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Examining Beliefs About The Use of Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices When Planning Literacy Instruction

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EXAMINING BELIEFS ABOUT THE USE OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE

TEACHING PRACTICES WHEN PLANNING LITERACY INSTRUCTION

by

Latwayla Lambert Knowlton

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband Kenneth, my daughter Layla, and my son Kenneth Durrell. Thank you for believing in me and supporting me throughout this journey. Each of you have contributed support in your own way, and I could not have completed this journey without you.

I also dedicate this document to my mom, Lula. You have consistently provided me with wisdom, encouragement, child care, meals, cleaning services, and most importantly you have been a listening ear. You never once stop believing in me or my ability to complete this work even when I did not believe in myself. Words cannot express my gratitude to you. I am blessed to have a support system as amazing as you all.

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Abstract

Knowlton, Latwayla L. The University of Memphis. May, 2020. Examining Relationships between beliefs about culturally responsive teaching practices, reading course enrollment, and demographic factors. Major Professor: Dr. J. Helen Perkins

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationships between beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction, reading course enrollment, and demographic factors among undergraduate K-6 elementary teacher candidates. Specifically, the study participants are K-6 elementary undergraduate teacher candidates attending a small, rural university within the Mid-south. The researcher sought to understand factors that may affect teacher candidates' beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices as they begin making specific pedagogical adjustments to the classroom when planning literacy instruction. Data for this study was collected using a structured survey in Qualtrics® which contained the Culturally Responsive Instruction and Curriculum Survey and self-reported demographic information. The results of this study found that there are no significant relationships between reading course enrollment, demographic factors, and overall beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction. This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Is there a relationship between reading course enrollment and beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction among undergraduate elementary teacher candidates?

2. Is there a relationship between demographic factors (educational demographics, community demographics) and beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction among undergraduate elementary teacher candidates?

3. Is there a relationship between reading course enrollment, demographic factors, and

   beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy

   instruction among undergraduate elementary teacher candidates?

Keywords: teacher candidate, culturally responsive teaching, critical pedagogy, diversity, critical literacy

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Chapter 1

Introduction

There is a growing need to emphasize diversity in literacy instruction (Xu, 2000), especially for teacher candidates enrolled in teacher education programs (Darder, Baltodano & Torress, 2009; Giroux, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Nieto, 2009; Sleeter, 2001). Given the demographic trends that show an increase in diversity in K-12 classrooms (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011; Rueda, 2011), students of diverse backgrounds continue to experience school failure (Au, 1999; Ladsons-Billings, 1995; Soto-Hinman & Hetzel, 2009) for which literacy achievement (NAEP, 2018) and cultural gaps between students of diverse background and that of the teacher may contribute (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Sleeter, 2001; Soto-Hineman & Hetzel, 2009). Yet, with the challenges of an increasingly diverse population and teacher demographics that do not reflect the diversity of America's P-12 students, too many teachers are inadequately prepared to teach diverse students despite the growing number of disproportionately poor performance of students of color (Gay, 2000, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Sleeter, 2001).

The remainder of this chapter includes background information, statement of the problem, the purpose, the research questions, and the theoretical framework for this study which examines the relationships between demographic factors, reading course enrollment, and beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices among undergraduate elementary teacher candidates. This chapter concludes with key terms.

Background Information

Change in student demographics. The United States of America is a diverse country with constantly changing demographics, and this shift in demographics is even more phenomenal among the school-aged population (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011). In the fall of 2014, Black,

Hispanic, Asian, and Native American children made up the majority of the approximately 50 million students in the nation's public schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2014), in the 2011-2012 academic year English Language Learners (ELLs) comprised 9.1 percent of the total student population which is nearly 4.4 million students. According to Camarota (2012), in southern states, immigrant populations increased to more than twice the national average of 28 percent over the past decade (Camarota, 2012). These changes in student demographics are important when planning literacy instruction because language is also an aspect of diversity, specifically linguistic diversity which impacts school literacy and learning.

Given these massive changes in the makeup of the school age population, it is difficult to ignore how language factors impact the classroom setting. Regardless of language and level of bilingualism and biliteracy, children's knowledge of their home language, literacy, and culture will influence how they perceive, negotiate, and process school literacy learning (Perez & MaCarthey, 2004). Yet, in light of the increasing racial and ethnic diversity of students over the past twenty years, the racial and ethnic demographic make-up of teachers remains predominately White (Iris Center, 2017).

Teacher demographics. The results from the 2015-2016 National Teacher and Principal Survey from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) suggests that in the 2015-2016 school year, there were an estimated 3,827,100 teachers in public elementary and secondary schools in the United States (NCES, 2018). About 3,608,600 taught in traditional public schools and about 218, 500 taught in charter schools (NCES, 2018). Of these more than three million teachers, about 80 percent of all public-school teachers were non-

Hispanic White, 9 percent were Hispanic, 7 percent were non-Hispanic Black, and 2 percent were non-Hispanic Asian (NCES, 2018).

According to Sleeter (2001), since the racial/ethnic configuration of most teachers does not reflect much diversity, a cultural gap exists which may contribute to the achievement gap. Sleeter (2001) contends that the gap between the teacher and student is largely cultural with White students dominating numerically within teacher education programs, especially within Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs), yet they bring very little cross-cultural background knowledge, and experience. Additionally, Sleeter (2001) states that PWIs have generally responded very slowly to the culturally gap with many White preservice students in the programs initially "showing receptivity toward learning about diversity" (p. 95), yet they anticipate working with children of another cultural background.

Sleeter (2001) also contends that race/ethnic background is a factor when preparing preservice teachers, and "continuing business as usual" in preservice teacher education will only continue to widen the gap between teachers and children in schools (p. 96). After a review of 80 studies on the effects of various preservice teacher education strategies, including recruiting and selecting students, cross-cultural immersion experiences, multicultural education coursework, and program restructuring, Sleeter (2001) found that most of the research focuses on addressing the attitudes and lack of knowledge of White preservice students. Sleeter (2001) argues that there is an "overwhelming presence of whiteness" and although attitudes and lack of knowledge are important to address, the real problem is figuring out how to populate the teaching profession with excellent multicultural and culturally responsive teachers. In conclusion, Sleeter (2001) asserts that preservice programs take two rather different lines of action to address the cultural gap between teachers and children in school: (a) bring into the teaching profession more teachers

who are from culturally diverse communities and (b) try to develop the attitudes and multicultural knowledge base for predominately White cohorts of preservice student.

Multicultural Literacy Instruction. "Multicultural issues are not particularly new…What is relatively new is the literacy field's focus on multicultural issues" (Garcia, Willis, & Harris, 1998, p. 182).While multicultural teacher education is important, Pohan & Aguilar (2000) argue that it is not theoretically sound to expect that an increase in multicultural knowledge alone would necessarily enhance the development of culturally competent educators if educators lack a corresponding set of accepting/affirming beliefs about diversity. It is vital that teacher educators examine the beliefs that teacher candidates have as they learn to modify pedagogy, especially critical pedagogy such as culturally relevant teaching when planning and implementing literacy instruction.

Culturally competent teacher candidates. Many teacher candidates are simply not culturally competent (Ladon-Billings, 2014; Sleeter, 2001). Culturally competent teachers are able to link schooling with a culture of literacy (Ladson-Billings, 1995). According to Ladson-Billings (1998), "what makes the ability to foster cultural competence among students [teacher candidates] difficult is finding that far too many teachers in U.S. schools possess only surface understanding of culture—their own or anyone else's" (p.261). Ladson-Billings (1996) suggests that many middle-class White American teachers fail to associate the notion of culture within themselves, thus, they believe they are "just regular Americans" while people of color are the ones "with culture" (p. 261). Thus, creating a mismatch between teacher candidates' beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices and the actual use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning and implementing literacy instruction.

When teacher candidates fail to acknowledge that they, too, have their own culture, this impacts their conceptualizations of satisfactory literacy instruction. In turn, they may discount attributes that contribute to satisfactory literacy performance simply because it does not align with their own views of culture, language, skills, and experiences (Delpit, 2006; Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Sleeter, 2001). As a result, culturally and linguistically diverse students that display conceptualization of literacy that are different from the teacher may be unfairly assigned negative labels such as struggling learner, struggling reader/writer, below basic, at-risk students etc. (Delpit, 2006). These culturally and linguistically diverse students as well as their teachers then begin to internalize these labels and essentially expect unsatisfactory literacy performance regardless of true academic ability (Enriquez, Jones, & Clarke, 2010). According to Enriquez et al (2010), "*struggling reader* has become a label that places everything—all challenges, difficulties, responsibilities, and possibilities related to reading—on the students, which can result in self-fulfilling prophecies, leading to withdrawn behavior and negative feelings about reading, education, and themselves" (p. 73). Based on decades of research on reading and the reader, Enriquez, Jones, & Clark (2010), contend that as teachers, we must first turn around our own perceptions and practices before we can turn around struggling readers. Beliefs about instructional practices such as culturally responsive teaching are especially important when planning literacy instruction for underrepresented and/or marginalized student populations.

Statement of the Problem

Scholars have documented that if teacher candidates are effectively prepared, they can address the current demographic changes in K-12 classrooms by being both aware and responsive to cultural diversity in classrooms while simultaneously maintaining high standards

for literacy instruction (Sleeter, 2001; Gay and Kirland, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2014). The argument is that when teacher candidates are led to first survey their own beliefs and attitudes toward culturally responsive teaching, this will prepare them to become culturally competent educators (Ladson-Billings, 2014). It will also contribute to understanding the concept that knowing who they are as people, understanding the contexts in which they teach, and questioning their knowledge and assumptions about cultural diversity are as important as the mastery of literacy techniques for instructional effectiveness (Gay and Kirkland, 2003). However, the relationships between factors that contribute to teacher candidates' beliefs about culturally responsive teaching practices and planning for literacy instruction are minimally examined. This study is an effort to address this lack of research. Knowing more about the relationships between factors such as course enrollment, demographic factors, and teacher candidates' belief will help scholars and teacher educators with reshaping ways that culturally responsive literacy instruction may correct the gap between the literacy achievement of students of diverse backgrounds and that of mainstream students as well as the cultural gap between teacher and student.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction, reading course enrollment, and demographic factors among undergraduate K-6 elementary teacher candidates. The researcher anticipates that this study may contribute to the gaps in the literature that fail to address how teacher candidates' beliefs and ways of viewing pedagogical approaches such as culturally responsive teaching may be rooted in power structures that contribute to inequalities and injustice within the literacy community (Handsfield, 2016). The goal is to contribute to

extending, challenging, and reshaping teacher candidate beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices so that culturally responsive literacy instruction may correct the gap between the literacy achievement of students of diverse backgrounds and that of mainstream student.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between reading course enrollment and beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction among undergraduate elementary teacher candidates?

2. What is the relationship between demographic factors (educational demographics, community demographics) and beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction among undergraduate elementary teacher candidates?

3. What is the relationship between reading course enrollment, demographic factors, and beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction among undergraduate elementary teacher candidates?

