and hardship among White adolescents that all end up in college. The assignment conveys a narrative of sameness—despite one's socioeconomic conditions, higher education or even a quality public high school is easily accessible to all students.

Inclusiveness was seen within all of the programs within the research sample. Inclusiveness is necessary as it allows for discussions on intersectionality. Inclusiveness is identified as a shortcoming of cultural competence training because too often instead of engaging in discussions of intersectionality, discussions exclude the more difficult aspects of identity such as race (Sue, 2015; Ferber et al., 2007). Someone's experience is affected by various factors of identity, including race, gender, culture, socioeconomic status, ability, and sexual orientation. Therefore, it is imperative to discuss these factors to understand how someone learns or

experiences education and society (Ferber et al., 2007). What most programs did was single out individual factors of identity to study, and there seems to be less focus on the intersection of these identities. The programs utilized course modules and course topics to center various aspects of identity such as race, gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. Readings, movies, and discussions were utilized to center the various aspects of identity. Penn State's *Social Problems* course included class topics on race inequality, gender inequality, aging inequality, and poverty/wealth inequality. Penn State's *Education Reform and Public Policy* course has a reading titled *The Pandemic Is a Crisis for Students With Special Needs* (Hill, 2020) that centers students with learning differences. Florida's *Schools on Screen* course has a module to center gender, titled "Gender in Film," where students view the films *Mean* Girls (Waters, 2004), *13 Reasons Why* (Gomez et al., 2017)*,* and *American Me* (Olmos, 1992). The required text for Florida's *History of Education* course is *And They Were Good Teachers: Florida's Purging of Gay and Lesbian Teachers* (Graves, 2009), which centers sexual orientation. UW-Bothell examines issues of race, gender, and religion in two of their three required major courses. Wisconsin discussed social change in relation to class, race, gender, migration, language, and abilities in all three of their required major courses. Arizona State had students read individual case studies focused on culture and ethnicity, race, sex, gender and identity, sexual orientation, religion, and immigration status in their *Community Context* course. Colby's *School and Society* and *Children and Adolescence* courses highlighted the dynamics of race, class, and gender in education and how differences in race, gender, race, ethnicity, social class, and sexual orientation shape the experience of young people. Spelman stated the variables of race, ethnicity, social

class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and exceptionality are examined in its *Multicultural Education* course.

Overall, we see each program aim to address multiple factors of identity through a particular course and/or as an overall goal or objective of the program. The challenge of addressing various factors of identity simultaneously is that there is a tendency to focus on those factors that are less controversial and avoid the difficult conversations that often revolve around race. For example, Arizona State asks students to attend an exhibition called "THEM: Images of Separation." The exhibition features "artifacts and images from pop culture used to stereotype different groups from the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia." However, students are asked to write a reflection on their experience at the exhibition that "explore[s] issues of racism, sexism, ageism, and other marginalized populations to understand how stereotypes are formed." This then allows students to ignore the racism that is the basis of the exhibition in exchange for other aspects of difference and identity. Inclusiveness is not an issue if more controversial topics such as race and ethnicity can be discussed as an individual topic and not mixed in with other topics to allow deflection. Additional conversations on intersectionality could also be beneficial if done without the exclusion of race.

Cultural competence is not limited to a domestic understanding of culture, therefore, the majority of the programs offered at least one course to frame culture within a global context. A global perspective is beneficial in a global society. Seven of the 10 programs examined for this study offered at least one course that provided a global perspective of education. Penn State's *Foundations of Civic Engagement* course overview stated that students should engage other citizens across and beyond Penn and globally. Penn State's *Social Problems* course description

stated that the course will take an "international approach." *Comparative Education* is a course that is common within education policy and studies programs, and often has a global focus. Wisconsin required a *Comparative Education* course that focuses on "education around the world." Northwestern's *Social Policy* course discussed policy from a global perspective, and Spelman's program overview stated graduates should be able to work with students from a "global community." Arizona State required three courses that center on a global perspective. Arizona State's *Partnering to Advance Educational Initiatives* course examines global formal and informal partnerships and reviews case studies from organizations around the globe. A global perspective can contribute to stronger cultural competence. All of the programs that had a course or a program overview with a global perspective did provide additional courses to prevent the deflection of race-based conversations and to address the impact of race in the United States within education and society.

Fight the Power and Reform the System: Critique of Systems

An aspect of effective cultural competence is the ability to critique systems that contribute to inequity, oppression, and racism. The programs in my research study did address education from a systems standpoint and not solely within the confines of the classroom or the school building. Even the programs that were more closely aligned with teacher preparation programs looked at education within the larger educational system. Arizona State's *Designing Learning Environments for Inclusion* course had an objective to analyze education systems and the learners within the education system. Wisconsin, UW-Bothell, Northwestern, and Furman looked at systems outside of education that shape the society in which students live and therefore impact their educational experience. The programs did not just require students to analyze,

