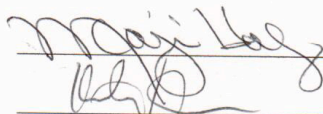


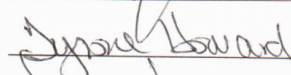

CLASS DISMISSED: AN EXAMINATION OF HOW ELEMENTARY TEACHER
CANDIDATES ARE PREPARED FOR TITLE I SCHOOLS

by

Shamaine Kyann Bertrand
A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty
of
George Mason University
in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy
Education

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Class Dismissed: An Examination of How Teacher Candidates Are Prepared for Title I Schools

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Dedication

This is dedicated to my two heartbeats, Ariana Simone Bertrand and Kennedy Peyton Bertrand, thank you for letting mommy chase her dreams. You girls are my inspiration and motivation, never forget that you can do anything.

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“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11, NIV) I would like to thank God for choosing me to do this work. I do not take this lightly and I am thankful for the plan He has for my life.

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List of Abbreviations

No Child Left Behind	NCLB
Every Student Succeeds Act.....	ESSA
United States Department of Education	USDOE
Limited English Proficient	LEP
National Association of Education Progress	NAEP

Abstract

CLASS DISMISSED: AN EXAMINATION OF HOW TEACHER CANDIDATES ARE PREPARED FOR TITLE I SCHOOLS

Shamaine Kyann Bertrand, Ph.D.

George Mason University, 2017

Dissertation Director: Dr. Marjorie Hall Haley

This study shares the perspectives of current elementary education teacher candidates with field and/or internship experiences in Title I schools. It provides some insight into the points of view of these teacher candidates who are able to inform teacher preparation programs about working with students from impoverished backgrounds. There is value in deeply understanding what teacher candidates believe they need to effectively meet the academic needs of students from low-income backgrounds.

For this study, elementary education teacher candidates and elementary education faculty participants engaged in an in-depth semi-structured interview; teacher candidates conducted photovoice activities; and provided demographic data. In addition, a document analysis of course syllabi was completed to understand how this particular college of education was preparing prospective teachers for teaching in Title I school settings. A qualitative research design was used to study and present how elementary teacher

candidates perceived their teacher preparation in regards to preparing them to teach in Title I or high-poverty schools. In addition, the research was designed to: a) impart the perspectives of what current elementary teacher candidates feel it takes to be prepared to enter the Title I classroom and b) inform teacher preparation programs about reforms to better meet the needs of current and future teacher candidates.

The findings of this study revealed that their traditional teacher preparation program lacked training teacher candidates to teach Title I students. Themes emerged in this study that included media, race, and Title I students' limited experiences. In addition, teacher candidates shared general perceptions of teacher preparation, what is working in their teacher preparation program, and what is missing in their teacher preparation program in regards to preparing them to teach students in Title I schools.

Recommendations for teacher education included modifying field experiences, training of faculty focused on poverty and social justice, recruitment of minority teacher candidates, and including content in teacher preparation programs focused on Title I schools. The voices of teacher candidates might provide colleges of education with ideas that may strengthen their current teacher preparation programs and prepare candidates to work with students in Title I schools.

Chapter One

From the moment students enter a school, the most important factor in their success is not the color of their skin or the income of their parents, it's the person standing at the front of the classroom...America's future depends on its teachers. That is why we are taking steps to prepare teachers for their difficult responsibilities and encouraging them to stay in the profession. That is why we are creating new pathways to teaching and new incentives to bring teachers to schools where they are needed most.

-Former President Barack Obama, March 10, 2009

In September 2011, the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) released the publication *Our Future, Our Teachers: The Obama Administration's Plan for Education Reform and Improvement*. The purpose of this publication was to share a plan for teacher preparation programs that will provide every teacher candidate with high quality preparation and support they need, so that every student can have the effective teachers¹ they deserve. In this publication Former Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan highlighted how most teacher preparation programs “operate partially blindfolded, without access to data that tell them how effective their graduates are in elementary and secondary school classrooms after they leave their teacher preparation programs” (USDOE, 2011). He also stated, “too few teacher preparation programs offer the type of rigorous, clinical experience that prepares future teachers for the realities of today’s

¹ Although there is no specific definition for an effective teacher, researchers have defined an effective teacher as one who understands subject matter deeply and flexibly; creates effective scaffolds and supports for learning; assesses

diverse classrooms” (USDOE, 2011). This publication focused on an issue in education that needs to be addressed, which is how teacher preparation programs can prepare prospective teachers to be effective in diverse classrooms.

Today’s diverse classrooms enroll approximately 16 million children below the age of 18 who are living in poverty (Addy & Wight, 2012); therefore, it is necessary for teachers to know how to meet the academic needs of these children. Consensus among educational researchers, administrators, and practitioners continues to grow stronger that teacher preparation programs are not adequately preparing prospective teachers to teach children who live in poverty (Duncan, 2009; Milner, 2015; Yeo & Kanpol, 1999). In order for teachers to have a chance to adequately support and teach students living in poverty, teacher preparation programs must be reformed (Milner, 2015).

In addition, an expected 1.6 million teachers will retire over the next ten years, and 1.6 million new teachers will be needed to take their place (USDOE, 2011). Given this reality, teacher preparation programs need to provide special attention to preparing teachers to effectively teach in diverse classroom settings, particularly in high-poverty classrooms. This study sought to explore elementary education teacher candidates’ perspectives about their teacher preparation and to what extent they were prepared to teach in Title I schools with a high percentage of students from impoverished backgrounds. The need to effectively prepare teachers to serve diverse student populations in public schools, specifically schools serving economically disenfranchised communities and communities of color, has been the subject of much research (Cochran-Smith, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Milner, 2003; Milner, 2015; Obidah & Howard,

2005; Ullucci & Howard, 2015). Gay (2010) argued that the changes needed in the current ideology of teacher education demand a powerful refocus to cultural diversity, which to date has not been implemented in teacher education reform. Teacher preparation programs need to refocus practices and experiences to support teachers who work with some of the most vulnerable students in U.S. schools (Milner, 2015). It is imperative that all who enter the teaching field are prepared to teach a racially, economically, ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse student population.

Most traditional teacher preparation programs are 4-year Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Bachelor of Science (BS) degree programs. However, in the State of Virginia this is not the case. Instead, prospective teachers must have a 4-year degree and then apply to a teacher preparation program for their initial teacher licensure, which can be combined with a Master's of Education degree. Customarily, these programs include: a) general education courses, b) professional education courses, c) specialized courses in a certification area, d) a specific number of hours of field experience, and e) at least one school internship. In schools with racially, economically, linguistically, ethnically, and culturally diverse students populations, teachers cannot depend solely on their content knowledge to guarantee that students will reach their highest academic potential (Harrison, Smithry, McAfee, & Weiner, 2006).

While teacher education curriculum is comprehensive, it often fails to include information that will prepare teacher candidates to teach in Title I schools that are often located in underserved areas. This study included an examination of the curriculum of a teacher preparation program to understand what prospective teachers were learning in

their courses that could or would prepare them to teach in Title I schools that have a diverse student population. The next section emphasizes the need for teacher preparation programs to prepare prospective educators to teach in Title I or high poverty schools.