Theoretical Framework

For the purpose of this study, the theoretical framework is diverse social constructivism (Au, 1998; Cummins, 1986, 1994). Application of a "diverse social constructivist perspective may encourage literacy educators to progress from a mainstream orientation toward a serious consideration of the significance of students' ethnicity, primary language, and social class to literacy learning" (Au, 1998, p.297). According to Cummins (1986), five explanations for the literacy achievement gap appear plausible from a social constructivist perspective: linguistic

differences, cultural differences, discrimination, inferior education, and rationales for schooling (p. 297). Deriving from Cummins' (1986, 1994) framework for empowering diverse students and incorporating these five explanations, Au (1998) suggests that school literacy learning of students of diverse backgrounds will be improved as educators address the goals of instruction, the role of home language, instructional materials, classroom management and interactions with students, relationships with the community, instructional methods and assessments. Au (1998) suggests that diverse social constructivism offers implications for reshaping schooling in ways that may correct the literacy achievement gap of students of diverse backgrounds.

A diverse constructivist orientation takes the mainstream constructivist line of reasoning one step further by inquiring into the ways that knowledge claims, of educators and their students are related to cultural identity and shaped by ethnicity, primary language, and social class (Au, 1998). Because the experiences that students bring to literacy learning may not align with or may even depart significantly from educator's expectations, a revaluing process must take place that includes teachers' acceptance of students as cultural beings (Au, 1998). A starting point is for teacher candidates to accept themselves as cultural beings as well which a goal for this study.

A diverse social constructivism perspective is appropriate for this study because from a social constructivist perspective, societal conditions lead to and sustain the literacy achievement gap over time; therefore, general principles must be examined and refined (Au, 1998). This supports the researcher's goal of examining the relationships between factors that influence teacher candidates' beliefs because teacher candidates' specific application to local context (education demographics, community demographics, reading course enrollment) may impact planning literacy instruction and need to be understood. Thus, this study was designed to examine the possible influences on teacher candidates' responses to particular culturally

responsive teaching practices in an effort to highlight the need to reshape these beliefs to improve students' opportunities to learn (Au, 1998).

Definition of Terms

1. Achievement gap—occurs when one group of students (such as, students grouped by race/ethnicity, gender) outperforms another group and the difference in average scores for the two groups is statistically significant (that is, larger than the margin of error) (U.S. Department of Education, National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2019).

2. Culture—the totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought. These patterns, traits, and products are considered as expressions of a particular period, class, community, or population (Gay, 2010); Culture—an amalgamation of human activity, production, thought, and belief systems (Ladson-Billings, 2014).

3. Cultural competence—refers to the ability to help students appreciate and celebrate their cultures of origin while gaining knowledge of and fluency in at least one other culture (Ladson-Billings, 2014).

4. Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT)— using cultures, experiences, and perspectives of African, Native, Latino, and Asian American students as filters through which to teach them academic knowledge and skills (Gay & Kirkland, 2003).

5. Culturally sustaining pedagogy—requires that pedagogies be more than responsive of or relevant to the cultural experiences and practices of young people—it requires that they support young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence (Paris, 2012).

6. Disciplinary literacy—refers to the idea that we should teach the specialized ways of reading, understanding, and thinking used in each academic discipline, such as science, history and literature (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2014).

7. Discipline— A domain or culture "in which certain kinds of texts are read and written for certain purposes and thus require certain kinds of literacy practice" (Moje, 2015).

8. Diverse social constructivist—perspective may encourage literacy educators to progress from a mainstream orientation toward a serious consideration of the significance of students' ethnicity, primary language, and social class to literacy learning" (Au, 1998).

9. Diversity—differences among groups of people and individuals based on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual orientation, and geographical area (NCATE, 2008).

10. Equity pedagogy—teaching strategies and classroom environments that help students from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural groups attain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to function effectively within, and help create and perpetuate a democratic society (Banks & Banks, 1995).

11. Literacy— the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, compute, and communicate using visual, audible, and digital materials across disciplines, and in any context (ILA, 2018).

12. Linguistically diverse—refers to students whose first language or home language is either a language other than English or a language other than the middle-class, mainstream English used in schools (Perez & McCarty, 2004).

13. Preservice teacher/teacher candidate—a graduate or undergraduate student participating in a teacher education preparation program who is not yet certified to teach.

14. Students of diverse backgrounds—refers to students in the United States who are usually from low-income families; of African American, Asian American, Latina/o, or Native American ancestry; and speakers of a home language other than standard American English (Au, 1998).

Organization of the Study

The content of this study is allocated into five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction to the study. In chapter one, the researcher first addresses background information followed by the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, the theoretical framework, and definition of terms. This chapter concludes with an organization of the study.

Chapter two is the review of literature. Chapter two reviews articles, books, and educational literature that represents recent research and commentary on the topic of teacher candidate beliefs, culturally responsive teaching practices, and culturally responsive literacy instruction. Chapter three is the research methodology. In chapter three, a detailed description of the methodology and the research design are provided. The research design section consists of contextual information about the study such as the setting, participants, data collection and procedures, and data analysis. Chapter four presents the research findings. Chapter five will include a discussion of the findings, implications, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

The articles, books, and educational literature selected for review for this study represents recent research and commentary on the topics of course enrollment, teacher candidate beliefs, culturally responsive teaching practices, culturally responsive literacy instruction, and critical literacy. This chapter concludes with an explanation of the gaps in the literature related to studies that investigate how preservice teachers have specifically integrated multicultural understandings into literacy instruction for students of diverse backgrounds. The next section provides a more detailed review of the role of course enrollment.

Role of Course Enrollment

Multicultural course enrollment. While many universities are advocates and respond to the challenge of designing multicultural programs, debates exist about the best ways to design and implement multicultural teacher education into courses (Cicchelli & Cho, 2016). Issues include questions of where multicultural education should be placed in programs of study, who should teach within these programs and what content should be included (Cicchelli & Cho, 2016). Researchers argue in favor of separate courses strictly devoted to learning about multicultural education through separate diversity courses and field experience (Deering & Stanutz, 1995; Goodwin, 1997; Tinkler & Tinkler, 2013; Miller & Miikulec, 2014; Lambeth & Smith, 2016). However, the results from these studies imply that coursework alone plays a limited role in changing teacher candidates understanding of other cultures and students with diverse backgrounds (Xu, 2000).

Other scholars who are advocates of multicultural education within teacher education programs argue that teachers should become knowledgeable about cultural diversity and develop

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pedagogical skills and attitudes to address racism and promote social justice (Banks & Banks, 2004; Deering & Stanutz, 1995; Cochran-Smith, 2004) while critical scholars also argue in favor of systemic change within teacher education programs at the institutional level to accommodate the growing emphasis on diversity (Darder, Baltodano & Torress, 2009; Giroux, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Nieto, 2009; Sleeter, 2001). According to Ladson-Billings (2009), "no single course or set of field experience is capable of preparing preservice students to meet the needs of diverse learners; rather, a more systemic, comprehensive approach is needed" (p. 463). As a result, course enrollment is a factor in this study.

Using a database of 2,500 preservice teachers' beliefs and student teacher performance assessments, Cherng & Davis (2017) examined five decades of rhetoric and reform in teacher education in an effort to highlight the importance of multicultural education in preparing teachers to meet the needs of all students. Cherng & Davis (2017) used state and national policy initiatives targeting multicultural awareness to build on two assumptions: (1) preservice teachers lack the multicultural awareness to function as culturally responsive educators and (2) higher levels of multicultural awareness correspond with increased pedagogical proficiency.

According to Cherng & Davis (2017), the increases in the number of studies geared toward reform in teacher education for diversity corresponds with the growing disparities in educational opportunity and achievement from diverse cultural groups. These disparities along with observable differences in the racial and ethnic backgrounds of teachers and the communities they serve, leads many to argue that there is a "demographic divide", and the solution is to better prepare teachers to demonstrate cultural responsiveness in all aspects of instruction (Cherng & Davis, 2017; Gay & Howard, 2000).

Literacy Course Enrollment. During literacy instruction, students from different backgrounds struggle with literacy and learning in academic context and the strengths they bring to the instructional situation often goes untapped (Vacca, Vacca & Mraz, 2017). Teachers often fail to make the connection between the content being taught and the students' cultures and languages (Vacca, Vacca & Mraz, 2017). Additionally, culturally and linguistically diverse students are the targeted population for improved literacy instruction, and they continue to be overrepresented in special education programs (Callins, 2006). In order for culturally and linguistically diverse students to reach their full potential, instruction should be provided in ways that promote the acquisition of increasingly complex knowledge and skills in a social climate that fosters collaboration and positive interactions among participants (Callins, 2006, p. 62). The next section provides a more detailed review of the role of teacher candidates' beliefs.

Role of Teacher Candidates' Beliefs

The importance of teacher candidates' beliefs cannot be underestimated. These beliefs undergird how these teacher candidates will plan for instruction, interact with students, and determine progress during implementation, especially for marginalized student populations (Rubie-Davis, Flint, & McDonald, 2012). In this context, it is important to examine teacher candidates' beliefs about the use of culturally responsive literacy practices because teachers' beliefs, characteristics, and contextual factors have all been shown to potentially influence the learning outcomes of students (Rubie-Davis, Flint, & McDonald, 2012). Arguably, the teacher is the number one model of what is considered satisfactory during literacy instruction, and teachers have beliefs, perceptions and expectations for learning that they bring to the learning environment that impact student achievement both inside and outside of the classroom (Enriquez, Jones, & Clarke, 2010).

According to Bartolome (2009), many students are well intentioned individuals who sincerely wish to create positive learning environments for culturally and linguistically diverse students; yet, they arrive to teacher educations programs with the perception that the academic achievement of subordinate students is technical in nature. Bartolome (2009) contends that teacher candidates usually assume that:

1. They, as teachers, are fine and do not need to identify, interrogate, and change their biased beliefs and fragmented views about subordinated students.

2. Schools, as institutions are basically fair and democratic sites where all students are provided with similar, if not equal treatment and learning conditions.

3. Children who experience academic difficulties (especially from culturally and linguistically low-status groups) require some sort of "special" instruction since they obviously have not been able to succeed under "regular" or "normal" instructional conditions.

In turn, if teacher candidates conclude that nothing is basically wrong with teachers and schools, then the belief is that minority academic underachievement is best dealt with by seeking generic teaching methods that will work with a variety of minority student populations (Bartolome, 2009). In essence, as opposed to seeking a tailored, individualized approach specific to the context of minority students, many teacher candidates opt for a "one size fits all" approach (Bartolome, 2009; Delpit, 2006; Reyes, 1992). Bartolome (2009) argues that "by understanding the historical specificities of marginalized students, these teachers and prospective teachers come to realize that an uncritical focus on methods make invisible the historical role that schools and their personnel have played (and continue to play), not only in discriminating against many culturally different groups, but also in denying their humanity" (p. 340).

According to Middleton (2002), increasing preservice teachers' diversity beliefs and commitments can be an arduous process. The challenge of this process lies in getting preservice teachers to recognize how the ethnocentricity and privilege associated with dominant-culture upbringing play a role in their beliefs and commitments (Middleton, 2002). In a combined quantitative and qualitative methods study, Middleton (2002) explored the attitudes, beliefs, and commitments of a predominantly Anglo-American population of preservice teachers (PT) enrolled in a diversity course. Middleton (2002) looked at participation in a diversity course as a means of outlining a framework for understanding PTs' commitment to multicultural education. Preservice teachers were asked to identify (1) their beliefs about racism, classism, sexism, dis/ability, and homophobia; (2) the impact that socialization in an Anglo-European, middle-class, male, able-bodies, heterosexual, Christianity based culture has had on their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors; and (3) the process they must go through in uprooting misconceptions and focusing on the realties that exist in U.S. schools.