discuss, and understand systems but also to discover how the students can use their knowledge and skills to reform systems and better serve all students. Wisconsin's program overview stated that students will study major socioeconomic institutions, including the justice system, the healthcare system, and political systems. Students also studied these dimensions in educational reform. UW-Bothell's *Teaching and Learning in Multicultural Society* course wanted students to explore systems of power and privilege. Examining power and privilege forces conversations about who has and has historically possessed the most power and privilege within the United States and how that power and privilege shows up in not just the education system but within society as a whole. Understanding systems of power and privilege is essential to effective cultural competence. Northwestern's *Understanding Knowledge* course also explores systems of power. Northwestern's *Social Policy* course had students read *The New Jim Crow* (Alexander, 2010), which examines the criminal justice system and critiques the disparities within the system. The *Social Policy* course also had students examine social problems within various systems and the root causes of social problems such as immigration, poverty, healthcare disparities, and child welfare. Furman's program is more closely related to a teacher preparation program, and its discussion of systems was limited to the educational system. In Furman's *Perspective of Education* course, students analyze policies within education systems such as student suspensions, expulsion rates, and student searches and seizures.

Effective cultural competence is not complete by simply understanding systems and how they operate but also must include the study of how they contribute to inequity, oppression, and institutional racism. Ideally, graduates of education policy and studies programs should be able to not only critique systems but also use their knowledge to reform systems once they have

identified their shortcomings. DePauw's program overview stated students should "have the ability to critique as well as problem-solve." Colby's *Education and Social Justice* course goal was to understand the concept of social justice and the dynamics of power, privilege, and oppression; improve education; and grasp the implications of contemporary reform. Several programs encouraged students to use a social justice lens to address the shortcomings of systems identified through their critique. Florida required students to read *Life in an Unjust Community* (Resnick, 2008), which explores people's responsibility to achieve social justice. Northwestern had students read works by Saul Alinsky, who is known as the father of community organizing, which consists of creating movements to help obtain justice and address a particular social problem in a community. UW-Bothell's program overview aims to produce educators who promote equity and social justice. Penn State was the only program that had a specific course dedicated to education reform, which was titled *Educational Reform and Public Policy*. This course included topics such as "Legacies of Resistance," "Rebuilding Communities," and "Critical Race Theory Equity-Based Reform." Within many programs, there were course topics and readings that included "Resistance and Courage," "Activist Teaching," "Educational Reform to Close the Black and White Achievement Gap," and "Advocacy for Change" as well as discussions on disparities within healthcare, housing, public programs, and services.

For students to understand and critique systems, programs encouraged them to connect the historical, political, and socioeconomic implications of education. Every program but Colby's referenced historical, political, and economic factors in at least one course overview. Four programs (Wisconsin, Spelman, DePauw, Northwestern) referenced historical, political,

social, and economic factors in their program overviews. Broader discussions of societal factors allow for greater opportunities to address inequities in society and how that impacts education.

Culturally Competent Course Requirements

Course requirements for the programs in my study varied greatly. Even though each program was an education policy or studies program, the focus of each program contributed to the variation. Furman's and Spelman's coursework was more closely related to a teacher preparation program. Northwestern's focus was social policy, and therefore, their program had course requirements that related to a public policy major. Colby's program shaped its program using a social justice and equity lens. Only three programs required an actual policy course, and one other program allowed students to choose if they wanted to take a policy course instead of a human development course. Only two programs required a *History of Education* course. Four programs required a *Foundations of* (or *Introduction to*) *Education* course. The type of courses that were most often required were human development and courses about society and social interactions within society. Five programs required a human development course, and seven programs required a *Social Interaction and/or Society* course. The number of required courses also provided significant variation. Some programs, such as Northwestern, encouraged students to craft their own curriculum within its program and allows students to choose 12 electives. Arizona State had the largest number of required courses with 20. The range of required major courses was 3–20. The majority of required major courses had a component that could contribute to cultural competence development, whether it be through an internship or field experience, relevant readings, or assignments. The range of courses that could contribute to cultural competence was 3–18.

For my study, I only reviewed course descriptions and course syllabi for required major courses because those courses cannot be avoided, and therefore, if they have content that contributes to cultural competence, all students are receiving that training. I did review the elective options for each program and the description for those courses to determine if there were more options for cultural competence training beyond required courses. Elective courses are optional but if someone were to enroll in certain classes, they could improve their level of cultural competence. Because required courses dictate how many electives a student can take, the range of required electives varied just as the required courses. The range for elective courses a student could take was 3–12.

Elective options did provide students significant opportunities to strengthen their cultural competence. Colby had elective courses on allyship and racial justice, a research class on privilege, and a course on the Black Power Movement. Wisconsin had electives that center on social justice, equity, and wealth and poverty disparities. Penn State has an entire section of elective options focused on diversity and equity. There were 19 course options within that section. Inclusiveness showed up in elective courses with options to focus on various aspects of identity. Gender was the most common focus on identity in elective courses. Global perspective courses were also prevalent within elective course options within the programs. Furman and Spelman had the fewest courses for cultural competence training. Furman required 10 electives, but they were all focused on specific subject curriculum and instruction courses, and Spelman only required three elective courses with only six options from which to choose. The six options only offered one course that could be relevant to cultural competence, which was a social problems course. Furman and Spelman were also the two programs that were most similar to a

teacher preparation program, so that contributed to greater micro-level (classroom and school building) coursework versus macro-level coursework (institutions and society).