Statement of the Problem

In the first years of their teaching career, most teachers have difficulty connecting with children from impoverished backgrounds because these teachers lack knowledge about working in low-income and/or urban settings (Sleeter, 2001). Moreover, these teachers have had little to no experience working with students from impoverished backgrounds or urban settings. To increase the effectiveness of teacher preparation, these programs should include coursework and provide experiences that will enable teacher candidates to be sensitive or empathetic to the vast array of needs that children in poverty bring to the classroom (Pellino, 2006). These students need effective teachers in order to succeed academically; therefore, there is a need for greater understanding of how teacher preparation programs prepare teachers to be effective in Title 1 schools where the majority of the students are from low-income backgrounds.

Students from these background have achievement disparities that are often attributed to socioeconomic factors. Research has shown that while economic status and parents' educational attainment are large factors in student achievement, teacher quality is the most significant determinant of student success; and, teacher certification and educational background are positively correlated with student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 1999a, 2000; Smith & Gorard, 2007; Stronge et al., 2011). In addition, scholars have found that students, who face many barriers and are low performing, can

attain higher levels of scholastic success when taught by effective teachers (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2012; Heck, 2007).

In 2014, the Children's Defense Fund (CDF), (2015) found that 15.5 million children (21.1%) were poor. Children of color, who will be the majority of children in America in 2020, continue to be disproportionately poor, where 37% of black children and 32% of Hispanic children are poor, compared to 12% of white non-Hispanic children (CDF, 2015). These statistics illustrate the need for teachers who are entering into the field to know how to effectively meet the academic needs of diverse learners, specifically students from impoverished backgrounds. These children make up the diverse student population sitting in today's classrooms that prospective teacher must teach. In order to guarantee prospective teachers are effective and improve teacher quality, there should be a greater emphasis on educators and the education, training, and support that they receive.

Most university graduates of teacher preparation programs are overwhelmingly white, middle class, monolingual, and show little interest in securing teaching positions in urban, hard-to-staff, and/or poor schools² (Groulx, 2001). Moreover, those who do enter teaching in these schools often abandon them as soon as they have opportunities to move to more affluent, better-resourced schools (Scafidi, Sjoquist, & Stinebrickner, 2007). The demand in poor schools for effective and highly qualified teachers is what Cochran-Smith and Fries (2001) termed a 'Teacher Quality Gap'. This phrase refers to

² Across the literature the following terms: urban schools, hard to staff schools, high needs schools, poor schools, Title 1 schools, diverse schools are used synonymously and in this research report.

the unequal and inequitable distribution across schools and districts of well-qualified teachers (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001).

Given appropriate courses and field experiences, teacher candidates could learn about urban schools, communities of color, and historical and institutional causes of persistent inequalities in opportunities and outcomes for low-income and/or poor students and their families. While graduates of teacher-education programs are considered highly qualified teachers because they meet state teacher requirements, they graduate from teacher preparation programs and struggle to provide instruction for the diverse student populations they are supposed to teach (Akiba, 2011). The next section provides a rationale for this study.

Rationale for the Study

A review of existing literature on teacher education, teacher quality, and the quality of teacher-student relationships, provides extensive research on: a) teacher preparation programs, b) reforms that require highly qualified and effective teachers, c) the challenges teachers face in low-income and/or poor schools, and d) sharing information on the growing population of students of color (Carey, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Strong et al., 2011). However, what is missing are the voices of teacher candidates who completed field experiences and internships in these low-income schools and their opinions of whether their teacher preparation programs prepared them and if so, to what degree, for Title I/high poverty schools.

Research suggests that policymakers, designers of teacher preparation programs, teachers, and teacher candidates cannot just be aware of the changing demographics, but

must be prepared with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to meet the needs of diverse learners (Causey, Thomas, & Armento, 2000; Feng, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Given this knowledge, it is imperative that teacher candidates, policymakers, and designers of teacher preparation programs discuss the educational needs of low-income learners in Title I/high-poverty classrooms. Some progressive teacher preparation programs include diversity training, multiculturalism, and effective strategies for urban schools as part of the teacher preparation curriculum (Nuñez & Fernandez, 2006). While some teacher preparation programs address diversity training, the traditional student teaching experience does not adequately prepare candidates for teaching in high-poverty schools (McKinney, Haberman, Stafford-Johnson, & Robinson, 2008). Additionally, to meet the needs of Title I schools with teacher shortages, many teacher preparation programs have reduced requirements, and some schools of education have lowered standards (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Teaching Preparation Task Force, 2012; Selwyn, 2007). In spite of the needs facing teachers in high-poverty schools, teacher training to meet those needs remains stagnant (Jacob & Lefgren, 2007).

Many research studies emphasized the need for a specific type of knowledge, teaching pedagogy, and dispositions for teachers to work successfully in high poverty schools (Delpit, 1988; Haberman, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 2009). However, policymakers, educators in colleges of education and PK-6 public schools, and teacher candidates with field or internship experiences in these schools rarely discussed reestablishing the requirements for a teacher to be highly qualified in order to be effective in high poverty schools. Although Haberman (1991) concentrated on characteristics of successful

teachers of children in poverty, he did not directly address the need for policymakers, teacher preparation programs, public schools, and teacher candidates to define what effective high quality teacher characteristics or qualifications were needed in these settings. Rushton (2001) and Sconzert, Iazzeto, and Purkey (2000) illustrated the continued need for more information on which elements of current teacher preparation programs successfully prepare teachers to teach in urban settings and/or Title I settings and which elements are not effective in this endeavor. Based on the findings, this study will ultimately assist in informing the decisions of teacher preparation programs and policymakers about what is needed to guarantee prospective teachers are effective teachers in all education settings, and specifically Title I schools. Given this framework which outlines the gravity of the current locus, the following section outlines research questions for this study.

Research Questions

This study explored how teacher candidates with field experience and/or internship experience in Title I schools perceived their teacher preparation in regards to preparing them to be effective high quality teachers in Title I schools. In addition, this study gave teacher candidates an opportunity to share what they believed they needed to be successful in this particular setting. While both elementary teacher candidates and elementary education faculty were interviewed to provide information for this question, conducting a document analysis on the courses offered in an elementary education program revealed what was being taught regarding Title I schools, students in poverty, or

teaching in an urban setting. Therefore, the first question has a sub-part a) to address course syllabi.

To examine the extent to which elementary education teacher candidates were being prepared by their teacher preparation programs to teach in Title I schools, the following research questions were addressed:

- 1) What role does teacher education play in how prospective teacher candidates understand Title I schools and low-income students?
 - a) If and how are the understanding of Title I schools and low-income students reflected in the course syllabi of a teacher preparation program?
- 2) Based on course work, field experiences, and internships do teacher candidates believe their teacher education program prepared them to teach in a Title I school?

This study used *photovoice* which is photo elicitation as a means of data collection to answer the following questions:

Photovoice Activity Research Questions

- a) What do teacher candidates believe they will need to be successful in a Title I school?
- b) What challenges do teacher candidates believe they will face while teaching in a Title I school?

These research questions were explored through the theoretical frameworks, Critical Theory and Sense-Making Theory described in the next section.

Theoretical Framework

Two major theories served as theoretical foundations for this study: Critical theory and Sense-making.