To measure beliefs quantitatively, the Beliefs about Diversity Scale (Pohnan and Aguilar, 1995) was used as a pre- and post- test measure of self-reported attitudes and beliefs about diversity before and after participation in a diversity course. Qualitatively, data were gathered through written self-reflective journals and oral discussions regarding specific attitudes, beliefs and change (or lack of change) in ideologies and commitments toward diversity (Middleton, 2002).

Middleton (2002) asserts that cognitive dissonance or giving preservice teachers time and opportunity to gather information, think critically, reflect, converse, and assess before making ideological decisions helped with encouraging multicultural understanding and commitment. According to Middleton (2002), some preservice teachers were so strongly motivated by their

existing beliefs that they chose not to explore some of the ideas presented in the course. The findings for this study offer guidelines for preparing preservice teachers to work with diverse student populations. An overall report of both quantitative and qualitative results suggests that regardless of the stages that preservice teachers are in, they can be taught to be more accepting of diversity given time and appropriate interventions.

Again, the importance of teacher candidates' beliefs cannot be underestimated. Current research on role of teachers' beliefs, particularly those of preservice and beginning teachers reveals that teacher attitudes, beliefs, and expectations have been found to guide their response towards instructional practices (Poahan & Aguilar, 2001; Middleton, 2002). The next section examines the importance of the role of culturally responsive teaching practices.

Role of Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices

Current research on the topic of culturally responsive teaching practices is robust, and appears in the literature under an assortment of labels including "culturally relevant" (Ladson-Billings, 1995); "culturally appropriate" (Au & Jordan, 1981); "culturally responsive" (Gay, 2002); and "culturally sustainable" (Paris, 2012). Components of culturally responsive teaching and critical pedagogy (Banks & Banks, 1995; Gay, 2002; Giroux, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto, 2009; Sleeter, 2001) contends that preservice teachers' unchanged beliefs and attitudes are a result of his/her own life and school experiences, which are often associated with European, middle-class, and mainstream culture. Therefore, teacher education programs should concentrate on the relationship developing capabilities of critical pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching when planning and implementing literacy instruction.

Culturally relevant. Ladson-Billings (2009) proposes a culturally relevant teacher education approach that considers the unique experiences of African-American students. According to

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Ladson-Billings (2009), teacher education programs in the United States fail to prepare classroom educators to effectively work with African American students by advocating for neutral, color-blind, one-size-fits-all pedagogy. According to Ladson-Billings (2009), attitudes and traditional educational values enacted by the dominant society strips African American students of their culture and language which perpetuates a deficit view of African American students. In the place of the traditional program, Ladson-Billings (2009) suggests a culturally relevant teacher education approach that highlights the need for change in the place of a traditional program. This change includes transformation in the way teachers see themselves, where they do their fieldwork, and how they use specific pedagogies to teach school curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Similar to Sleeter, (2001), Ladson-Billings (2009) insists that any teacher preparation program that seeks to effectively prepare teachers to work with African-American students, must reassess admission procedures, examine curriculum, restructure field experiences, and recruit and retain African American faculty.

Culturally Responsive. According to Gay (2002), educators generally agree that effective teaching requires mastery of both content knowledge and pedagogical skills. This statement applies to knowledge of both student population and subject matter (Gay, 2002). As a result, *Culturally Responsive Teaching* (CRT) for ethnically diverse students should be a fundamental feature of teacher preparation and classroom practice (Gay & Kirkland, 2003). Beliefs about the necessity of CRT are based on the premises established by critical scholars Gay and Kirkland (2003) who explain that:

    (a) multicultural education and educational equity and excellence are deeply connected;

    (b) teacher accountability involves being more self-conscious, critical, and analytical of one's own teaching beliefs and behaviors;

(c) teachers need to develop deeper knowledge and consciousness about what is to be taught, how, and to whom.

Therefore, developing personal and professional critical consciousness about racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity should be major components of preservice teacher education (Gay, 2002).

Culturally sustaining pedagogy. Paris (2012) argues that while inspired by what it means to make teaching and learning relevant and responsive to the language, literacies, and cultural practices of students across categories of difference and (in) equality, she still questions whether these terms are really "descriptive enough in their orientation to the languages and literacies and other cultural practices. While this concept of culturally sustaining pedagogy builds on Ladson-Billings (1995) landmark article *Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy*, Paris (2012) contends that the term and stance of "relevance" or "responsiveness" does little to explicitly support the goal of an educational program that maintains heritage ways. Paris (2012) offers the term "culturally sustaining pedagogy" as an alternative that she believed embodies some of the best past and present research and practice in resource pedagogy tradition and as a term that supports the value of multiethnic and multilingual present and future (p.95). According to Paris (2012), "culturally sustaining pedagogy seeks to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling (p.95).

Teachers and prospective teachers must enter into their classrooms with the experience and "know-how" by which to incorporate elements of culturally responsive teaching into literacy instruction. The missing piece is information about how teacher educators can guide prospective teachers' development of reading and literacy beliefs and attitudes toward embracing critical and

culturally relevant pedagogy in order to prepare them to engage their future students with literacy instruction as it relates to their cultural context.

In order for marginalized students who are culturally and linguistically diverse students to become better prepared as members of society, they need to be fully functional participants in literacy communities (Callins, 2006). Important features of such settings include high expectations, exposure to academically rich curricula and materials, approaches that are culturally and linguistically responsive and appropriate, use of instructional technologies that enhance learning, and emphasis on student-regulated, active learning rather than teacher-directed transmission (Callins, 2006).

Measuring Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices

Using a two-phase explanatory mixed methods research design, Siwatu (2011) examined the culturally responsive self-efficacy forming experiences of preservice teachers enrolled in a teacher education program in the Midwest. The first phase involved the collection of quantitative data to examine the nature of 192 preservice teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs. The second phase consisted of a sub-sample of six women and two men selected from phase 1 to participate in follow-up face-to-face interviews.

Data for the first phase was collected using the CRTSE scale (Siwatu, 2007). According to Siwatu (2011), the CRTSE scale is a Likert-type scale that consists of 40 items designed to elicit information from preservice teachers regarding their self-efficacy to execute specific culturally responsive teaching task. Participants were asked to rate their confidence ability to engage in specific culturally responsive teaching practices by indicating a degree of confidence ranging from 0 (no confidence at all) to 100 (completely confident). A descriptive analysis of the

self-efficacy data was conducted to identify preservice teachers with high and low CRTSE beliefs.

Finding suggests that disparities exist in the exposure to the practices associated with culturally responsive teaching. According to Siwatu (2011), preservice teachers with higher self-efficacy beliefs reported that more of the tasks outlined in the self-efficacy scale were discussed in their teacher education courses. Additionally, preservice teacher revealed that only a select few of their courses exposed them to the theory and practices undergirding culturally responsive teaching. Findings also suggest that becoming an effective culturally responsive teacher requires both developing the knowledge of culturally responsive teaching and the self-efficacy skills to put these skills to use (Siwatu, 2011). Preservice teachers acknowledged that many of the culturally specific institutional practices measured by the CRTSE scale were not discussed in their teacher education courses. The next section discusses the role of culturally responsive literacy instruction.

Creating Culturally Responsive Literacy Instruction

There is a misconception that methods, strategies, and instructional frameworks can be adequately learned and taught in decontextualized manner, and the assumption is that teachers are neutral in their employment of these strategies (Brock, Case, & Taylor, 2013). By neutral, Brock, Case, & Taylor (2013) contend that some educators engage in their work without attending to important issues such as race, class, sexual orientation, and gender. Another dilemma is that educators can unwittingly perpetuate deficit views of children from non-dominant backgrounds (Delpit, 2012; Gutierrez, 2008). Culturally responsive literacy instruction is "instruction that bridges the gap between the school and the world of the student, is consistent with the values of the students' own culture aimed at assuring academic learning and encourages

teachers to adapt their instruction to meet the learning needs of all students" (Callins, 2006, p.63).

In a qualitative study, Hilaski (2018) explored the way four Reading Recovery teachers attempted to make their Reading Recovery instruction culturally responsive for their culturally and linguistically diverse students by addressing the cultural mismatch. During the study, teacher participants participated in seven 2-hour professional development sessions where they engaged in three learning opportunities: (1) reading professional literature, (2) building relationships with students and their families, and (3) reflecting on teaching practices through video-recorded lessons. For data collection and analysis, the constant comparative method was used. The primary methods for data collection were interviews, reflective journal entries written by participants, teacher student artifacts, and professional development video-and audio-recordings.

According to Hilaski (2018), by thinking intentionally about the tenants of culturally responsive teaching as well as students' linguistic, social and cultural knowledge, participating teachers found ways to enact culturally responsive teaching into their Reading Recovery instruction. Findings suggest that teachers' practices shifted in three main ways: observation, conversation, and instruction.

In a study that incorporated an adaptation of the ABC Model (Schmidt, 1999) into preservice teachers' cases studies of individual students of diverse backgrounds during field experiences in a literacy methods course, Xu (2000) found that even with a significant level of pedagogical knowledge, preservice teachers often deny English language learners meaningful and effective literacy instruction.

Participants of this study consisted of 20 preservice teachers in their early 20s enrolled in a teacher education program in a major university in the Southwest. Preservice teachers

integrated the ABCs Model into their case studies (Autobiography, Biography, Cross-Cultural analysis, Analysis of Cultural Difference, and Classroom Practice). According to Xu (2000), adapting the ABC's Model into the literacy methods course seemed to assist preservice teachers in translating their understanding of diversity into teaching reading and writing and in reexamining their perceptions of diversity and students of different cultures. Finding suggest that most students still tend to believe that students lack expected literacy skills because they speak another language, have unsupportive parents, or come from poor families (Xu, 2000).

Role of Critical Literacy

Critical literacy is in fact culturally responsive literacy instruction. According to the literature, critical pedagogies for literacy instruction may be based on teachers implementing critical literacy in an effort to display cultural competence that enables each student to relate course content to his or her cultural context. The challenges associated with teaching critical literacy and the absence of a single widely accepted definition or a template for bringing critical literacy to pedagogical practices manufactures many differences (Beck, 2005; Freebody & Frieberg, 2011). Hayik (2016) explored the applicability of critical literacy pedagogy with adolescent English as a foreign language (EFL) students in the Middle East. Lewison et al (2002) examined the understanding of classroom practices of both newcomer and novice teachers. Morrell (2002) illustrated how the teaching of pop culture can produce powerful academic and social results with urban youth. Beck (2005) reported how critical literacy instruction can have a place in penal institutions, and Behrman (2006) examined articles that support critical literacy implementation in the upper primary or secondary levels. While there are many similarities concerning the application of critical literacy in the classroom, the most common similarity is the four dimensions framework of critical literacy, which suggests that students disrupt the

commonplace, consider multiple viewpoints, focus on the sociopolitical, and take-action to promote social justice (Hayik, 2016; Lewison et al, 2002; Beck, 2005). According to Lewison et al (2002), these four dimensions are reported as being interrelated—none stand-alone. Giroux (2009) also supports the idea of critical literacy where teachers engage with students as historical subjects and transformative agents of change, as well as integrate the curriculum as a vehicle for critical dialogue.