Electives can have a significant impact on cultural competence development as there are more than enough options to craft a series of courses that would result in improved cultural competence. However, most programs offer so many elective options that unless a student is intentional in choosing those courses they could easily be avoided. For example, Northwestern allows students to choose nine of their electives from various departments within the university, including Communications, History, Statistics, Psychology, Political Science, Philosophy, Latino Studies, and African American Studies. Florida allows students to pick five electives from any academic department. The options for courses that center on issues such as race, institutional racism, oppression, and equity are available, and some of the elective courses are extremely progressive and align with the literature's description of effective cultural competence. However, incorporating some of the elective course material into the required major course curriculum could strengthen the cultural competence training within all the programs, even those that already have a solid curriculum.

Table 9. Program Course Requirements

School	Required Major Courses	Courses With Cultural Competence Components	Elective Courses
Penn State	5	3	5
UW-Bothell	4	3	5
Wisconsin	3	3	4

Arizona State	20	18	Varies with program concentration
Florida	13	8	5
Northwestern	10	6	12
Colby	4	3	4
DePauw	5	3	5
Furman	3	2	4
Spelman	12	7	3

Visual Findings

The visuals on the education policy and studies programs' webpages did not reflect cultural competence training within the programs. All programs in the sample utilized traditional and generic education-related visuals. I utilized the Kress and van Leeuwen Visual Analysis Rubric to analyze the images in my study. Kress and van Leeuwen do not believe that "the meaning of images is always related to, and in a sense, dependent on verbal text" (2006, p.17). Using my findings, I aimed to find a connection between the level of cultural competence training within the programs' curricula and the images they use to represent their program on their websites. I specifically reviewed the webpages for the education policy and studies programs only and did not review the webpages for the education department or school of education. My findings focused on general descriptors and attributes of visual elements such as actors, actions, settings, types of actors, and symbolism and design, which includes image placement and layout, navigation, background, and spatial relationships.

The actors most prominently featured on the program webpages were students. The program webpages featured students on seven of the 10 websites reviewed. Colby, Arizona State, and Florida did not fully feature students. Arizona State showed students' hands, and Florida only showed a partial view of a student's face. While the actors on the websites were predominately White, there was an attempt to demonstrate diversity. The websites that were reviewed seemed to be a bit more authentic in their diversity representation compared to the college and university brochures and website main pages, which often intentionally place students of color in photos even if that level of diversity does not exist on campus. Most of the photos that featured a student of color seemed like an actual interaction in a classroom or real school event and not random students interacting to create a false or less commonly occurring interaction. If a photo was staged, the photo still appeared to be believable interactions between actors. UW-Bothell featured a Muslim woman in a hijab on their program home page. Northwestern's program home page featured 13 students in a group photo where three of the students appeared to be students of color, however, it was difficult to determine their race or ethnicity. Spelman College is an HBCU, so unsurprisingly they featured three Black women on their program home page. Gender representation was a bit more evenly distributed among the websites. Education is known as a more female-dominated field, however, that was not represented on the program websites.

Images of the actors' activities and interactions on the website were a representation of the programs as opposed to generic/stock photos in several instances. UW-Bothell's program website showed students experiencing what seemed to be aspects of their field study. In one case, two students were shown doing what appeared to be observations of kids on a school

playground. In another, a student is in the background but appears to be working at a school or youth center. DePauw highlighted real opportunities that students in the program were able to take advantage of through the education studies program. One student was shown at her internship at the U.S. Department of Education with the U.S. Capitol building behind her. Another photo was of students teaching at a school. However, this photo might have sent an unintended message as it showed two young White women teaching in a school that was in another country, and all the students were Black. The caption revealed that the students were teaching in Uganda. It was a real experience of DePauw students, but it could perpetuate the "White Savior" mentality found in fields such as education and social work. It would have been helpful to show the local teacher in the photo and the DePauw students assisting her as she taught the Ugandan students. Northwestern's program is a Social Policy program, and the actors on the webpage were in front of an older building that could be a municipal building (see Figure 1). The students were also dressed in business attire, which represents the heavier policy focus of the program as opposed to more of an education focus. Actors on Arizona State's webpage only clearly showed students' hands writing words on pieces of paper that were positioned as the focal point of the image (see Figure 2). The words were "Community," "Exploration," and "Divers-" (likely the front half of "Diverse" or "Diversity"). Centering the ideals of the program in the program homepage image instead of the students is significant. Penn State, Furman, and Spelman used more traditional education and generic college website images, such as students working in groups in a classroom or another campus setting like a library and listening to a lecture in a classroom. Overall, the settings for the photos were not unique or representative of the breadth of topics within an education policy or studies program. There were no images that

distinguished the education policy and studies programs from other education programs or

academic programs in general as most of their curricula suggest.