Critical theory. Researchers believe critical theory can help produce knowledge that can change existing oppressive structures and remove oppression through empowerment (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). This theory has a dual purpose; it acts as a lens to view situations, and it is a means to change situations (Giroux, 1983). In the most general sense, critical theory is a set of ideas about society that has the ability to transform society. Critical theory seeks to find out how things should be, how things are, and suggests a plan for change; therefore, it is descriptive and prescriptive (Giroux, 1983).

Critical theory has influenced educational research in many ways (Aronwitz, 2003; Giroux, 1983). When applied to education, critical theory “questions the existing economic, political, and social purposes of schooling and examines policy through the lens of oppressed groups, with a normative orientation toward freeing disenfranchised groups from domination and subjugation” (Cooper, Fusarelli, & Randall, 2004, p. 9). Critical education theory is practical and seeks to make changes within a system. In order to make these changes critical theory not only addresses policy, but it also seeks to transform individuals from dominated objects into active subjects who are self-determining (Bronner, 2011; Morrison, 2001).

From the perspective of critical theory, policy analyses focus on the obvious and hidden uses of power through which “policy is transformed into power” (Morrison, 2001, p. 216). In order to do this, critical educational theorists study the relationships between schools and society and ask if inequality is reduced or perpetuated by various policies and curricula (Morrison, 2001). Using critical theory as a framework to examine how colleges

of education are training prospective teachers to prepare them to teach in Title I schools disrupts the dominant narrative and challenges the dominant perspective of traditional teacher preparation programs. Critical theory provided a lens for this study that critically analyzed course syllabi in search of literature, discussions, and assignments that prepare prospective teachers for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

Critical educational theory seeks to make modifications within a system (Bronner, 2011; Morrison, 2001). To make these modifications, critical theory seeks to transform individuals from dominating objects into self-determined active subjects (Cooper et al., 2004). The goal of this research was to elucidate and re-configure policy about what teacher candidates will need to be successful in Title I schools and transform teacher preparation programs in order to prepare prospective teachers for Title I classrooms. Initiatives such as Excellent Educators for All and federal laws such as *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* and *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* acknowledge that many highly qualified or high quality teachers are unprepared for the realities of a Title I classroom. As a result, teachers are entering Title I schools feeling overwhelmed and completely dependent upon their administrators, colleagues, and curriculum specialists to provide them with teaching direction and classroom management strategies.

If the federal government's definition of a highly qualified teacher required that these teachers entered the classroom prepared to teach students of color, as well as students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, then these teachers would likely be better prepared to effectively teach in any school, but specifically Title I schools. As such, it is possible that highly qualified teachers with exposure and knowledge to teach in Title I

schools would greatly reduce the number of ineffective teachers working with low-income minority students and lessen the perpetuation of inequality in our schools.

Sense-making theory. The second foundational theory was sense-making. The sense-making framework is an effort to study how people construct sense of their worlds and, in particular, how they construct information needs and uses for information in the process of sense-making (Dervin, Foreman-Wernet, & Lauterbach, 2003). Sense-making is central to all communicating situations; (whether they are intra-personal, interpersonal, mass, cross-cultural, societal, or international) the sense-making approach is seen as having wide applicability (Dervin et al., 2003). Dervin et al. (2003) used this theory to search for patterns in how people construct sense rather than for mechanistic input-output relationships. Sense-making focuses on how individuals use the observations of others as well as their own observations to construct their pictures of reality and use these pictures to guide behavior (Dervin et al., 2003). The sense-making framework assumes that sense-making behavior is responsive to and mandated by changing situational conditions (Dervin, 1983).

Using sense-making as a framework for this study made sense of why and how teacher candidates understand Title 1 institutions in which they might work and the children qualifying for Title I. This theory provided insight into how teacher candidates who have field or internship experience in Title I schools believed they were being prepared by their teacher preparation program to teach in Title I schools. Sense-making “made sense” of their experiences and provided suggestions for what changes, if any need to occur in teacher preparation programs in order for teachers to be successful in

classrooms with students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds. The next section compiles the definitions of terms that were explored throughout this research.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms are essential to the reader's understanding and context of this study.

Title I schools. Forty percent or more of the student population receives free or reduced lunch (USDOE, 2014a).

Social class. Marx and Engel (1967) defined class as one's relation to the means of production. An understanding of social class as one's positions in economically based social hierarchies is clearly influenced by Marxist lines of thought (Kamieniecki & O'Brien, 1984). In this study, class is rooted in these Marxist and neo-Marxist formulations of social class. Class is referred to as stable demographic aspects of a person that reflect the particular economically associated skill sets and opportunities an individual has, such as income, occupational prestige, and educational attainment.

High poverty schools. Schools that are oversized, under-funded, and located in poor working class communities, comprised of mainly non-White and linguistic minorities often headed by single parent households (Singer, 1996).

Effective teachers. Although there is no specific definition for an effective teacher, researchers have defined an effective teacher as one who understands subject matter deeply and flexibly; creates effective scaffolds and supports for learning; assesses student learning continuously and adapts teaching to student needs; and provides clear

standards, constant feedback, and opportunities for revising work (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

Highly qualified teacher. In Section 9101 of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, the Highly Qualified Teacher is defined as one who: a) has a bachelor's degree or higher, b) holds full state certification, and c) demonstrates subject specific competency in assigned core academics (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

Teacher candidate. A student enrolled in an approved teacher preparation program who aspires to become a classroom teacher after completing course requirement and passing a teacher competency exam.

Professional development schools. “a superb laboratory for education schools to experiment with the initiatives designed to improve student achievement” (Levine, 2006, p. 105).

This chapter provided an overview of the problem and explained the importance of teachers being prepared by colleges of education to teach in Title I schools. This chapter indicated the need for teacher preparation programs to prepare all teachers to teach in high-poverty schools so all students can have effective highly qualified teachers in every classroom.

The next chapter reviews literature related to: a) the challenges teachers face in Title I/high-poverty schools, b) teacher preparation for high-poverty schools, c) distribution of teacher quality, and d) effective teachers in Title I schools. Although there are many studies about teachers, teacher candidates, teaching, and education, there are minimal studies that sought out teacher candidates' perspectives on these topics.

Chapter Two

The literature reviewed for this study is divided into four sections: a) the challenges teachers face in Title I/High poverty schools, b) teacher preparation for high-poverty schools, c) distribution of teacher quality, and d) effective teachers in Title I schools.

The first section focuses on the challenges teachers face in Title I schools. The demographics of U.S. schools are changing at rapid rates, the demands placed upon students, and teachers are increasing (McDonald, 2005). Not only do teachers need to be able to teach their subject(s), but they also need to reach a diverse population of students with whom they may be very unfamiliar (McDonald, 2005).

The second section looks at how teacher preparation programs are preparing teacher candidates to teach in high-poverty schools. A preliminary analysis of the literature on diversity, state and national program standards for teacher preparation, and teacher preparation programs in the United States suggests a lack of emphasis on social class (Banks, 2004; Jennings, 2007; Nieto, 2000). With more than 16 million students in poverty attending U.S. public schools, teacher preparation programs need to emphasize teaching in high-poverty or Title I schools.