According to Beck (2005), teaching critical literacy requires that the teacher "highlight controversial, provocative issues in student-centered discussions that encourage students to reflect on their own experiences and to make changes in themselves and the world around them" (p.399). Beginning with a short vignette about a personal experience while teaching an adult literacy class in an all-male maximum-security correctional facility in Canada, Beck (2005) questions whether it is appropriate to teach critical literacy where student voices are deliberately discouraged and silenced. Beck (2005) seeks to answer the question "Is critical literacy dependent upon a place?" In order to consider the question of a place for critical literacy, Beck (2005) uses current research to examine assumptions behind critical literacy, the methods used to teach it, and the challenges involved in adopting such practices in both regular and alternative classrooms.

Beck's assumptions about critical literacy draw from the work of the traditions of the Frankfurt School of Social Critical Theory by maintaining that "unequal power relationships are perpetuated through the legitimizing of particular forms of knowledge that serve the interest of dominant culture and ideology" (p. 393). Thus, the individual is the agent for change, and questioning why some constructions of knowledge are legitimated while others are not encourages individuals to develop the critical awareness necessary to challenge the status quo

and discover alternatives to existing social inequalities (Beck, 2005). Through the lens of critical education theory, or critical pedagogy, Beck (2005) applies the tenants of critical social theory to the educational arena and examines how schools reproduce inequality and injustice, yet may be sites for critical consciousness and transform society. These practices include choice of text, interaction patterns, and textual interpretations that reinforce dominant literary views, mainstream cultural norms, and sustain dominant cultural ideologies (Comer & Nixon, 1999). Additionally, the work of Paolo Freire, McLaren, and Giroux are used to largely unite critical literacy and critical pedagogy.

In an analysis of critical pedagogy of popular culture, Morrell (2002) illustrates how the critical teaching of popular culture can produce powerful academic and social results with urban youth. Drawing from data collected over eight years while teaching urban teens in the San Francisco Bay area and southern California, Morrell (2002) uses vignettes and teacher created classroom units to focus on popular manifestations of popular culture such as hip-hop, film, and mass media.

During the first eight months of an ongoing study of critical literacy in classrooms, Lewison, Flint & Sluys (2002) examined the understanding and classroom practices of two groups of teachers, newcomers and novices. A research sample of 13 teachers welcomed the researchers into their classrooms. Lewison et. al. (2002) examined these two groups to provide insights into the concerns that teachers have when they begin implementing critical practices in their classrooms, what these practices look like, and what support is most helpful for newcomers and novices. A variety of data sources including pre-workshop questionnaires, post-workshop evaluations, teacher authored progress reports, workshop filed notes, transcripts of student group sessions, classroom observation field notes, student artifacts, and transcripts of student literature

circle discussions were used to aid in understanding the issues that newcomers and novices face when they begin implementing critical practices. Using vignette of two teachers, one newcomer and one novice, Lewison et al (2002) illustrate how the four dimensions of critical literacy play out in their classrooms and how their stories are similar to other newcomers and novices in the group. Lewison et al (2002) used four interrelated dimensions to guide this study and the interpretation of data, which include disrupting the commonplace, interrogating multiple viewpoints, focusing on sociopolitical issues, and taking-action and promoting social justice.

Behrman (2006) examines a number of articles published between 1999 and 2003 that present lessons or units to support critical literacy at the upper primary or secondary levels. Using a total of 36 articles as a research sample, Behrman (2006) applied the study of language and text to multiple subject areas including activities within language arts, interdisciplinary language arts-social studies, and interdisciplinary language-arts-science context. Articles that describe practices in science, writing with special needs students, the computer lab, and an unspecified subject area were also included. Behrman (2006) organizes the classroom practices used in the review into six broad categories based on student activities or tasks: reading supplementary texts, reading multiple texts, reading from a resistant perspective, producing counter-texts, conducting student-choice research projects, and taking social action.

Hayik (2016) challenges the reality of gender roles by engaging in a practitioner inquiry project on gender issues with her Israeli Arab students. Grounded in critical literacy theory, Hayik (2016) attempts to challenge the status quo through raising students' awareness about the problematic portrayal of females and encouraging them to act. Guided by the curiosity of whether the students would adhere to the traditional standards or alternatively welcome unconventional feminist perspectives, Hayik (2016) explored how the student would responds to

an invitation to challenge gender bias and sexism informed by the four dimensions framework of critical literacy which encourages students to disrupt the commonplace, consider multiple viewpoints, focus on the sociopolitical, and act to promote social justice.

Using critical discourse analysis and Janks (2010) Synthesis Model of Critical Literacy, interview and classroom data from four teachers of English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) learners in two high schools were analyzed for the ways these teachers constructed critical literacy in their talk and practice. All four teachers indicated significant commitment to critical literacy as an approach to English language teaching; yet, their understandings varied. These understandings ranged from providing access to powerful genres, to rationalist approaches to interrogating text, with less emphasis on multimodal design and drawing on learner diversity. The discussion of data was structured around Janks (2010) model, which uses an explanatory framework to further organize the data into four categories: Domination, Access, Diversity, and Design. According to Alford & Jetnikoff (2016), "*Domination* assumes a critical discourse analysis approach in which the language and images in dominant texts are deconstructed to discover concepts such as fore-groundings, silences and whose interests are served" (p. 114). That is, the focus of each lesson was to deconstruct a parent text in detail for their Domination potential. Additionally, "Diversity" involves drawing on a range of modalities as resources and to include students' own diverse language and literacies" (p.114). Ultimately, Alford & Jetnikoff (2016) assert that Domination with Access allows the exclusionary force of dominant discourses to be challenged and potentially dissipated. Additionally, access with Domination provides a view of texts and discourses as reproducible but always invested with power. Implications highlight the need for greater professional development in order to expand teacher understanding and practice so that it might encompass more fully the transformative goals of critical literacy.

Barriers to Critical Literacy Implementation

According to Shor (2009), when we are critically literate, we examine our ongoing development, to reveal a position from which we make sense of the world and act on it. However, this statement implies that teachers and teacher candidates who seek to implement critical literacy have first accepted that the position from which they make sense of the world is not neutral; it may include implicit or hidden bias. So, even though teacher candidates believe that they see and treat people as equals, hidden biases and unchanged beliefs and attitudes as a result of their own life and school experiences, which are often associated with European, middle-class, and mainstream culture may still influence their perceptions and actions. This may contribute to a resistance to the implementation of critical literacy because it may be rooted in the very power and domination they seek to analyze in a text. Essentially, there seems to be a gap in the literature that fails to addresses the role of teacher candidates' reflecting on beliefs about what they believe when learning to modify their pedagogy. This process is especially important to survey these beliefs when helping teacher candidates use in establishing cultural sensitivity toward diversity when planning implementing critical literacy as pedagogy.

Gaps in the Literature

Sadly, empirical research geared toward assisting teacher candidates with reflecting on beliefs about instructional literacy approaches to better serve the needs of culturally diverse students in literacy with emphasis on preparing the teacher is limited. While there is a multitude of research that argues the benefits for using culturally relevant teaching and/or culturally relevant pedagogy in general, the fact remains that there is need for an increased emphasis on preparing teacher candidates to help students of diverse backgrounds achieve in the areas of reading and writing.

Few studies have investigated how preservice teachers have specifically integrated multicultural understandings into literacy instruction for students of diverse background (Xu, 2000). While researchers have documented the disparities and lack of achievement that diverse students experience due to a lack a literacy skill, preservice teachers must be able to link their understandings of diversity to teaching reading and writing (Au, 1993, Xu, 2000).

Additionally, studies that attempt to link specific teacher characteristics, such as race/ethnicity, level of education, or prior experience, with differences in cultural awareness and intercultural sensitivity, are largely absent from the literature (Cherng & Davis, 2017).

Chapter 3

Methods

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationships between beliefs about the use of culturally responsive literacy instruction, reading course enrollment, and diversity factors among undergraduate K-6 elementary teacher candidates. This chapter provides the research design and contextual information about the study such as the setting, sample size, data collection and procedures, and data analysis.

Research Design

This research study utilized a quantitative survey research design. Specifically, the beliefs of elementary undergraduate teacher candidates attending a small, rural university within the Mid-south were examined so that the researcher could come to understand teacher candidates' beliefs about culturally responsive teaching practices as they begin making specific pedagogical adjustments to the classroom environment and curriculum when planning literacy instruction. By conducting this study, the researcher hopes to contribute to the gaps in literature where literacy researchers fail to address the idea that teachers within the literacy community are not inherently neutral beings who will automatically implement literacy practices that are free of bias and personal beliefs. Upon this realization, it is vital to acknowledge associations between specific reading course enrollment, teacher demographics, and teacher candidates' beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices because teachers bring their socially accepted beliefs and ways of thinking about the world into the classroom, and literacy instruction is impacted due to these beliefs.

In the field of literacy, quantitative research represents a very useful set of techniques for addressing research questions that require the collection, analysis, and interpretation of

numerical data for describing, explaining and predicting human phenomena (Onwuegbuzie & Mallette, 2011). Under optimal conditions, such as with large and random samples, the findings from quantitative research studies can be generalized from the sample to the population from which the sample was drawn, and if designed in an optimal way inform the field of literacy (Onwuegbuzie & Mallette, 2011). In order to generate quantitative descriptions (statistics) of the sample in this study, the Culturally Responsive Instruction & Curriculum Survey developed by J. Anganza & Bilingual Trainees (2008, 2009) was used as a data collection instrument. The structured survey questions were delivered to teacher candidates electronically and answered via Qualtrics electronic media. Self-reported undergraduate elementary teacher candidate demographics were also collected.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions were used to conduct this study.

1. What is the relationship between reading course enrollment and beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction among undergraduate elementary teacher candidates?

   H_0: There is no relationship between reading course enrollment and beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction among undergraduate elementary teacher candidates.

   H_A: There is a relationship between reading course enrollment and beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction among undergraduate elementary teacher candidates.

2. What is the relationship between demographic factors (educational demographics, community demographics) and beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching

practices when planning literacy instruction among undergraduate elementary teacher candidates?

H_0: There is no relationship between demographic factors (education demographics, community demographics) and beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction among undergraduate elementary teacher candidates.

H_A: There is a relationship between demographic factors (education demographics, community demographics) and beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction among undergraduate elementary teacher candidates.

3. What is the relationship between reading course enrollment, demographic factors, and beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction among undergraduate elementary teacher candidates?

H_0: There is no relationship between reading course enrollment, demographic factors, and beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction among undergraduate elementary teacher candidates.

H_A: There is a relationship between required reading course enrollment, demographic factors, and beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction among undergraduate elementary teacher candidates.

Research Setting

In this section, the researcher provides the reader with relevant information surrounding the research site. It begins with a description of the university, the course, and it concludes with a

detailed description of the participants. The purpose of this information is to set the scene for the

research study by providing contextual information about the methods.