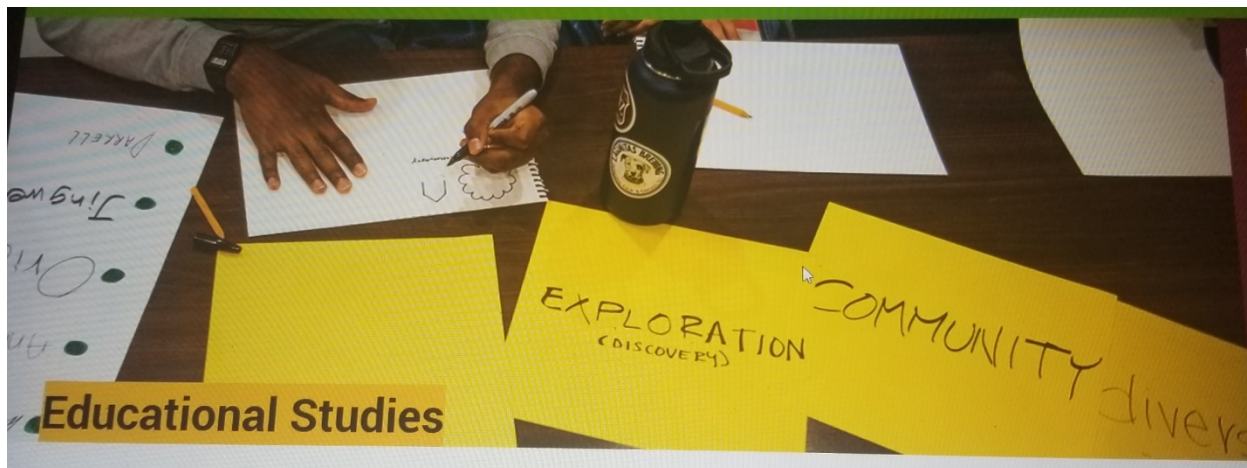Figure 1. Northwestern University Social Education Policy Studies program webpage. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.sesp.northwestern.edu/ugrad/social-policy/index.html

Figure 2. Arizona State Education Studies program webpage. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://education.asu.edu/degree-programs/undergraduate-programs/educational-studies

The symbolism of the images and their placement seemed to represent traditional images

of education. Furman's home page shows a woman with a toddler, sitting close together as if she

were the child's mother instead of a teacher with her student (see Figure 3). The woman/teacher

is helping the child/student sound out the letter "S," symbolizing education, but the context

within education was unclear. The setting for this photo was odd as it looked more like a residential setting or maybe a child psychologist's office, which are usually structured more causally to help younger patients feel comfortable. On another page, Furman highlighted its Bell Tower on campus with the background of a bright blue sky. DePauw had a carousel of photos in the center of its homepage, making it the focal point. The first picture is of a professor in the program, who is featured in the majority of the photos in the carousel. The professor is in the foreground with one of his students clearly visible in the background (see Figure 4). The professor is White, and the student is Asian. The photo singularly did not propose an issue. However, right beneath the carousel of photos, as if it was meant to be a caption, was a statement about "Black Lives Matter (BLM)." The real caption for each photo was to the left of the photo but the Black Lives Matter statement was oddly placed under the photos, most of which featured a White professor, and there were no photos or context for the statement. It seemed out of place, as if they just needed a space to add the statement without much thought.

Figure 3. Furman University Education Studies program webpage. (n.d.). Retrieved from
https://www.furman.edu/academics/education/program-overview/educational-studies/

Figure 4. DePauw University Education Studies program webpage. (n.d.). Retrieved from
https://www.depauw.edu/academics/departments-programs/education-studies/

Programs that stated more progressive ideas on their webpage and even explicitly referenced cultural competence did not represent these ideas in their visuals. Colby is an elite, East Coast, liberal arts school; however, their education studies program had very progressive goals and ideals. Unfortunately, the images did not match the progressive text on Colby's website. There were no students featured on the program webpage but instead some out of focus images of old textbooks and ivy leaves. These images seemed to perpetuate the elite and conservative image of East Coast liberal arts schools, not a place that has courses on allyship and the Black Power Movement. Even Spelman, which explicitly calls out cultural competence as a goal for all of its graduates and has a course about the educational experience of Black students, still stuck with very traditional images of a student reading a book on campus and students in the library working on computers. Most of the schools' programs emphasize that their program is about nontraditional education settings; they mention diversity in socioeconomic, historical, political, and cultural aspects of education, but none of that is represented in the visuals on their webpages. Ultimately the images on the program websites do not closely align with the descriptions presented on their websites. These images are not counterproductive to the curricula, but are simply generic to education program websites and college websites in general.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Overview

Research shows most academic programs have minimal courses related to topics that could improve cultural competence, such as culture, race, or equity and inclusion. The U.S. Census says that only 13.1% of Americans hold a graduate or professional degree. Therefore, if professionals do not receive some type of cultural competence training as undergraduates, they may never receive any training. If we want professionals to enter the workforce with some level of cultural competence, training has to occur in undergraduate programs. Because of the need for professionals to enter the workforce with some level of cultural competence, I decided to focus my study on undergraduate education policy programs. Education policy and studies graduates work in education capacities that extend beyond the classroom, from the federal government to local community centers. Due to education policy and studies graduates' extensive reach within education, I felt it was important to study and understand the implications of their cultural competence development. Through the review of program overviews, course overviews, and syllabi, I was able to identify evidence of cultural competence training in every undergraduate education policy and studies program in my study.