The third section focuses on the distribution of teacher quality. Most university graduates of teacher-education programs, who are overwhelmingly White, middle class,

and monolingual, show little interest in securing teaching positions in urban, hard-to-staff, and/or poor schools (Groulx, 2001).

The final section examines the traits of an effective teacher and whether or not being highly qualified results in being an effective teacher. The federal government under the *NCLB* legislation deems that a highly qualified teacher have a bachelor's degree, engage in teacher preparation programs, and pass certification. The definition of highly qualified teachers does not refer to the quality of instruction they deliver as teachers, but rather the completion of educational and/or schooling requirements.

Challenges Teachers Face in Title I/High-poverty Schools

In Section 9101 of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, the Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) is defined as one who: a) has a bachelor's degree or higher, b) holds full state certification, and c) demonstrates subject specific competency in assigned core academics (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). There is nothing in this legislation that requires a highly qualified teacher to have experience teaching low-income or economically disadvantaged students. Because there is no requirement for highly qualified teachers to have experience teaching low-income students, many teacher preparation programs do not focus on teaching this specific demographic of students. Throughout a teachers' career he/she will teach at least one student from a low-income background, therefore, it is imperative that teacher candidates know how to build relationships and meet the academic needs of students in poverty.

In order to provide additional funding to meet the needs of students from low-income backgrounds, the Title I program was created. This program was created to

provide financial assistance through state education agencies to local school districts and schools with a high number or percentage of low-income children. School districts and school sites that are eligible for Title I funding must allocate monies to ensure that disadvantaged students are supported in achieving in schools. According to National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, U.S. Department of Education, 2015), more than fifty thousand public schools across the country are eligible to use Title I funds to provide additional academic support and learning opportunities to help economically disadvantaged children master curricula and meet state standards in core academic subjects.

Schools use Title I funding to support high-quality instruction of students who are “at-risk” of failing to meet academic standards (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). In addition to the eligibility requirements, schools that are given Title I funding are also subject to sanctions if students do not meet accountability benchmarks. In order for teachers to be hired to teach in a Title I schools they must meet the *NCLB* definition of a highly qualified teacher. However, the *NCLB* definition of a highly qualified teacher does not require teachers to have knowledge of or experience working with students from low-income backgrounds. Therefore, it is possible for highly qualified teachers to be working in Title I schools who do not know how to effectively teach students from backgrounds that may differ from their own and students who may need academic support, encouragement, or tangible items. This should encourage teacher preparation programs and policymakers to revisit what a highly qualified Title I teacher is and whether or not teacher preparation programs are preparing prospective teachers to teach students in all

classroom settings, including students who attend Title I schools. Yet, some teachers feel that they should have more experience in order to be considered highly qualified in a Title I setting (Carey, 2004).

In today's Title I schools, many teachers find themselves in situations where they must work with students who may differ from themselves in race, culture, and socioeconomic backgrounds, thus, these teachers may be overwhelmed and unsure of how to connect with all students (McDonald, 2005). This leads teachers to ask themselves, "How will I relate to students who do not share my background" (McDonald, 2005, p. 419). Often, new teachers who are prepared in their subject area but lack the experience of teaching in general or teaching in a Title I setting, need the most help, are often placed in schools where students need the most attention. Teachers who have graduated from a teacher preparation program should be in a position to help students despite differences in their cultural, racial, or socioeconomic backgrounds. If teachers are unable to meet the needs of these students, it calls into question whether their teacher preparation programs have adequately prepared them (McDonald, 2005).

In some cases teachers have not attended a traditional teacher preparation program and instead matriculate at alternative teacher preparation programs. These alternative programs focus on certification exam preparation rather than the necessary education and preparation teachers need in order to deal effectively with diverse students in Title I school environments. Teachers in Title I classrooms who do not have the experience and knowledge to be effective are a disadvantage to both themselves and the students they teach. Furthermore, these novice teachers with less experience "are

particularly vulnerable, because they are more likely to be assigned low-performing students” (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2012). Many novice teachers receive little to no professional support and feedback, and more than likely do not receive any information regarding what an effective teacher does or how to help his or her students succeed (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2012).

According to the National Education Association, half of all new K-12 teachers will leave the teaching profession within the first five years (Ingersoll, 2003) citing a lack of support. The half of new K-12 teachers that stay in the profession stay in schools “where they feel successful, having created functional classrooms with students who are behaving appropriately and are academically engaged” (Greenburg et al., 2013, p. 1). The New Teacher Project (2013) conducted a study on *Perspectives of Irreplaceable Teachers* in order to obtain the views of outstanding teachers on improving high-poverty urban schools. This project administered surveys to top teachers and reported challenges such as: “Insufficient time for planning or collaboration with other teachers,” “having students who are behind academically or behaviorally challenging,” “having students whose out-of-school lives distract from their focus in school,” “having to work with other teachers who are not effective,” and “poor school leadership” (p. 18).

A large percentage of the respondents did report that they enjoyed teaching “in spite of the way the teaching profession is structured, not because of it” (The New Teacher Project, p. 24) and they reported finding “incredible fulfillment in their work with students” (p. 24). However, 75% of these respondents that represented the top teachers in America’s urban schools reported that they planned to stop teaching at their

school within five years and 60% reported that they planned to stop teaching within five years (The New Teacher Project, 2013). The New Teacher Project study finds the “structure of the teaching profession” to be a determinant of whether teachers stay or leave the field of education (The New Teacher Project, 2013). If urban schools provide teachers the opportunity to share their understanding of the institutions in which they work, it is possible that to address teachers’ challenges and these irreplaceable teachers would remain in these schools.

Nieto (2003) conducted a qualitative study that addressed the problem of teachers leaving the profession and sought to determine, from then current teachers’ points of view, notions of a ‘Highly Qualified Teacher’ and asked why some teachers quit while others stayed. Nieto led a group of Boston teachers through a one-year inquiry, for which the researcher had no preset questions allowing discussions to evolve. The findings of the study revealed that the teachers focused more on personal relationships and creating communities than they did on certification and educational qualifications. Teachers felt that, “Rather than ‘best practices’ or prescribed pedagogy...a combination of interrelated conditions and values keeps excellent teachers going, including love, autobiography, hope, anger, intellectual work, and the ability to shape the future” (p. 386). The following conclusions were made as a result of this one-year study:

- 1) A more diverse teaching population needs to be recruited.
- 2) Teachers need to know more about their students.
- 3) There is not enough time to do everything teachers need to do.

- 4) “No amount of decontextualized best practices” (p. 396) will make teachers more committed and prevent them from leaving the profession.
- 5) The way that teachers are currently prepared to teach (professional development and education courses) needs to change.

There are various challenges within today’s schools. In order for educators to be better prepared to teach in schools with high populations of students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds, they need more subject-specific, pedagogical, and classroom management education that is focused on teaching in Title I schools. However, teacher educational requirements have remained the same and, in some instances, they have decreased. The next section presents research discussing the teacher preparation needed for teachers in high-poverty schools.