Setting

The setting of the study was a small, rural university located within the Mid-South region

of the United States. As of the spring 2019 semester, the university enrollment was over 14,000

students. According to the Office of Institutional Research (2019), the student population at this

university is 60% female and 40% male, and of these 14,085 students, 26% represent ethnic

diversity on campus with 13% of students listed as non-White Americans and 13% African

American students.

The Courses

Teacher candidates enrolled in three different mandatory reading courses offered to

undergraduate elementary teacher candidates during the Fall 2019 semester were used in this

study. Those courses were: Content Area Reading and Writing in Elementary School,

Foundations of Reading Instruction, and Literacy Assessment, Diagnosis, and Development.

Each course is an undergraduate 3-credit hour mandatory reading course that focuses on reading

program level outcomes for Elementary Education (K-6) majors. These courses were chosen for

this study because each course is offered at a different level during the program. Foundations of

Reading Instruction is identified as a course taken in the first semester of Junior year. It is the

very first reading course that elementary teacher candidates take once they have been admitted to

the teacher education program. Content Area Reading and Writing in Elementary School is

identified as a course taken during the second semester of Junior year for K-6 Elementary

Education majors only. Literacy Assessment, Diagnosis, and Development is identified as a

course that is taken during the first semester of the teacher candidates' Senior year. It is the final required reading course for K-6 Elementary Education majors.

Sample

The study participants were undergraduate K-6 elementary education students enrolled in three different mandatory reading courses during the fall 2019 semester at a rural, public university within the Mid-South region of the United States. Admission into the university teacher education program, identification as a K-6 Elementary Education major, and enrollment in either Foundations of Reading Instruction, Content Area Reading and Writing in Elementary, or Literacy Assessment, Diagnosis, and Development during the Fall 2019 semester were the delimitations of the participant selection. Participants were all Junior I, Junior II or Senior I level students at the university. This sample of teacher candidates was of interest because it included participants from each of the required reading courses prior to the internship for the undergraduate K-6 Elementary Education program.

As of the spring 2019 semester, there were 72 students in the Department of Teacher Education that identified as undergraduate K-6 Elementary Education majors. The sample for this study consisted of 26 undergraduate elementary teacher candidates. A non-randomized convenience sample was used in this study; participation was completely voluntary. Table 1 presents the suggested coursework sequence for completion of the K-6 Elementary Education Degree Program.

Table 1

BSE K-6 Elementary Education Degree Program

Classification	Required Credits	Required Reading Courses
Freshman I	15 credit hours	N/A
Freshman II	16 credit hours	N/A
Sophomore I	16 credit hours	N/A
Sophomore II	16 credit hours	N/A
Junior I	16 credit hours	RDNG 3203 Foundations of Reading
Junior II	16 credit hours	RDNG 3223 Content Area Reading and Writing in Elementary
Senior I	17 credit hours (Internship I)	RDNG 4103 Literacy Assessment, Diagnosis and Development
Senior II	12 credit hours (Internship II)	N/A

Source: Office of Institutional Research, University (2018)

Instrumentation

Instrument

A structured survey (Grooves et al., 2009) was administered in digital format via an anonymous link using Qualtrics electronic media for this study. The first portion of the survey was the Culturally Responsive Instruction & Curriculum Survey (Appendix C). This survey was developed by J. Anganza & Bilingual Trainees (2008, 2009) and addresses culturally responsive teaching practices in reference to the classroom environment, curriculum, and teaching styles used during classroom instruction. The purpose of the survey was to measure undergraduate elementary teacher candidate beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices

when planning literacy instruction. The Culturally Responsive Instruction and Curriculum survey consists of twenty-eight Likert scale questions that were divided into three subgroups: Environment (11 questions), Curriculum (8 questions), and Teaching Style (9 questions). To complete the survey, teacher candidates were asked to read the statements under each subgroup and determine their beliefs about the use of each statement when planning literacy instruction by selecting the answer that best describes their beliefs about each statement. This instrument used a 5-point scale: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree.

Additionally, the structured survey instrument contained a demographic background questionnaire (Appendix B). This portion of the survey was administered to collect data from teacher candidates pertaining to gender, ethnicity, age, reading course enrollment, education demographics, and community demographics. There were 15 demographic questions.

Operational Variables

For the purpose of this study, undergraduate elementary teacher candidates' beliefs were measured on a continuous scale and used as the dependent (criterion) variable for analyzing each research question. For research question one, required reading course was used as an independent (predictor) variable, and it was measured as a categorical variable. For research question two, demographic factors (education demographics, community demographics) were used as independent (predictor) variables, and all were measured as categorical variables. For research question three, reading course enrollment and demographic factors were used as independent variables. Table 2 provides a description of the independent variables that were used for this study.

Table 2

Description of Independent Variables

Variable	Type of Variable	Response Categories
Required Reading Course	Categorical	1= Foundations of Reading Instruction
		2= Content Area Reading and Writing
		3= Literacy Assessment, Diagnosis and Development
Age Group	Categorical	1= 18-19
		2= 20-21
		3= 22-23
		4= 24 or older
Demographic Factor: Educational Diversity		
The teachers in my high school present multicultural viewpoints about historical and current events	Categorical	1= Never
		2= Rarely
		3= Occasionally
		4= Regularly
The student population in my high school spoke primarily__	Categorical	1= English
		2= Spanish
		3= Chinese
		4= Bilingual or Multilingual
Was your high school population considered ethnically diverse?	Categorical	1= Yes
		2= No

Table 2 (continued)

Description of Independent Variables

Variable	Type of Variable	Response Categories
Was the teaching staff in your high school ethnically diverse?	Categorical	1= Yes 2= No
Demographic Factor: Community Diversity		
Was the community in which you were raised considered ethnically diverse?	Categorical	1= Yes 2= No
Have you always lived in the same town where you graduated high school?	Categorical	1= Yes 2= No
Do you plan to return to your town after graduation from college?	Categorical	1= Yes 2= No
What type of community did you live in while group up?	Categorical	1= Rural 2= Urban 3= Suburban
Identify the number of languages spoken fluently in your home, including English.	Categorical	1= one 2= two 3= three 4= more than three

Data Collection & Procedures

After Institutional Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix C) approval on November 11, 2019, data for this study was collected using Qualtrics electronic media. Qualtrics is a web-based software that enables the user to create surveys, administer feedback and polls, and generate reports using a variety of distribution means. To collect the survey data, all K-6 undergraduate elementary teacher candidates enrolled in each of the required reading course during the fall 2019 semester were sent a recruitment email (Appendix D) via their university student email account. The recruitment email contained an invitation to participate, the purpose of the study, the name of the principal investigator, risks, benefits, who to contact if a problem occurred, and an anonymous digital link to complete the structured survey if they agreed to participate. Clicking the anonymous link within the email directed undergraduate elementary teacher candidates to an online informed consent form that asks each of them to first acknowledge that participation was voluntary, they understood the study, and they were at least 18 years of age. They were given two options: "I consent, begin the study", or "I do not consent, I do not wish to participate. After giving informed consent, undergraduate elementary teacher candidates were directed to the survey. If the undergraduate elementary teacher candidate chose not to consent, the survey was ended and an automated response was displayed that thanked the undergraduate elementary teacher candidate for their time. The survey took no more than 8-10 minutes to complete. Elementary teacher candidates who received the recruitment email had one week from the date of receiving the recruitment email to complete the study. Once the specified range for taking the survey expired, the researcher adjusted the settings of the survey within Qualtrics to reject any further submissions. Partial surveys were accepted.

To protect the anonymity of each undergraduate elementary teacher candidate, the following settings were applied within Qualtrics: an anonymous link that allowed undergraduate elementary teacher candidates to anonymously complete the survey, a restriction to keep participants from taking the survey more than once, and a tag was added to prevent search engines from indexing.

Data Analysis

For this study, data was collected in Qualtrics electronic media and then analyzed using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) data analyses. The independent variables (predictors) utilized in this study were reading course enrollment (Foundation of Reading Instruction, Content Area Reading and Writing in Elementary, and Literacy Assessment, Diagnostics, and Development) and demographic factors (education demographics and community demographics). The dependent (criterion) variable was the Overall CRIS score. Both research questions one and two were analyzed using an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). An ANOVA works by comparing the spread (or variance) of the group means (called the between-group sum of squares) with the spread (or variance) of the values within the group (called the within-group sum of squares) (Muijs, 2007). Research question three was analyzed using an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). The ANCOVA works by detecting the means of three or more independent groups while controlling for scale variates.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the research design and contextual information about the study such as the setting, sample size, data collection and procedures, and data analysis. The study participants were undergraduate K-6 Elementary Education students enrolled in three different mandatory reading courses during the fall 2019 semester at a rural,

public university within the Mid-South region of the United States. The sample for this study consisted of 26 undergraduate K-6 elementary teacher candidates. Statistical analyses for this study included descriptive statistics to outline the characteristics of the sample and ANOVA to measure statistical significance between reading course enrollment, demographic factors, and an Overall CRIS score. The following chapter provides the findings and results of the study.

Chapter 4

Findings

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationships between overall beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction, reading course enrollment, and demographic factors among undergraduate K-6 elementary teacher candidates. In this chapter, the findings and results of twenty-six undergraduate K-6 elementary teacher candidates who completed the Culturally Responsive Curriculum & Instruction Survey (CRIS) and self-reported demographic information are provided. Three research questions and hypotheses guided this study. Research questions one and two were analyzed using an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical analysis. Research question three used an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) statistical analysis. The data for this study was collected in Qualtrics and analyzed using SPSS. The findings are organized and presented according to descriptive statistics for the survey and the three research questions. The following research questions and hypotheses guided this study.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

1. What is the relationship between reading course enrollment and overall beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction among undergraduate elementary teacher candidates?

   H_0: There is no relationship between reading course enrollment and beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction among undergraduate elementary teacher candidates.

H_A: There is a relationship between reading course enrollment and beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction. among undergraduate elementary teacher candidates.

2. What is the relationship between demographic factors (educational demographics, community demographics) and beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction among undergraduate elementary teacher candidates?

    H_0: There is no relationship between demographic factors (education demographics, community demographics) and beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction among undergraduate elementary teacher candidates.

    H_A: There is a relationship between demographic factors (education demographics, community demographics) and beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction among undergraduate elementary teacher candidates.

3. What is the relationship between reading course enrollment, demographic factors, and beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction among undergraduate elementary teacher candidates?

    H_0: There is no relationship between reading course enrollment, demographic factors, and beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction among undergraduate elementary teacher candidates.

H$_A$: There is a relationship between required reading course enrollment, demographic factors, and beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction among undergraduate elementary teacher candidates.

Demographic Factors

The study sample consisted of twenty-six female undergraduate K-6 elementary education teacher candidates attending a small, rural university within the Mid-south. Of the undergraduate K-6 elementary teacher candidates who participated in this study 42% were enrolled in Foundations of Reading Instruction; 42% were enrolled in Content Area Reading and Writing in Elementary; and 16% were enrolled in Literacy Assessment, Diagnosis and Development. The ages of the participants in the study were reported as 20-21 (73.08%), 22-23 (11.54%), and 24 or older (15.28%). There were no participants who reported being 18-19 years of age. All twenty-six female teacher candidates who participated in this study self-reported their ethnicity as White, non-Hispanic. Demographic information for the undergraduate elementary teacher candidates is displayed in Table 3.