Through the further review of course descriptions and course syllabi, there were some course assignments and readings that demonstrated some familiar shortcomings of cultural competence, such as colorblind theory, which can deflect attention from issues of race by

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highlighting sameness and inclusiveness. However, the shortcomings that were present were not so substantial as to counteract the effective cultural competence training that was taking place within the programs. Ultimately, there is cultural competence training happening that aligns closely with what the literature identifies as effective approaches, but there is room to improve training within education policy and studies programs. Improved cultural competence would benefit various groups of education stakeholders. This chapter outlines the implications of my study for education policy and studies programs and graduates, education policy and studies professors, and future education policy and studies students.

Culturally Competent Undergraduate Programs and Their Graduates

My findings revealed an attempt at effective cultural competence training in all of the education policy programs in my study, so these programs appear to be moving in the right direction. The statements regarding BLM, diversity, and social justice found on programs' webpages and course syllabi were supported by related readings and discussions. However, I do question, how long this will last. It is my hope that these programs are not treating discussions on race-based topics as a moment but a movement toward incorporating these discussions, assignments, and readings into all of their major coursework. And it is my hope these attempts at cultural competence training in higher education are not following a short-term trend but become regular practice for not just education policy and studies programs but all academic programs, especially those programs that disproportionately impact the lives of Black students and Black people. Many students enter academic programs aimed at helping diverse populations with limited knowledge and interaction with diverse populations (Suneson, 2020). If colleges and

universities incorporate cultural competence as a significant part of their academic programs, then future professionals will enter the workforce prepared to work in a pluralistic society.

Because the racial tensions that have loomed over the United States for centuries are more apparent to some people now, many industries including education are putting more effort into trainings that address diversity, race, and, to a lesser extent, racism. Unfortunately, research shows most people are typically "put off" (Castagno, 2014) by words such as "race," "racism," and "White" because they assume the words are imbued with personal and individual blame and guilt (Sue, 2011, 2013; Sue et al., 2009). These feelings could prevent professionals from engaging in much needed cultural competence training in the workforce even when it is mandatory. If professionals receive cultural competence training during their undergraduate studies, they are more likely to enter into their chosen field with a foundation of cultural competence upon which they can build. By entering the workforce with a level of cultural competence, when faced with mandatory "diversity training" or team discussions on how to be an "anti-racist," professionals may be less "put off" (Castagno, 2014). Professionals may also be more open to these activities and contribute to the discussions, which are then effective and impactful instead of performative wastes of work time.

Every program implemented the three-dimensional approach (Knowledge, Skills/Practice and Self-Awareness; Sue, 2001) but in a way that could develop a stronger foundation for cultural competence. I identified programs promoting knowledge acquisition from various sources besides textbooks, which are often written from a limited perspective and can be filled with stereotypes, misinformation, and deficit portrayals (Sue & Sue, 1999; Ridley, Baker, & Hill, 2001). Wisconsin encouraged community-based learning/knowledge to promote that knowledge

does not only come from textbooks and a singular point of view. Northwestern has a course titled *Understanding Knowledge* that questions how knowledge is produced and how the sources and production of knowledge interact with "socio-political and cultural constructs." Developing skills and practice was common among all of the programs in my study. Students were required to gain experience working or volunteering in a variety of educational settings. Some programs required students to tutor in a school setting, participate in teacher and classroom observations, and work in youth-based community organizations that serve a diverse population of students. Lastly, self-awareness, the last component of the three-dimensional approach, was mostly achieved through assignments such as journals and autobiographies. The assignments helped students reflect on their personal experiences and explore how those experiences could impact their ability to work in environments that may differ from those with which they are familiar. Due to the more robust, three-dimensional approach I identified in the programs, that students received exposure to the foundations of cultural competence that can be built upon over time.

Professors Attempting to Build Culturally Competent Curricula

My findings show a response to the need as expressed in the literature to incorporate explicit race-based conversations into program courses for improved cultural competence. Overall, the programs in my study did a satisfactory job in setting the foundation for conversations through readings and assignments based on how their courses curricula aligned with cultural competence literature. However, I do question if my positive assessment is based on the fact that I expected to see very limited to no cultural competence coursework that centered race outside of a narrow historical context or to promote diversity. A simple acknowledgement of race, particularly only within a historical context, was the most significant shortcoming of the

cultural competence training I saw within the programs. Racism is not only something that happened in the past, but is still happening today. Race is the scaffolding that structures American society (Crenshaw et al., 1995) and an inevitable part of our everyday lives. Critical race theory and antiracist scholars adhere to the view that structural or institutional racism is the primary cause of racism today and that the only way to combat racism is to dismantle racist systems (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Thorough discussions about race have to include discussions of racism in the past and present.

Many of the readings in my study focused on slavery, reconstruction, and the Civil Rights Movement, which only address race in a historical context. A historical context of racism is needed, but to stop the discussion as if racism ended after 1964 and to present contemporary Black academics writing about racism as innovative or provocative is not culturally competent practice. The historical readings and sources regarding racism included watching *Eyes on the Prize* (Bagwell, 1987); *Greater Crossing Indians*, *Settlers and Slaves in the Age of Jackson* (Snyder, 2017); and readings by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Frederick Douglas, and Booker T. Washington. Professors have a responsibility to center race within their courses in a direct way and within a contemporary context if they want to develop culturally competent graduates. One way professors can improve conversations in their courses is to expand the scholars included in required readings.