Teacher Preparation for High-Poverty Schools

Public policy in the U.S. is filled with opinions about how teacher quality should be defined, what teacher preparation should include or exclude, and if teacher preparation is necessary (Berry, Hoke, & Hirsch, 2004; Cochran-Smith, 2001). Teacher education seems crucial to the preparation of teachers, especially as teachers are prepared to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse P-12 student population (Milner, 2010). Preparing teachers for diversity, equity, and social justice are perhaps the most challenging and daunting tasks facing the field of teacher education (Milner, 2010). However, these tasks are necessary in order for teacher candidates to be successful in the schools that need them to be effective the most. Ullucci and Howard (2015) addressed how teacher preparation programs can prepare teacher candidates for students from impoverished

backgrounds. These scholars suggested that teacher preparation programs include conversation and activities in their teacher preparation classroom that discuss the myths about poverty that teacher candidates bring with them. In addition, they provide anchor questions designed to undo the classist frameworks and the culture of poverty lens used in most traditional education classrooms (Ullucci & Howard, 2015). Having teacher candidates discuss their biases and their beliefs about students from impoverished backgrounds can help teachers change the way they view students in poverty. Teacher preparation programs need to discuss poverty in education, which has not happened often enough.

In synthesizing 40 years of research, the Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE) concluded that the context in which students learn is paramount and should not be dismissed from the instructional agenda (Tharp-Taylor & Nelson-Le Ball, 2005). Although the body of research indicated that culture is a viable part of instruction (Boykin, Tyler, Watkins-Lewis, & Kizzie, 2006; Williams, 2006), the literature does not explain the differences between ethnic and socioeconomic cultures. The two are not the same. Poverty has a unique culture that crosses racial and ethnic boundaries (Lewis, 1959). Vanerharr, Munoz, and Rodosky (2006) argued that teachers should be prepared on the culture of poverty as part of improving student achievement. Ryan, Fauth, & Brooks-Gunn (2006) suggested that teachers use the culture of poverty concept as a tool to help gain a better understanding of the challenges that impoverished children face. Ladson-Billings (2006) argued that there is a “poverty of culture” and not a culture of poverty, which is “a phrase to describe what they see as a pathology of poor

students and hide behind child poverty as an excuse for why they cannot be successful with some students.”

The understanding gained from a student of poverty may help teachers make small changes to their instructional schema, and perhaps develop effective methods of instruction. Currently, the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) Standards does not require teacher preparation programs to focus specifically on students in poverty; however, research presents a need for prospective teachers to have experience and education related to teaching students in poverty (Ullucci & Howard, 2015; Milner, 2015). In order to raise the performance of teacher candidates as practitioners in the nation’s P-12 schools and raise the stature of the profession, the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) and National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) merged to become CAEP. This new accrediting body has five CAEP standards that reflect the voice of the education field on what makes a quality educator (CAEP, 2013). The five standards are:

- 1.) Content and Pedagogical Knowledge
- 2.) Clinical Partnerships and Practice
- 3.) Candidate Quality, Recruitment, and Selectivity
- 4.) Program Impact
- 5.) Provider Quality, Continuous Improvement, and Capacity (CAEP, 2013)

CAEP has made diversity a crosscutting theme emphasizing the importance of diversity across all of teacher preparation program efforts. Along with technology, the second crosscutting theme, the commission stresses the significance of diversity, however

does not have any specific requirements for colleges of education to prepare prospective teachers for students from impoverished backgrounds. While these standards were created for colleges of education to use in order to prepare prospective teachers for all classrooms, they seem to suggest that all students have the same needs. The standards do not specifically address teaching students from low-income backgrounds or minority students which may result in teachers being unprepared to teach all students.

According to the National Center for Teaching Quality and National Education Association, universities and school districts must do more to prepare teachers for success in our most high-poverty schools (Berry, 2009). While universities are admitting teaching candidates that will teach students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds, most programs still do not adequately prepare teachers to perform effectively in high needs schools (Berry, 2009). Many schools fail to distinguish the differences between the work responsibilities of teachers in different school settings. The current public school demographics of students show a 9% decrease of White non-Hispanic students, a 1% decrease of Black students, and a 6% of Hispanic students as of Fall 2013 (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Given the acknowledged changes in demographics already underway in the U.S. there is an increased need for teachers who are prepared and willing to meet the needs and opportunities of working in school settings that often have great cultural diversity in their student populations and a high number of students who are from low-socioeconomic and/or poor backgrounds. In addition, these current demographics demonstrate a need for traditional teacher preparation programs to ensure teacher candidates are systemically prepared for diverse classrooms and communities.

In a study conducted by Jennings (2007), of 142 public university elementary and secondary programs in various regions of the United States, found that most programs that emphasized diversity focused on race/ethnicity, special needs, language diversity, economic (social class), gender, and sexual orientation. After analyzing the data, Jennings (2007) found programs placed the lowest value on social class. For example, elementary program coordinators who reported their programs rank-ordered their program's emphasis on economic status (social class) to be less than 2% in comparison to the categories of race and ethnicity, which was at 45.6%. This illustrates how unimportant providing prospective teachers with education or information regarding teaching students from different social classes.

This study highlights that class was and is still is dismissed when it comes to what education programs rank as important. According to Shiner and Soderff (2003), "teacher preparation programs often fail to provide their graduates with adequate knowledge and experience to be successful working in a multi-ethnic, multi-racial community – particularly those communities with high numbers of students living in poverty" (p. 24). If prospective teachers are not provided with the knowledge and experiences to be successful in schools with high numbers of low-income students, how are students who attend these schools supposed to be successful? How are teachers who will teach in these schools supposed to be successful?

Many participants in the New Teacher Project survey expressed that teacher preparation coursework "was not very useful over the long run" and almost half disagreed that their training "had helped them improve the quality of their teaching" (The

New Teacher Project, 2013, p. 12). When respondents were asked to choose something that improved the quality of their teaching, the statement “The teacher preparation I received prior to obtaining my first full-time teaching job” (p. 12) was chosen least. When asked about their pedagogical training, respondents’ answers also suggested a “troubling lack of rigor in their training programs” (p. 12). Furthermore, “59 % said that nearly all their classmates successfully completed training – even those who didn’t work very hard;” and almost half reported that, their program “granted certification (p. 12) to all candidates, even those who could not demonstrate success in the classroom” (The New Teacher Project, 2013).

I believe teacher preparation programs need to focus on the perspectives of current teacher candidates with experience in Title I schools regarding how teacher preparation coursework is preparing them for Title I schools. This will inform colleges of education about what pedagogical training prospective teachers need in order to be successful in Title I schools and knowing teacher candidates’ perspectives can help faculty adjust their coursework to meet the needs of teacher candidates. Also, I believe it is possible that effective preparation will yield teachers that stay in the field longer and are able to effectively handle the challenges of Title I schools.

Preservice teachers often report feeling unprepared in their ability to teach in low-income and/or poor schools (Whitney, Golez, Nagel, & Nieto, 2002). This sense of being unprepared is supported by additional research that indicates teachers are not prepared to meet the demands of the increasingly diverse populations of low-income and/or poor schools (Nieto, 1992; Sleeter, 2001). Most preservice teachers enter teacher preparation

programs, bringing prior knowledge and experiences they acquired from their families, personal experiences, and K-12 schooling; therefore, their beliefs developed long before they enter teacher preparation programs (Swartz, 2003). Preservice teachers often perceive their beliefs as reality and as a result are challenging to influence.