In addition to gender, ethnicity, age, and reading course enrollment, participants were asked to self-report several factors relating to education demographics and community demographics by answering 10 additional questions. To self-report education demographics, teacher candidates were asked to identify information about the high school that they attended. To self-report community demographics, candidates were asked to consider the community where they grew up. The purpose of including education and community factors was to provide additional information that described the nature of the sample beyond ethnicity, gender, age, and reading course enrollment. Because there were several questions that addressed both education and community demographics on the survey, the researcher composed two separate variables to

represent education demographics and community demographics by computing the statistical

mean for each factor within SPSS. For education demographics, Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7 and Q8 were

used. For community demographics, Q9, Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13 were used. Descriptive statistics

for both education and community factors that include the mean and standard deviation are

displayed in Table 4.

Table 3

Combined Undergraduate Elementary Teacher Candidate Demographics

Variable	N	Percent
Gender		
Female	26	100
Male	0	0
Ethnicity		
Black, non-Hispanic	0	0
White, non-Hispanic	26	100
Age		
18-19	0	0
20-21	19	73.08
22-23	3	11.54
24 or older	4	15.38
Reading Courses		
Foundations of Reading Instruction	11	42.31
Content Area Reading and Writing	11	42.31

Table 3 (continued)

Combined Undergraduate Elementary Teacher Candidate Demographics

Variable	N	Percent
Literacy Assessment, Diagnosis and Development	4	15.38

Culturally Responsive Curriculum & Instruction Survey

During the fall 2019 semester of the 2019-2020 school year, data for this study was collected via a structured survey using an anonymous link in Qualtrics electronic media. The structured survey consisted of the Culturally Responsive Curriculum & Instruction survey (CRIS) and self-reported demographic information. The purpose of the CRIS was to measure beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction. The Culturally Responsive Instruction and Curriculum survey consists of twenty-eight Likert scale questions that were divided into three subgroups: Environment (11 questions), Curriculum (8 questions), and Teaching Style (9 questions). To complete the survey, undergraduate teacher candidates were asked to read the statements under each subgroup and determine their beliefs about the use of each statement when planning literacy instruction by selecting the answer that best describes their beliefs about each statement. This instrument used a 5-point scale: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree. For the purpose of this study, the sum of each subgroup from the CRIS was computed into a an Overall CRIS composite scale score in SPSS to reflect the overall beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction.

Descriptive statistics that include the means and standard deviations for Overall CRIS scores,

reading course enrollment, and demographic factors are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Overall CRIS Score, Reading Course Enrollment, and Demographic Factors.

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Beliefs: Overall CRIS Score	26	42.34	7.39
Reading Course	26	1.73	0.72
Demographic Factors			
Education Demographics	26	1.78	0.27
Community Demographics	26	1.44	0.24

Results

Three research questions and hypotheses were tested to compare the effect of reading

course enrollment and demographic factors on the Overall CRIS score. For research question

one, reading course enrollment (Foundation of Reading Instruction, Content Area Reading and

Writing in Elementary, and Literacy Assessment, Diagnostics, and Development) was the

independent variable and Overall CRIS score was the dependent variable. For research question

two, demographic factors (education demographics and community demographics) were the

independent variables and Overall CRIS score was the dependent variable. For research question

three, both reading course enrollment and demographic factors were the independent variables and Overall CRIS score was the dependent variable.

Research Question 1

For research question one, the null hypothesis stated: H_0: There is no relationship between reading course enrollment and beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction. The criterion for rejecting the null hypothesis was ($p < .05$). An ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of reading course enrollment on the Overall CRIS score. An analysis of variance showed that the effect of reading course enrollment on the Overall CRIS score was not significant, ($F(2, 23) = 0.659$, $p = .52$).

Research Question 2

For research question two, the null hypothesis stated: H_0: There is no relationship between demographic factors (education demographics, community demographics) and beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction. The criterion for rejecting the null hypothesis was ($p < .05$). An ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of demographic factors on the Overall CRIS score. An analysis of variance showed that the effect of demographic factors on the Overall CRIS score was not significant, education demographics ($F(8, 26) = 0.10$, $p = .99$); community demographics ($F(5, 26) = 0.21$, $p = .94$); and combined education and community ($F(3, 26) = 0.34$, $p = .79$).

Research Question 3

For the third research question, the null hypothesis stated: H_0: There is no relationship between reading course enrollment, demographic factors, and beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction. The criterion for rejecting the null hypothesis was ($p < .05$). An ANCOVA was conducted to compare the effect of the Overall

CRIS score between reading course enrollment while controlling for demographic factors. An analysis of covariance showed that the effect of reading course enrollment when controlling for demographic factors on the Overall CRIS score was not significant, reading course (F (2, 21) = 0.52, p = .59); education (F (1, 21) = 0.23, p = .63); community (F (1, 21) = 0.31, p = .57).

Summary

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationships between beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction, reading course enrollment, and demographic factors among undergraduate K-6 elementary teacher candidates. Data for this study was collected using a structured survey in Qualtrics that contained the Culturally Responsive Instruction and Curriculum Survey and self-reported demographic information. In this chapter, the findings and statistical analysis results of 26 undergraduate K-6 elementary teacher candidates who attend a small, rural university within the Midsouth were provided. Chapter 5 provides a discussion and interpretation of the findings.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationships between beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction, reading course enrollment, and demographic factors among undergraduate K-6 elementary teacher candidates. The independent variables (predictors) utilized in this study were reading course enrollment (Foundation of Reading Instruction, Content Area Reading and Writing in Elementary, and Literacy Assessment, Diagnostics, and Development) and demographic factors (education demographics and community demographics). The dependent (criterion) variable was the Overall CRIS score. Both research question one and research question two were analyzed using an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical analysis. An ANOVA works by comparing the spread (or variance) of the group means (called the between-group sum of squares) with the spread (or variance) of the values within the group (called the within-group sum of squares) (Muijs, 2007). Research question three was analyzed using an ANCOVA. An ANCOVA works by comparing the difference in means of three or more independent groups while controlling for a scale covariate. In this chapter, an in-depth discussion of the findings, an interpretation of findings, implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research are discussed.

Discussion of Findings

The data for this study was analyzed using SPSS, and findings were revealed using SPSS output. On the SPSS output, the 'Test of Between-Subjects Effects', was used to tell whether there was a relationship between the independent variables (reading course enrollment and demographic factors) and the dependent variable (Overall CRIS score). The SPSS output lists several different statistics to represent the findings. The first column is the source and it contains

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all independent variables. The second column gives the sum of squares (within and between groups). The third column lists the degrees of freedom, and the fourth column gives the mean square. The fifth column is the F-test value. The significance level or the p-value is given in the last column. Again, if the p-value is below 0.05 the value is considered significant. While the (p-value < .05) cut-off point was used to determine if there was an overall significant difference, it does not establish where the significance lies (Muijs, 2007). The findings for each research question are presented below.

Research Question One. For research question one, the purpose was to determine if there was a relationship between reading course enrollment (Foundations of Reading Instruction, Content Area Reading and Writing in Elementary, and Literacy Assessment, Diagnosis, and Development) and beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction. To test the null hypothesis for research question one, data was analyzed using the statistical test of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Using the ANOVA, the researcher was able to test the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between reading course enrollment and beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction. The ANOVA was chosen for this research question because it uses one or more independent variables (reading course enrollment) which consists of several groups (Foundations of Reading Instruction, Content Area Reading and Writing in Elementary, and Literacy Assessment, Diagnosis, and Development), and one dependent variable (Overall CRIS score).

For the analysis, the ANOVA used a test (the F test) to determine whether there were significant differences between the means of the three required reading courses. Once the F-test statistics were calculated, a *p*-value was calculated to tell how likely it would be to find

differences between the means of the three reading courses if there was no difference in the population. To determine whether or not the relationship was significant, $p < .05$ was used.

The results of the ANOVA are as followed: reading course enrollment ($F(2, 23) = 0.659$, $p = .52$). The independent variable, reading course enrollment, has a p-value of .52 which is not significant ($p < .05$). This means that there is not a significant difference between the reading course enrollment and the Overall CRIS score. Therefore, reading course enrollment was not a predictor of over beliefs about culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction ($p < .05$). The results for research question one support the null hypothesis.

Research Question Two. For research question two, the purpose was to determine if there was a relationship between demographic factors and undergraduate elementary teacher candidate beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction. To test the null hypothesis for research question two, data was analyzed using the statistical test of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). For this research question, ANOVA was used to calculate the variance of the Overall CRIS score within demographic factors (education demographics and community demographics). The ANOVA was chosen for this research question because it uses one or more independent variables demographic factors (education demographics and community demographics), and one dependent variable (Overall CRIS score).

For the analysis, the ANOVA used a test (the F test) to determine whether there were significant differences between the means of the demographic factors. Once the F-test statistics were calculated, a p-value was calculated to tell how likely it would be to find differences between the means of the demographics if there was no difference in the population. To determine whether or not the relationship was significant, $p < .05$ was used to determine if there was an overall significant difference.

The results of this analysis are as followed: education demographics (F (8, 26) = 0.10, p = .99); community demographics (F (5, 26) = 0.21, p = .94); and combined education and community demographics (F (3, 26) = 0.34, p = .79). Based on these findings, there was no statistical significance when investigating the relationship between demographic factors and overall beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction (p < .05). The results for research question two support the null hypothesis. The findings from the ANOVA analysis are listed in Table 5.

Table 5

Relationship between Demographic Factors and Overall CRIS Score

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Education	87.56	8	10.94	0.10	.99
Community	117.538	5	23.50	0.21	.94
Education *Community	109.81	3	36.60	.34	.79

Research Question Three. For research question three, the purpose was to determine the relationships between reading course enrollment, demographic factors, and undergraduate elementary teacher candidates' beliefs. To test the null hypothesis for research question three, data was analyzed using the statistical test of Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). For this research question, ANCOVA was used to calculate the variance of Overall CRIS score between reading course enrollment when controlling for demographic factors (education demographics and community demographics). The ANCOVA was chosen for this research question because it

uses one or more independent variables (reading course enrollment), one or more covariates (demographic factors), and one dependent variable, (Overall CRIS score).

For the analysis, the ANCOVA used a test (the F test) to detect a difference between the means of reading course enrollment while controlling for demographic factors. Once the F-test statistics were calculated, a p-value was calculated to tell how likely it would be to find differences between the means of the three reading courses and demographic factors if there was no difference in the population. To determine whether or not the relationship was significant, $p <$ .05 was used to determine if there was an overall significant difference.

The results of this analysis are as followed: reading course (F (2, 21) = 0.52, p = .59); education (F (1, 21) = 0.23, p = .63); community (F (1, 21) = 0.31, p = .57). Based on these findings, the effect of reading course enrollment when controlling for demographic factors on the Overall CRIS score was not significant, reading course (F (2, 21) = 0.52, p = .59); education (F (1, 21) = 0.23, p = .63); community (F (1, 21) = 0.31, p = .57). The results for research question three support the null hypothesis. The findings from the ANCOVA analysis are listed in Table 6.