Effective dialogue in courses would mean more work for professors who have grown their academic knowledge upholding the status quo. It means they would not be able to rely on the traditional readings used for generations or depend on the *New York Times Bestsellers List* to tell them which Black author's writings they could add to their syllabi. Most faculty members

lack preparation to facilitate classes that engage in racial dialogue, address Whiteness, and systemic oppression (Sue et al., 2009; Pasque et al., 2013) among other difficult topics. Professors could be better equipped to facilitate race-based conversations if they were more active in finding scholars that could spark conversation instead of passively relying on what is popular.

There have been so many activists in the fight for racial justice and equality for Black people in and out of education, but the readings in my study were heavily focused on the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement, Booker T. Washington, and W. E. B. Dubois. In addition to limiting the readings to historical time periods, there was also a lack of variety of authors within that time-period including an omission of female authors and activist of that time such as Ida B. Wells, Fannie Lou Hamer and Anna Julia Cooper. There is also a tendency to limit readings on race to the "popular" Black intellectuals in academia. Too often only one contemporary Black academic is allowed to take up space at a time. For years we saw Cornell West on every syllabus that wanted to address race; Michael Eric Dyson had his time; Ta-Nehisi Coates showed up on several syllabi in my study; and I predict Ibram X. Kendi will be the go-to Black academic for race discussions for the next few years as his book "How to Be Anti-Racist" (2019) has been on every must-read list in 2020. There were some readings found in my study that could push contemporary conversations of racism such as *The Case for Reparations* (Coates, 2014), and *Agitation and Abolition in Black Education* (Love & Muhammad, 2020). Contemporary Black scholars such as Dr. Tressie McMillian Cottom, Dr. David Stovall, Roxane Gay and Dr. Brittney Cooper that discuss race and racism could be better incorporated within courses and can be found from a variety of sources with a little effort.

Until we concretely name racism as a problem, we will be challenged to resolve the glaring racial disparities (Kohli et al., 2017). "Nice" approaches that avoid using the words "race," "racism," "White," or "Black" make it harder to identify and address inequity (Castagno, 2014). Therefore, if conversations are more explicit, it opens the door for more robust race-based conversations that lead to solutions and the reform of broken systems. Some explicit race-based readings and sources that I identified to potentially spark conversations were the movie *Higher Learning* (Singleton, 1995), which examines issues of police brutality and White supremacy on a college campus, the article G*overnment Gives Native Students Inadequate Education and Gets Away With It* (Woods, 2020) and the book *Against the Dark: Anti-Blackness in Education Policy and Discourse* (Dumas, 2016), which both examine how policies discriminate against people of color.

To be more explicit in discussions of race would also mean professors have to learn how to facilitate effective conversations even if they become uncomfortable (Sue, 2013). Through continued cultural competence research, colleges and universities can see that some programs are taking the uncomfortable step of more controversial readings and discussions on race and racism. Derald Sue (2013) found most professors keep race-based conversations light, relying on students of color to lead such discussions, or ending the conversations once emotions arise. If this practice continues, the root cause of so many social and educational problems steeped in institutional racism (Briscoe & Khalifa, 2015) will never be addressed.

To Be or Not to Be … Culturally Competent: Choosing the Right Education Policy or Studies Programs

Prospective students that seek to pursue an educational policy or studies degree want to work in education, but often not in a traditional school or classroom setting. Some of their employment options can include nonprofit organizations, government, and social service agencies, which are work environments that often reach a broader and more diverse population than schools, which can often be homogenous. Therefore, if potential graduates' job prospects are in environments where they are expected to comfortably operate through a lens outside their own, they should seek programs that can assist them in widening their lens. Because issues such as inequities and racism are embedded in our systems, including education, and impact how we all experience society, all prospective education policy students should aim to develop their cultural competence. Groups that are on the receiving end of inequity and racism do not necessarily know how inequity and racism occur or how to resolve it. Therefore, cultural competence training is not only intended for White students with limited exposure to diverse groups but for all students interested in reforming systems that create problems within education.

Many of the programs in my study encouraged students to self-reflect on their own experiences, develop an understanding of their personal identity, and evaluate how their identity impacts their worldview. Self-awareness development helps students recognize that their lens is not the only way to see the world. Education and policy studies students should review the curriculum and course syllabi of their potential programs for evidence of self-awareness development as that is one of the basic tenets of cultural competence. It is important for individuals to look within themselves, examining their own concepts of privilege, experiences

with racism, and underlying perceptions of themselves and others that they have gathered over time (Allen-Meares, 2007). Successful cultural competence training entails a willingness by trainers and trainees to address internal issues related to personal belief systems, behaviors, and emotions when interacting with other racial groups (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1997; Sue, 1999). As an individual's experience of cultural difference becomes more complex, their potential to develop intercultural competence increases (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003; Davies, et al., 2015). The recommendation for students to seek programs that develop their self-awareness was met in my findings. There were assignments and activities to develop students' self-awareness that included autobiographies, poems, visual projects, and the most common assignment was a semester-long reflection journal.