A survey study conducted with 92 students in a teacher preparation program found that most students in teacher preparation programs held biases towards culturally diverse populations including beliefs that assessments should not be modified to address various language difficulties, and felt moderately uncomfortable with people who spoke different dialects (Walker-Dalhous & Dalhouse, 2006). Negative stereotypes and lack of knowledge about how to work with students of various ethnic, linguistic, and economic backgrounds may affect the quality of teaching. In most cases, this affects the quality of teaching negatively with students suffering. This calls for traditional teacher preparation programs to focus on diversity throughout all coursework and provide opportunities for prospective teachers to work with diverse student populations.

Most teacher preparation programs confine diversity preparation to a course, workshop, or module that students are mandated to complete for certification requirements. Urban and multicultural education researchers recommended multiple cultural competence courses that may or may not include discussion regarding social class within preservice teacher preparation programs. Research has found that the more courses a preservice teacher takes in multicultural education, the higher their cultural competencies (Pohan, 1996).

Gorski (2009) administered a research study that examined multicultural teacher education course syllabi from colleges and universities across America. The syllabi were limited to courses focused explicitly on multicultural teacher education (Gorski, 2009). The majority (30 out of 45) of the syllabi analyzed was from undergraduate courses and 15 were from graduate levels courses (Gorski, 2009). Using qualitative content analysis and drawing on existing typologies for multicultural education, he analyzed the theories and philosophies underlying multicultural teacher education course designs. The researcher concluded, “most of the syllabi did not appear to be designed to prepare teachers to practice authentic multicultural education, they did appear designed to meet the NCATE standard” (Gorski, 2009, p. 312).

Teacher preparation programs must go beyond meeting just the standards of college accreditation and educate preservice teachers so they may enter diverse classrooms as effective highly qualified teachers. Only addressing the standards of college accreditation does not provide teacher candidates with the opportunity to learn about diverse student populations and how to effectively teach in Title I schools. The standards of college accreditation do not even scratch the surface of what teachers need to know and be able to do in order to be effective in Title I schools.

To address the competencies that pre-service teachers should have in addition to coursework, teacher preparation programs require field experiences in diverse settings, however the standards for measuring their effectiveness differ. Field experiences are a part of nearly every accredited teacher preparation program (CAEP, 2013). In these experiences, preservice teachers observe, interact, and have teaching opportunities in K-

12 schools. Several qualitative research studies find clinical practice in low-income and minority settings as important when preparing teachers to teach in similar environments (Anderson & Stillman, 2011; Anderson & Stillman, 2013a; Cabello & Burnstein, 1995).

In order to influence the beliefs of these preservice teachers, preparation programs need to group coursework with field experiences in Title I schools and create a framework that will enhance the success of preservice teachers working in diverse communities that include students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds. Field experiences can be crucial in teacher candidates' opportunity to teach children different from themselves. School-based field experiences are common for students in traditional teacher preparation programs. Darling-Hammond, Hammerness, Grossman, Rust, and Shulman (2005) and Zeichner and Conklin (2005) found that in teacher preparation programs where field experiences are strategically aligned with coursework and carefully monitored, teacher educators are more effective in preparing teachers to apply rigorous teaching practices. The professional development schools (PDS) model has successfully provided teacher candidates with opportunities to work with school-university partnerships. However, if the schools that are partnered with these universities are not Title I or of high poverty, students are not receiving clinical experiences that will help them be effective in these settings.

In a qualitative study regarding teachers' perceptions of their clinical practice in urban schools with high populations of low-income and minority students, the teachers interviewed emphasized the importance of having student teaching in a similar environment in which they would be teaching, to experience the challenges of working in

a high-poverty urban environment (Cabello & Burnstein, 1995). Anderson and Stillman (2013) conducted a qualitative research study interviewing first year teachers at urban schools who student taught at another urban/high needs school. The results from data analysis indicated that these teachers, who were later hired at an urban school, believed that having their student teaching in a similar setting was extremely helpful. Participants stated that in having had the clinical practice in an urban/high needs school, when they started teaching at their school, they felt comfortable with their population and that the condition and situations were not shocking (Anderson & Stillman, 2013a).

Field experiences in diverse settings guarantee preservice teachers the most promising experiences if tied to coursework and closely supervised (Foote & Cook-Cottone, 2004). One might ask, if providing teacher candidates with experiences in diverse settings is proven to help teacher candidates feel comfortable in these settings, why are colleges of education throughout the country not requiring prospective teachers to complete field experiences in Title I schools? When teacher candidates complete field experiences in Title I schools it provides them with a different perspective of teaching in a Title I school because most teacher candidates are culturally and economically different than the students in Title I classrooms.

Based on the current cultural differences between teachers and students in public schools, colleges and universities need to confront the issues of teacher preparation and critically reflect on instructional practices for their teacher candidates to experience success, reach all students, and remain in their chosen careers. Cochran-Smith and Villegas (2016) developed a theoretical and analytical framework that allowed them to

chart the landscape of teacher preparation research in relation to larger social, political, and economic forces and the resulting ideas that have shaped education over the last 50 years. This analysis revealed that researchers do not generally frame the research to reflection preparation for high poverty schools (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2016).

Cochran-Smith and Fries (2001) analyzed traditional teacher preparation programs and found the preparation of teachers for high-poverty schools or hard to staff schools as a “policy problem”. The goal of the policy was to determine which of the broad parameters of teacher education that could be controlled by policymakers was likely to better teacher quality and supply in low-income and/or poor schools by positively impacting student achievement, the distribution of teacher qualifications, the diversification of teacher work force, and teacher retention. With no professional standards holding colleges of education accountable for teaching prospective teachers how to teach students from low-income backgrounds, what Cochran-Smith and Fries (2001) defined as a “policy problem” will continue to exist.

With the requirement for all states to have highly qualified or high quality teachers in every classroom, *ESSA* is aiming to change traditional teacher preparation programs to increase the enrollment of prospective teachers. This requirement policy is making teacher preparation an agenda item for state school boards, legislatures, and colleges of education. America is taking a closer look at how its teacher preparation schools are improving the quality of teachers they produce (National Center of Teacher Quality (NCTQ), (2014). The critical importance of improving the quality of teacher

preparation to produce more classroom-ready teachers receives increasing attention (NCTQ, 2014).

The Obama Administration in April of 2014 announced its intentions to increase accountability measures for teacher preparation and restrict grant money only to high-performing programs. Former Education Secretary Arne Duncan noted, “Programs that are producing teachers where students are less successful, they either need to change or do something else, go out of business” (NCTQ, 2014). Schools of education must focus on preparing future teachers to teach students from low-income backgrounds, student success depends on it. The next section presents research that shows teachers who tend to teach in high-poverty schools are more often less qualified than teaches in schools that do not have a high percentage of students in poverty.

Unequal Distribution of Highly Qualified Teachers

Teachers who are underqualified (Borman & Kimball, 2005; Cochran-Smith, Feiman-Nesmer, & McIntyre, 2008), disproportionately teach students in poverty and students with a minority background. This is proven by the fact that “low-come and minority students are nearly twice as likely to be assigned to the least effective teachers and half as likely to be assigned to the most effective teachers” (Kaplan & Owings, 2001, p. 68). Furthermore, the reality in many high-poverty schools is that they employ a greater number of new teachers, fewer certified teachers, and teachers often have weaker education backgrounds than do the teachers employed in schools not considered high-poverty (Haycock & Crawford, 2008).