Table 6

Relationship between Required Reading Course, Demographic Factors, and Overall CRIS Score

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Reading Course	62.31	2	31.15	0.52	.59
Education	13.97	1	13.97	0.23	.63
Community	18.83	1	18.83	0.31	.57

Interpretation of Findings

The overall findings of this study did not provide conclusive results concerning the relationship between reading course enrollment and demographics as factors related to overall beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction. More research is needed. However, the researcher hopes that this research study contributes to the gaps in literature where literacy researchers fail to address the idea that teachers within the literacy community are not inherently neutral beings who will automatically implement literacy practices that are free of bias or personal and socially accepted beliefs when planning literacy instruction.

One notion is that teachers bring their socially accepted beliefs and ways of thinking about the world into the classroom, and literacy instruction is impacted due to these beliefs (Au, 1998). Au's (1998) research suggest that educators must move toward a diverse constructivism perspective and move beyond a mainstream constructivist orientation. According to Au (1998), research conducted from a diverse constructivist orientation addresses issues of educators' and students' cultural identities. Au (1998) argues that educators' recognition of the inequities possible in a given education situation depends on an understanding of their own cultural identities as well as the cultural identities of their students. Yet, the results of this study suggest that a relationship may not exist as exhibited by the idea that education demographics community demographics, and literacy course enrollment are factors that influence teacher candidate beliefs about culturally responsive teaching practices.

However, previous research on culturally responsive teaching and critical pedagogy contend that preservice teachers' unchanged beliefs and attitudes are a result of his/her own life and school experiences, which are often associated with European, middle-class, and mainstream

culture (Banks & Banks, 1995; Gay 2002; Giroux, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto, 2009; Sleeter, 2001). As a result, *Culturally Responsive Teaching* (CRT) for ethnically diverse students should be a fundamental feature of teacher preparation and classroom practice, and developing personal and professional critical consciousness about racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity should be major components of preservice teacher education (Gay, 2002; Gay & Kirkland, 2003).

The finding of this research study may also provide an understanding of the importance of examining teacher candidates' beliefs because teachers' beliefs, characteristics, and contextual factors have all been shown to potentially influence the learning outcome of the students they teach (Rubie-Davis, Flint, & McDonald, 2012). Noting individual factors that may influence teacher candidate beliefs is especially important when planning literacy instruction because the teacher is arguably the number one model of what is considered satisfactory literacy instruction (Enriquez, Jones & Clarke, 2010). Teachers have beliefs, perceptions, and expectations for learning that they, too, bring to the literacy environment that impacts student achievement both inside and outside of the classroom (Enriquez, Jones & Clarke, 2010). The importance of teacher candidates' beliefs cannot be underestimated (Rubie-Davis, Flint, & McDonald, 2012).

Implications

Overall, this study found that there are no significant relationships between reading course enrollment, demographic factors, and overall beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning literacy instruction. Though no significant relationships were found in this study, the role that teacher candidate demographics and teacher candidate beliefs play when planning culturally relevant literacy instruction cannot be ignored. Arguably, examining the relationships that exists between teacher candidate demographics, teacher candidate beliefs, and undergraduate literacy coursework are important factors for literacy

researchers to study considering the increasing racial and ethnic diversity of K-12 students and the continuous underachievement of students of diverse backgrounds. According to the Iris Center (2017), while the racial and ethnic diversity of students has increased over the past twenty years, the racial and ethnic demographic make-up of teachers remains predominately White. These factors cannot be ignored, especially considering the cultural gaps between teachers and students that impacts literacy and learning (Soto-Hinman & Hetzel, 2009).

By conducting this study, the researcher hopes to contribute to the gaps in literature where literacy researchers fail to address the idea that teachers within the literacy community are not inherently neutral beings who will automatically implement literacy practices that are free of bias and personal beliefs. With this understanding, much of the value associated with the interpretation of the findings of this study are tied to what Sage & Wells (2014) assert as critical quantitative inquiry. According to Sage & Wells (2014), the purpose of a critical approach to quantitative work in education is not to prove the relevance of grand theories, but rather to add to the knowledge about the students and faculty being studied. I agree. In essence, the findings from this study may contribute to the future conversation about the need to produce more quantitative studies that focus on equity concerns, especially within the literacy community. According to Sage & Wells (2014), one way these equity concerns can be highlighted is through the analysis of large data sets that include quantitative methods to represent educational processes and other outcomes that may reveal inequities and identify perpetuation of those that were systemic such as race, class, and gender.

Limitations

One primary limitation for this study was the sample size. Though administering the survey via Qualtrics electronic media was highly flexible for both the researcher and the

participants, the sample size may have been impacted because the survey was not given in a structured environment. A recruitment email was sent to over 70 undergraduate K-6 elementary students; yet, only about one-third or 26 teacher candidates completed the survey. As a result, the size of the sample limits the generalizability of the results to the population. Additionally, limiting the study to only undergraduate K-6 elementary education majors proved to be a limitation for the sample size. Expanding the sample to include K-6 elementary education teacher candidates pursuing a Masters of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree may have been beneficial for increase the sample size and for creating a more diverse sample that included age and gender as demographic factors. Additionally, the survey was only open for 7 days. Permitting additional time to answer the survey may have increased the response as well.

A further limitation is failing to use a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods. The use of solely a multiple-choice survey made it difficult in some ways to come to a deeper understanding of contextual differences. The design of the survey used standardized answers which in many ways limited the depth of the responses from teacher candidates. An open-ended response may have added more depth. Additionally, standardized answers produced a number of categorical variables as opposed to continuous variables which in turn limited the level of statistical analysis that could be computed.

Finally, there are a number of ways to conduct survey research; yet survey design was a primary limitation for this study. Primarily, the amount of self-reported information contributed to limitations. While survey research is particularly suited for examining feelings, opinions, and beliefs about certain issues, self-reported information can be seen as unreliable (MUIJS, 2007).

Recommendations for Future Research

Few studies have investigated how preservice teachers have specifically integrated multicultural understandings into literacy instruction (Xu, 2000). Future research may include more research that contributes to the gaps in the literature that fail to address how teacher candidates' beliefs and ways of viewing pedagogical approaches such as culturally responsive teaching may be rooted in power structures that contribute to inequalities and injustice within the literacy community (Handsfield, 2016). The goal is to create a more extensive body of literature that extends, challenges, and reshapes teacher candidate beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices so that culturally responsive literacy instruction may correct the gap between the literacy achievement of students of diverse backgrounds and that of mainstream student.

In essence, all stakeholder within the literacy classroom contribute a unique sociocultural environment. Teachers, teacher candidates, students, and all literacy users are "members of a defined culture with a cultural identity", and the degree to which they engage in learning or use literacy is a function of this cultural identity (Perez & McCarthy, 2004, p. 6). The very notion of satisfactory literacy performance is heavily influenced by teachers, and both teachers and students bring with them *cultures* (beliefs, views, attitudes, perceptions) that must be acknowledged in the literacy learning process.

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Appendix A

IRB Approval

Institutional Review Board
Division of Research and Innovation
Office of Research Compliance
University of Memphis
315 Admin Bldg
Memphis, TN 38152-3370

November 12, 2019

PI Name: Latwayla Lambert-Knowlton
Co-Investigators:
Advisor and/or Co-PI: J Perkins
Submission Type: Initial
Title: Examining Elementary Teacher Candidates' Beliefs About the Use of Culturally
Responsive Teaching Practices When Planning and Implementing Literacy Instruction
IRB ID **:** #PRO-FY2020-154
Exempt Approval: November 8, 2019

The University of Memphis Institutional Review Board, FWA00006815, has reviewed your
submission in accordance with all applicable statuses and regulations as well as ethical
principles.

Approval of this project is given with the following obligations:

When the project is finished a completion submission is required

1. Any changes to the approved protocol requires board approval prior to implementation
2. When necessary submit an incident/adverse events for board review
3. Human subjects training is required every 2 years and is to be kept current at
   citiprogram.org.

For any additional questions or concerns please contact us at irb@memphis.edu or 901.678.2705

Thank you,
James P. Whelan, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chair
The University of Memphis

September 18, 2019

Principal Investigator: Latwayla Knowlton
Board: Institutional Review Board (IRB)
Study: FY19-20-47 Examining Teacher Candidates' Beliefs About Culturally Responsive
Teaching When Planning and Implementing Literacy Instruction
Submission Type: Initial
Board Decision: Exempt
Approval Date: September 18, 2019

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research study.
The Arkansas State University IRB has determined this research qualifies for exemption under
45 CFR 46.104(d) under:

Category 2.(ii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive,
diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of
public behavior (including visual or auditory recording).
Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place
the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing,
employability, educational advancement, or reputation.

- Changes to the protocol must be submitted to the IRB for approval as they may alter
  exempt-eligible status.
- Continuing IRB review is not required if there are no changes to the protocol.
- When the research is complete, please log in to Cayuse to submit a closure report.
- Investigators are also asked to promptly report any unanticipated problems or complaints
  to the Committee.

Please retain a copy of this correspondence for your records. If you have any questions, please
contact the Director of Research Compliance at (870) 972-2694 or IRB@astate.edu. Please
include your study title and study label.

Sincerely,

Amy R. Pearce, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board

Appendix B

Survey Recruitment Email

Dear Participant:

My name is Latwayla Knowlton, and I am a Curriculum and Instructional Leadership doctoral student at The University of Memphis. I am under the supervision of Dr. J. Helen Perkins. Currently, I am collecting data for my doctoral dissertation, which will examine beliefs about how undergraduate teacher candidates in a small, rural university in the south consider diversity and culturally responsive teaching when planning and implementing literacy instruction in the elementary discipline area classroom. You are being invited to take part in this research study because you are a teacher candidate enrolled in a Content Area Reading and Writing in Elementary course preparing for disciplinary literacy instruction. Thank you in advance for your participation in this study.

Should you agree to participate in this research, you will be asked to complete an online survey that consist of two parts. The first part of the survey collects demographic information. The second part of the survey asks you to describe your beliefs about 10 statements regarding the knowledge and skills necessary to consider diversity when planning and implementing instruction. The survey should take no more than 10-15 minutes to complete.

Additionally, upon completion of the survey, you may be chosen at random to participate in an interview on a later date. The interview will consist of additional semi-structured questions to further assess your understanding of how teacher candidates' beliefs about the knowledge and skills necessary to consider diversity when planning and implementing instruction connect to planning and implementing disciplinary literacy instruction using Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) practices in your future disciplinary literacy classroom. If you are chosen to participate in the interview, you will receive an email invitation with the location, date, and time of the interview. The duration of the interview is estimated as 30-45 minutes.

Your decision to participate or decline participation in this study is totally voluntary, and you have the right to terminate your participation at any time without penalty. While completing the survey, if you decide at any time that you do not wish to continue, simply close your browser. Any responses you may have provided prior to closing your browser will be removed from data storage an analysis. Likewise, you may discontinue the interview at any time without penalty.