Prospective students should also look for programs that allow them to go out into nontraditional education spaces to develop the skill-building component of the three-dimensional approach called for by scholars. Going into non-traditional spaces helps students understand not only what education looks like in these spaces but also what are the other social systems in need of reform to improve education. I worked as a community organizer for the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless for almost a decade. During that period, I spent the majority of my time advocating and developing education policies in Chicago Public Schools to support homeless students and their families. I was able to understand how housing, finance, and transportation hindered a student's academic success even before they entered the classroom every morning. Education policy and studies students should look for field experiences and internships outside of the classroom that allow for a broader view of society and that highlight barriers that society places upon children and communities that result in education disparities. Some unique skills and

practice activities I identified outside of the classroom included requiring students to attend school board meetings, serve as a consultant for a community-based organization, and volunteer within a setting that "provides learning opportunities to a diverse range of children and youth" as stated by the University of Florida.

Prospective students should look for programs that promote intense discussions, even if they might be uncomfortable, particularly uncomfortable conversations on race. Going to work in communities that are diverse and where variation in aspects of identity such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or sexual orientation are more prevalent, professionals have to be comfortable talking about these topics. Potential students can review required courses on a program's website and request the syllabi of particular courses to understand the type of discussions and ideas that will be highlighted in the courses. Potential students could also visit a class, if at all possible, to get a feel for how they would handle discussions they may have avoided or have not had to have before. The program syllabi in my study revealed discussion topics that included "Representation of Schools, Teacher and the White Savior Narrative," "Equity and Critical Race Theory," and "Educational Reform to Close the Black and White Achievement Gap." These are some of the examples of discussions that explicitly center race and may be uncomfortable for students who have never engaged in conversations on race before. If a potential student feels so uncomfortable in discussions of what some deem "controversial" that may be a chance to 1) take inventory of why they feel uncomfortable and 2) find out if they are ready to work on behalf of the students, families, and communities that represent various aspects of identity. As someone who worked in college access and counseling for 12 years, I know this type of self-actualization is a challenge for a 17- or 18-year-old deciding on a college major. However, because of the times in which we

live, when racial tensions are extremely high, young people are not shielded from issues of race and therefore have developed some ideas and feelings about topics of race. As colleges continue to make more public statements and add "diversity statements" and "disposition statements" to websites and syllabi, to make it clear issues of race will occur, students should be aware of their ability to handle these topics.

Limitations

There were no significant limitations in my ability to address my first research question. I was able to determine whether and to what extent there were aspects of cultural competence incorporated into the curricula of the educational policy and studies programs in my sample. I was able to also determine how these programs incorporated cultural competence in their curriculum. The limitations for this study came with answering my second question, which focused on how the programs incorporated effective cultural competence, which includes programs' addressing issues such as institutional racism, oppression, and system reform to combat racism.

Factors that contributed to the limitations were that I could not retrieve the syllabi for each class. One program did not respond to my request, and two programs refused to provide their syllabi. I am not sure why they refused as I reassured each professor I would not include the actual syllabi in my final dissertation. I know that some professors do not want to share some of their innovative teaching methods or their intellectual property, but neither of the professors that refused to provide their syllabi provided a reason. Each of them just said they would be unable to assist me. The syllabi that were provided contributed some additional insight into how in-depth each class goes into issues of race and racism, and identified any cultural competence

shortcomings within the course. Syllabi were not required to answer my research questions but did provide some additional data.

With the syllabi available, there were still some limitations because syllabi varied in detail. Some professors had details such as weekly course topics, readings, discussion post questions, and class discussions. Other syllabi were more of an outline with directions to go online to get assignment details and discussion post questions, and some readings were only posted online. At most universities, syllabi are binding documents so leaving out some detail allows professors the flexibility to add, remove, or change assignments, readings, discussions, and course topics. Ultimately even with all of the data points in this study, which included program overviews, course descriptions, and course syllabi, there is still no way to know how in-depth the courses are going into discussions on topics such as race, racism, institutional racism, or systemic reform. Even with readings, assignments, and discussions that set a foundation for effective cultural competence, professors have to be able to facilitate the "tough" racial dialogue and have to connect assignments to the larger issues of institutional racism, oppression, and the need for reform.

Lastly, assessing programs simply from digital data sources is a limitation. Through digital sources, I could determine what programs committed to doing in regard to cultural competence through the program overviews, courses, and syllabi. I, however, could not determine what cultural competence training actually occurred in those courses. Two different professors of two different classes could have the same syllabi, and yet, the depth and breadth of cultural competence could vary based on the willingness of everyone to engage. Even if the professor pushes for more racial dialogue, the students could limit or expound on the

conversation introduced by the professor. Therefore, to expand this study, I would recommend attending classes to analyze the discussions, view student presentations, and lecture notes.

Conclusion

Within education, cultural competence literature is often in the form of culturally relevant pedagogy/teaching, but education extends far beyond what students experience in the classroom, and cultural competence should include the study and understanding of the society K-12 students experience and what that means for their education. A teacher implementing culturally relevant pedagogy is beneficial, but it does not develop the sweeping systemic reform we need within society and education to address the many challenges, disparities, and injustices in education. Effective cultural competence training can highlight the systemic and institutional racism that contributes to ineffective policies and programs disproportionately impacting Black students. However, due to cultural competence having its roots in multiculturalism, there is still some work that needs to be done for cultural competence to evolve to effectively address deficiencies in systems and institutions. Once those deficiencies are recognized and called out, they then can be corrected or at least addressed.