In many circumstances, a teacher is placed into a classroom teaching a subject in which he or she may have little to no expertise (Carey, 2004). Researchers believe that it is this out-of-field teaching that, at the very least, has contributed to the achievement gap (Heck, 2007; U.S. Department of Education, 2004, 2011). Multiple research studies show that minority students, low-performing students, and/or poor students, are “far more likely than other students to have teachers who are inexperienced, uncertified, poorly educated, and underperforming. Many of those teachers demonstrate most or all those unfortunate qualities all at the same time” (Carey, 2004, p. 8).

The poor students and students of color that legislators were concerned about are attending schools where teachers are undereducated and ineffective, but these teachers are still considered highly qualified according to how *NCLB* defines a highly qualified teacher (Ingersoll, 2001; Jacob, 2007). While teacher candidates are required to have completed a teacher preparation program and pass various subject matter certification exams, they will still be considered inexperienced and possibly underperforming if they choose to teach in Title I schools because they lack the knowledge and experiences gained through teaching students from low-income backgrounds. One should ask if teacher candidates’ preparation does not address how to teach students from marginalized backgrounds or students from low-income backgrounds effectively, how could these prospective teachers be any more effective or comfortable working with this particular group of students than the teachers who are currently struggling in these classrooms?

Teachers who possess certain characteristics, such as academic ability and experience, tend to avoid high-poverty schools (Bacolod, 2007; Boyd, Lankford, Loeb,

Rockoff, & Wyckoff, 2008; Clotfelter et al., 2010; Player, 2009). At the request of the Urban League of Miami, the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) analyzed the distribution of teachers in Miami-Dade County Public Schools. An examination was conducted of whether the distribution of quality teachers was equally distributed throughout Miami-Dade County's nine voting districts (NCTQ, 2014). NCTQ framed this analysis around five indicators: teacher experience, teacher retention, teacher attendance, teacher performance, and teacher preparation.

The results of this analysis showed that the two voting districts (1 and 2) with the highest percentage of students who qualified for free and reduced lunch had far more novice teachers than the other 7 voting districts (NCTQ, 2014). In addition, teachers in these high-poverty voting districts resigned at higher rates and had the highest absences from work. With over 80 percent of the schools in districts 1 and 2 having greater than 80 percent poverty as measured by eligibility for free or reduced lunch, these schools were not provided with the most effective teachers (NCTQ, 2014). What is happening in Miami-Dade is happening in other districts in the United States. Teachers who are in their first years teaching are placed in schools that have a high population of students from low-income backgrounds. If these teachers have not received any coursework or field experiences involving teaching in high-poverty schools, how can these teachers be successful?

One study completed by the Tennessee Department of Education found a relatively equal number of highly qualified teachers in economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged schools (Sanders, Wright, & Langevin, 2008).

However, after five years of teaching at the economically disadvantaged schools, the equality of teacher distribution decreased dramatically. This study illustrates that if teachers are equally distributed amongst poor schools and affluent schools, the teachers at the poor schools often make the move to the more affluent schools once they have the experience to make them more competitive. West and Chingos (2008) found the preference of most teachers is to work in schools that provide greater resources and better working conditions. This research indicates that highly qualified teachers are not equally distributed amongst schools with higher and lower socioeconomic status.

The unequal and inequitable distribution of highly qualified and effective teachers is not new in education. Lankford, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2002) tracked teacher sorting across schools and school districts in New York State using teacher exam test scores and competitive status of undergraduate institution as measures of teacher quality. Using seven linked datasets from the New York State Education Department and The State University of New York, the researchers matched teacher personnel information to scores on the National Teacher Examination (NTE), the New York State Teacher Certification Exam in Liberal Arts and Science (NYSTCE), and the SAT. In addition, teachers were also matched by undergraduate GPA, competitiveness of the undergraduate institution as measured by *Barron's College Guide*, years of teaching experience, and level of licensure. All teachers in New York State were examined, based on the above criteria, in 1999-2000.

Overall, teacher qualifications were not evenly distributed across schools in New York State (Lankford et al., 2002). The researchers found that non-white, poor, and

Limited English Proficient (LEP) students were more likely to have low-quality teachers than were white, non-poor, and non-LEP students. For poor students, 28% of the teachers failed the NTE or NYSTCE compared to 20% of those teachers that taught non-poor students. Based on test scores of fourth and eighth grade students on the English Language Arts exam, the researchers found that at schools where students scored at the lowest level, 35% of teachers had failed the NTE and NYSTCE. The researchers found that the distribution of teachers has remained consistent over the past 15 years. Lankford et al. (2002) found that teachers who rank higher tend to leave, or never enter, high-poverty schools.

While the study above verifies that teachers with certain qualities sort into schools with lower levels of poverty, the study draws from a sample of teachers that began before the passage of *NCLB*. The *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 required that all classrooms have a “highly qualified” teacher. The *Every Student Succeeds Act* of 2015 acknowledges that students from low-income communities are less likely to be taught by effective highly qualified teachers than their peers. As a result, the teacher population in the America’s public schools may be more highly qualified, but still lack the skills to effectively make a difference in high-poverty schools.

The State of Illinois’s Education Research Council assigns each school a Teacher Quality Index (TQI) based on five measures: a) the percentage of teachers with BA degrees from more-competitive colleges, b) the percentage of teachers with fewer than four years of teaching experience, c) the percentage of teachers with emergency or provisional credentials, d) the percentage of teachers who failed the Basic Skills test on

the first attempt, and e) the average ACT composite score of teachers (Peske & Haycock, 2006, p. 16). Using these five measures, 84% of the highest-poverty schools had a TQI in the bottom 25% of the state, and 56% had a TQI in the bottom 10% of the state. In the lowest-poverty schools, 46% had a TQI in the top 25% of the state, and only 5% had a TQI in the bottom 25% of the state. This data illustrates that after the passage of *NCLB*, there was still a gap in teacher qualifications.

With this gap in teacher qualifications, it is time for colleges of education to seek ways to provide teacher candidates with coursework and experiences that will not only have them meet the *NCLB* qualifications of being a highly qualified teacher, but also provide them with ways to be effective in classrooms with culturally and socio-economically diverse students. Research shows that the equitable distribution of teachers is a concern in school districts across the country, with poor schools/lower performing schools often experiencing greater difficulty in recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers than more affluent schools in the same district (Loeb, Kalogrides, & Beteille, 2012). There would not be a discussion about the equitable distribution of teachers if traditional teacher preparation programs prepared prospective teachers to teach *ALL* students, focused on providing teacher candidates with courses that discuss meeting the needs of students in high-poverty/urban/Title I schools, and required field experiences in these schools. Providing teacher candidates with this knowledge and experience would help them become effective teachers in their future classrooms.