There are no risks to individuals participating in this research beyond those that exist in daily life. While there are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study, the data obtained will inform future teacher preparation and contribute to the literature regarding preparing teacher candidates for Culturally Relevant Teaching (CRT) practices in disciplinary literacy classrooms. There will be no financial compensation for your participation in this research.

The privacy of each participant and confidential information connected to the research study will always be maintained. Data collected via the survey will be provided by a secure, reliable survey agency, and no Internet Protocol (IP) address will be collected when participants respond to the survey. The researcher will not share identifiable or individual information with anyone. The

researcher will be the only person authorized to view and access survey data. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, or if any problems arise, please contact:

Researcher:
Latwayla L. Knowlton
Doctoral Candidate
Department of Instruction and Curriculum Leadership—Reading
The University of Memphis
870-219-5017
lllamber@memphis.edu

Advisor:
Dr. Helen J. Perkins
Professor
Department of Instruction and Curriculum Leadership—Reading
The University of Memphis
901-678-4195
jhperkns@memphis.edu

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights in this research study, please contact the University of Memphis IRB:

IRB Chair:
Chair, Institutional Review Board (IRB)
The University of Memphis
901-678-5071
slhayes@memphis.edu

Following the link below indicates that you have read the description of the study, and you agree to participate in the study.

College of Education Diversity for Teacher Candidates

<div align="center">

Appendix C

Informed Consent Statement

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You are being asked to participate in a research study. Latwayla Knowlton of the University of Memphis, Department Instruction, Curriculum and Leadership is in charge of the study. She is being guided by Dr. J. Helen Perkins.

The purpose of this research is to examine undergraduate elementary teacher candidates' beliefs about the use of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning for the implementation of literacy instruction. You are being invited to participate because you are an undergraduate elementary teacher candidate enrolled in one of the following required reading courses during the Fall 2019 semester: Content Area Reading and Writing in Elementary, Foundations of Reading Instruction, or Literacy Assessment, Diagnosis and Development.

Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete an anonymous online survey. The anonymous online survey asks you to respond by answering 28 questions regarding your beliefs about culturally responsive teaching practices and literacy instruction. You will also be asked to complete 15 demographic questions. Your participation should take about 10 minutes. Participating in this study is completely voluntary and if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any point without penalty. To discontinue the survey, simply close your browser.

As a participant in this research study, there no direct benefits to you for participating. However, the data obtained will inform future teacher preparation and contribute to the literature regarding preparing teacher candidates for culturally relevant teaching practices in literacy classrooms. No financial compensation will be provided for your participation in this research study.

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. We will make every effort to keep the information collected from you private. We will protect the confidentiality of your research records by collecting data via a secure, reliable survey agency, and no Internet Protocol (IP) address will be collected when participants respond to the survey. The primary investigator will not share identifiable or individual information with anyone. The primary investigator will be the only person authorized to view and access survey data as well.

If you have questions about the research, you may contact:

    Primary Researcher:
    Latwayla L. Knowlton
    Doctoral Candidate

Department of Instruction and Curriculum Leadership—Reading
The University of Memphis
870-219-5017
lllamber@memphis.edu

Advisor:
Dr. Helen J. Perkins
Professor
Department of Instruction and Curriculum Leadership—Reading
The University of Memphis
901-678-4195
jhperkns@memphis.edu

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject please contact:
Institutional Review Board, University of Memphis, irb@memphis.edu , or 901.768.2715

ELECTRONIC CONSENT

Please select your choice below. You may print a copy of this consent documents for your records. Clicking on the "Agree" button indicate that you

- Have read the above information
- Voluntarily agree to participate
- Are 18 years of age or older

Appendix D

Demographic Background Survey

Please complete the following survey.

This section addresses general information.

1. Identify your gender
   o Female
   o Male

2. How do you identify your ethnicity?
   o Asian/Pacific Islander
   o Black, non-Hispanic
   o American Indian/Native Alaskan
   o White, non-Hispanic
   o Biracial/Multi-racial (belonging to more than one racial group)

3. Age
   o 18-19
   o 20-21
   o 22-23
   o 24 or older

4. The teachers in my high school presented multicultural viewpoints about historical and current events
   o Never
   o Rarely
   o Occasionally
   o Regularly

5. The student population in my high school spoke primarily
   o English
   o Spanish
   o Chinese
   o Bilingual or Multilingual

6. The student population in my high school included students with disabilities (check all that apply)
   o In the general education classroom
   o In separate classes
   o Not applicable/no students with disabilities
   o Don't know

7. Was your high school population considered ethnically diverse?
   - ○ Yes
   - ○ No
8. Was the teaching staff in your high school ethnically diverse?
   - ○ Yes
   - ○ No
9. Was the community in which you were raised considered ethnically diverse?
   - ○ Yes
   - ○ No
10. How would you describe the student body at this institution?
   - ○ Mainly one racial group
   - ○ Two or more racial groups
   - ○ Many racial groups

11. Which required reading course are you enrolled in during the Fall 2019 semester?
   - ○ Foundations of Reading
   - ○ Content Area Reading and Writing in Elementary
   - ○ Literacy Assessment, Diagnosis and Development
   - ○ Other

12. Have you always lived in the same county/town where you graduated?
   - ○ Yes
   - ○ No

13. Do you plan to return to your county/town after graduation from college?
   - ○ Yes
   - ○ No

14. What type of community did you live in while growing up?
   - ○ Rural (population less than 25,000 with farmland)
   - ○ Urban (population more than 500,000 people; large city)
   - ○ Suburban (larger than rural area, smaller than urban)

15. Identify the number of languages spoken fluently in your home, including English
   - ○ one
   - ○ two
   - ○ three
   - ○ more than three

Appendix E

Culturally Responsive Instruction Curriculum Survey (CRICS)

The following question ask about beliefs of the effectiveness of culturally responsive teaching practices when planning and implementing literacy instruction. Please respond to each question using the scale below (for each question, select the number that best reflects your response). Please answer open and honestly, there are no right or wrong answers.

ENVIRONMENT

How effective do you believe the following culturally responsive teaching practices are when PLANNING the ENVIRONMENT for literacy instruction?

When PLANNING literacy instruction, I believe...

1. Classrooms contain visuals that represent the cultural heritage of the students.
    a. Not effective at all
    b. Slightly effective
    c. Very Effective
    d. Extremely effective

2. Seating arrangements support collaboration during classroom activities.
    a. Not effective at all
    b. Slightly effective
    c. Very Effective
    d. Extremely effective

3. Incorporation of culturally relevant artifacts in lesson
    a. Not effective at all
    b. Slightly effective
    c. Very Effective
    d. Extremely effective

4. Visual displays using native language(s) of students
    a. Not effective at all
    b. Slightly effective
    c. Very Effective
    d. Extremely effective

5. Pictures of culturally relevant positive role models
    a. Not effective at all
    b. Slightly effective
    c. Very Effective
    d. Extremely effective

6. Library of culturally and linguistically relevant books
   a. Not effective at all
   b. Slightly effective
   c. Very Effective
   d. Extremely effective

7. Culturally relevant music is played
   a. Not effective at all
   b. Slightly effective
   c. Very Effective
   d. Extremely effective

8. Work samples that reflect students' culture are displayed
   a. Not effective at all
   b. Slightly effective
   c. Very Effective
   d. Extremely effective

9. Use of a variety of teaching tools to present culturally relevant materials (video, DVD, musical instruments, internet)
   a. Not effective at all
   b. Slightly effective
   c. Very Effective
   d. Extremely effective

10. Rules are positively framed with cultural sensitivity
    a. Not effective at all
    b. Slightly effective
    c. Very Effective
    d. Extremely effective

11. Examples of student involvement are present in the classroom
    a. Not effective at all
    b. Slightly effective
    c. Very Effective
    d. Extremely effective

CURRICULUM

How effective do you believe the following culturally responsive teaching practices are when PLANNING the CURRICULUM for literacy instruction?

When PLANNING literacy instruction, I believe...

12. Main texts represent diverse cultures including those represented in the classroom.
    a. Not effective at all

b. Slightly effective
c. Very Effective
d. Extremely effective

13. Supplementary material to text or standards—the teacher incorporates various cultural
    a. Not effective at all
    b. Slightly effective
    c. Very Effective
    d. Extremely effective

14. Events/experiences/activities to relate lessons with students' culturally specific prior knowledge.
    a. Not effective at all
    b. Slightly effective
    c. Very Effective
    d. Extremely effective

15. The teacher includes open discussions of historical, cultural, and political influences of the topic addressed.
    a. Not effective at all
    b. Slightly effective
    c. Very Effective
    d. Extremely effective

16. The teacher relates current events to the topic and how this relates to the students and allows for open discussion.
    a. Not effective at all
    b. Slightly effective
    c. Very Effective
    d. Extremely effective

17. Activities/discussions/questions are open-ended to allow for critical analysis and inclusion of ideas by students.
    a. Not effective at all
    b. Slightly effective
    c. Very Effective
    d. Extremely effective

18. Teacher collects data regarding the students' culture and background (ex: journals, quick writes, family tree).
    a. Not effective at all
    b. Slightly effective
    c. Very Effective
    d. Extremely effective

19. Integration of culture and background knowledge into the curriculum (ex: list of relevant books posted for students to read, incorporated students' culture into activities.
    a. Not effective at all
    b. Slightly effective
    c. Very Effective
    d. Extremely effective

TEACHING STYLE

How effective do you believe the following culturally responsive teaching practices are when IMPLEMENTING the TEACHING STYLE for literacy instruction?

When IMPLEMENTING literacy instruction, I believe...

20. The environment is nurturing and encourages participation.
    a. Not effective at all
    b. Slightly effective
    c. Very Effective
    d. Extremely effective

21. The teacher validates students' language (ex: there is no wrong answer. Allows/supports primary language, handles speech errors/language, written and spoken errors by modeling correct grammar and sentence structure without calling student out).
    a. Not effective at all
    b. Slightly effective
    c. Very Effective
    d. Extremely effective

22. The teacher validates students' cultures (ex: encourages students to talk about their own experiences, knows about students' home life and culture. Teacher should conduct home or student survey. Incorporate different cultures into curriculum.)
    a. Not effective at all
    b. Slightly effective
    c. Very Effective
    d. Extremely effective

23. There is positive student/teacher interaction. (ex: positive statements, nonverbal gestures, proximity to students, teacher should actively build relationships.
    a. Not effective at all
    b. Slightly effective
    c. Very Effective
    d. Extremely effective

24. Incorporate cooperative learning strategies (group vs. partners vs. individual working arrangements in class.

a. Not effective at all
b. Slightly effective
c. Very Effective
d. Extremely effective

25. Positive classroom management style. (authoritative or authoritarian?)
    a. Not effective at all
    b. Slightly effective
    c. Very Effective
    d. Extremely effective

26. Differentiated Instruction (doesn't teach to the middle, incorporates all students, lecture vs. small group instruction)
    a. Not effective at all
    b. Slightly effective
    c. Very Effective
    d. Extremely effective

27. Teacher self-reflection (journal, daily log)
    a. Not effective at all
    b. Slightly effective
    c. Very Effective
    d. Extremely effective

28. Progress monitoring (systemically evaluates effectiveness of instruction)
    a. Not effective at all
    b. Slightly effective
    c. Very Effective
    d. Extremely effective