Abrams and Moio (2009) argue that CRT can be used to address some of the noted shortcomings associated with the current cultural competence training models, particularly its tendency to not acknowledge institutional and systemic racism. CRT offers a transformative solution to racial, gender, and class discrimination by linking theory with practice, scholarship with teaching, and the academy with the community (Solorzano, 1997). CRT has gained increasing attention among scholars as an analytical tool for examining ways in which race and racism shape policies and practice in education (Dixson et al., 2006). However, within education

CRT should place more emphasis on critique of liberalism as opposed to counter-storytelling or other tenets. Classical liberalism has contributed to the racist foundations within our current systems and neoliberalism continues to influence education, particularly higher education which I highlighted in Chapter 2. Gloria Ladson-Billings calls to dismantle neoliberal systems by understanding the critical scholarship that rejected forms of liberalism in higher education through formal and informal agitation against these traditional norms (1999).

Connecting CRT to its legal roots is essential for it to be a framework that can help cultural competence evolve to its most effective form. CRT's legal foundation calls for radical sweeping change instead of incremental change that has failed to result in equality. Bringing CRT's legal foundation into education scholarship that centers race and cultural competence encourages a shift from framing race solely within the context of academic differences and individual experiences to the macro-level issues to reform education and other social systems and their liberal ideological foundations. The CRT tenet critique of liberalism can result in positive implications of cultural competence training in education policy and studies programs.

I conducted this study during a time where people's racist views were on full display as the country argued why Black Lives Matter. I watched for weeks the protests against racism across the country that were broadcast on television and then had to write an argument on the need to address institutional racism using academic literature as I was living my argument in real-time. When I began this study, I knew that racism was alive and well based on my experience as a Black woman in America. I had no idea terms like "White privilege," "antiracism," "institutional racism," "equity," and "diversity" would flood every aspect of my life from conversations with loved ones, social media, my work in affordable housing, and even

the trash reality television I watch to drown out the world. I questioned whether my research was even relevant because now everyone was talking about cultural competence and pushing for increased racial dialogue. Even my mother who works for a big retail department store came to me to express that she felt the race-based conversations at work were facilitated improperly because they were thoughtless and forced. One member of her company's response to the race conversations was "well how many of them do I have to hire?"

I realized that my research was indeed important because we have to develop culturally competent professionals entering the field. We cannot wait until they enter the field and think that race conversations and cultural competence are about figuring out "how many of them" have to be hired and then all of our race issues are solved. America has to face our ugly racist past and present, and move past diversity quotas as our only measure of addressing race, racism, and inequities. While cultural competence is something that we should and need to see in all fields, the education field can lead the way in the evolution of cultural competence training. The education field started cultural competence training with multicultural education and evolved to the three-dimensional approach, which sets a solid foundation for effective cultural competence, but it is not enough. Now is the time to evolve cultural competence to its most powerful form, which involves highlighting institutional racism within our systems and reforming those systems to finally achieve a more equitable education system.

Education is how we prepare the next generation of leaders in all fields and trades. Education is where students develop skills to contribute to society economically and socially. Education is a system that all people have to navigate and move through, so why should education not take the lead in equipping students from kindergarten through college to be

culturally competent? Education policy and studies students, in particular, interact with youth inside of school and also within the society in which they live, so they can make the education system more culturally competent from the federal policy level to the classroom. Just like the Black scholars before me, what I am saying in this study as I scream and fight for my humanity in the real-world is not innovative or new. But my study does highlight how we can move to action to improve the experience of Black students and ultimately all marginalized students in the education system by being explicit and intentional in building culturally competent education professionals.

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VITA

Dr. Allen is a scholar-practitioner whose academic research and professional efforts focus on addressing disparities in the areas of education, housing and economics that impact Black people in the United States. Dr. Allen has been published in the academic journal Thresholds in Education and featured in various media outlets including NPR, Texas Observer and the Chicago Tribune. She has been a presenter and speaker at numerous conferences and events for national organizations such as the American Evaluation Association, National Partnership for Educational Access, and NeighborhoodWorks.

Dr. Ashley Paige Allen currently serves as the inaugural Executive Director of the Houston Community Land Trust where she works to develop affordable housing to increase the rate of Black homeownership and preserve communities of color that are rapidly experiencing gentrification. Dr. Allen has over 15 years of non-profit leadership experience in the areas of education, workforce development, and affordable housing. Prior to joining the Houston Community Land Trust Dr. Allen was the Director of Postsecondary programs for Horizons for Youth an over 30 year-old educational non-profit and a Program Manger at the Illinois Biotechnology Industry Organization where she worked to increase representation of underrepresented populations in S.T.E.M careers.

As a community organizer for over 10 years, she helped develop and drive campaigns for homeless services, affordable housing policy, and education. She helped draft and pass the Students in Temporary Living Situations policy which now provides educational support to

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Dr. Allen completed her doctoral work in Cultural & Educational Policy Studies at Loyola University Chicago. She received her MPA from Governors State University and her BS from Florida A&M University.