Effective Teachers

Solely focusing on teachers being highly qualified or high quality does not guarantee student success; teachers must be effective in these Title I school settings. Many scholars have chosen to change the term from ‘highly qualified’ to ‘highly effective’ teachers (Stronge, 2007). Effectiveness refers to teaching ability while quality has been interpreted related to qualifications found on a resume without any real connection to the act of teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Stronge, 2007). According to a publication of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), their accepted definition of an effective teacher “must have sufficient knowledge of content, of pedagogy, of context, and of students (so as) to appreciate the intricacies that are bound up in the teaching and learning process” (Stronge, 2007, p. 101).

Haycock (1998) performed a meta-analysis of the Education Trust, which included studies from Tennessee, Texas, Alabama, and Massachusetts that were examined to determine what had the most significant impact on student achievement. The findings of this analysis determined that the largest factor was the effectiveness of the teacher, yet none of the studies analyzed by Haycock went further to specifically define teacher effectiveness. Haycock shared that there were inferred qualities of teacher effectiveness from the studies such as strong verbal and math skills, deep content knowledge, and teaching skill (Haycock, 1998).

Stronge et al. (2011) shared five strategies that described the “four dimensions that characterize teacher effectiveness” (p. 340). The first two dimensions that relate to teaching practices describe instruction that is clear, complex, differentiated, and focused

on learning. The dimensions that follow these relate to creating a positive learning environment based on the personality of the teacher. Effective teachers engage in teaching practices that provide a connection between the lessons and students, question students consistently and continually assess their students throughout the instructional process (Stronge et al., 2011).

Greenburg et al. (2013) claimed that being an effective teacher has much to do with classroom management. This was based on the use of three summaries of 150 students that were conducted over the last 60 years. According to these scholars, a teacher must manage his/her classroom if they are going to teach, regardless of their expertise. Effective teachers are engaged in frequent positive interactions and maintain instructional focus (Greenburg et al., 2013; Stronge et al., 2011).

When comparing various studies on the effective teacher, these teachers use five strategies. First, the effective teacher reinforces positive behavior and does not focus on negative behavior. Second, the effective teacher establishes routines that create structure and guide students. Third, the effective classroom is filled with engaged students because the lessons within the classroom are filled with engaged students because the lessons within the classroom are interesting, invite student participation, and connect with students. Fourth, when students do misbehave, there are consistent consequences for this behavior. Fifth, the effective classroom has well-established rules that communicate classroom expectations (Greenburg et al., 2013; Stronge et al., 2011).

The characteristics and abilities of an effective teacher extend beyond the highly qualified teacher criteria that *NCLB* requires teachers to have. Effective teachers have a

significant impact on student achievement; some researchers even argue that the teacher is often one of the most important factors in the academic growth of students (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Sekayi & Solomon, 2007). Sanders and Rivers (1996) developed the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) to measure the gains in student achievement within a given year that were directly attributed to individual teachers.

TVAAS provides a quantifiable measurement of teacher performance effectiveness. This measurement demonstrates the value that an educator adds to student learning beyond factors outside of the school.

Research (Sanders & Horn, 1995; Sanders & Rivers, 1996) using and examining the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System has revealed some significant findings regarding teacher effectiveness. Sanders and Rivers (1996) found that having an effective (or ineffective) teacher for three consecutive years resulted in differences in student achievement of 50 percentile points. Moreover, students benefit greatly from regular assignment with effective teachers. Students considered low achieving, such as those that attend Title I schools, benefit the most from increases in teacher effectiveness (Sanders & Rivers, 1996).

High quality instruction could significantly overcome disadvantages associated with low-income backgrounds (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005). Previous research contends that having high-quality teachers throughout school can substantially offset, or even eliminate, the disadvantages of low-socioeconomic background (Wayne & Youngs, 2009). In the previous section, research illustrated that many high-poverty and/or Title I schools have teachers that are ineffective because they do not have the knowledge and/or

skills to teach in these environments. Therefore, if high-quality teachers are needed to help students from low-income backgrounds succeed, then these students are not getting a fair opportunity at being academically successful.

Goldhaber and Anthony (2009) surveyed 293 successful teachers in various charter schools in the Detroit area in an attempt to identify commonly used instructional strategies that resulted in student achievement for low socioeconomic students. They identified classroom environment, teacher enthusiasm, and classroom management among the characteristics of effective teaching. How to create a positive classroom environment and classroom management are taught in teacher preparation programs, however if teacher candidates are not taught about what classroom management may look like in different settings, these future teachers will not be able to be successful teaching students from low-income backgrounds. Teachers that are successful teaching students from low-income backgrounds understand that there might be different approaches needed and they must understand the exogenous factors that may affect these students.

Sanders and Rivers (2008) found in a study of six inner city, low-performing, high-poverty schools in Detroit that the successful students had teachers who set clear expectations in the beginning of class. In addition, students were encouraged to take risks and help each other answer questions and respond to instruction without facing judgment or ridicule when answering questions incorrectly. Researchers (Thomas, 2007; Wong & Wong, 2009) have identified other specific methods effective teachers used to connect with students such as sharing personal information about their own favorite writers, creating bulletin boards that display personal pictures of their own families, sharing

stories about their own lives, and displaying student accomplishments from local newspapers. Conversely, these effective teachers also encouraged their students to talk about their families, their home lives, and their culture. The teachers then integrated those things into classroom discussions, student work, and instruction (Thomas, 2007). Additionally, effective teachers possess other characteristics that are linked to improving student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2008).

The *NCLB* requirement for a highly qualified teacher in every classroom is supported by extensive research that connects teacher success to student success (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Haskins & Loeb, 2007; Heck, 2007; Smith & Gorard, 2007; Stronge et al., 2011). The launching of the *Excellent Educators for All* Initiative (USDOE, 2014b) and the *Every Student Succeed Act (ESSA, 2015)* illustrates a need for effective teachers in high poverty schools. Although *NCLB* has expired, teachers are still required to meet *NCLB*'s highly qualified teacher requirement. In response to the expiration of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, in December 2015, a bipartisan bill entitled the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* was signed into law as a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). This new law acknowledges that minority and low-income students are less likely to have effective teachers than their peers (USDOE, 2015).

In response to the expiration of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, *ESSA* Section 1177-1113 (Sec. 2001) "Title II-Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High-Quality Teachers, Principals, and Other Leaders" states that the federal government will provide grants to state educational agencies and sub grants to local educational agencies to: a)

improve the quality and effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other school leaders, b) increase the number of teachers, principals, and school leaders who are effective in improving student achievement in schools, and c) provide low-income and minority students greater access to effective teachers, principals, and other school leaders (USDOE, 2015). Also, *ESSA* allows states to use Title II funds for multiple strategies to reform teacher preparation statewide specifically focusing on “creating new strategies to ensure that effective, experienced teachers are well represented in schools serving predominantly students from low-income families and students of color” (USDOE, 2015).

Researchers have developed a list of practices shared by many effective teachers in challenging schools. However, there seems to be a lack of teacher candidate voices. There is minimal research that shows how elementary teacher candidates with field experiences or internship experiences in Title I schools perceive their teacher preparation and what they think they need educationally and pedagogically. This study sought to disrupt the agenda of traditional teacher preparation programs and draw attention to social class, which is often dismissed in colleges of education.

This literature review shared an overview of federal, state, and collegiate policies regarding teacher quality, the challenges teachers face in Title I/High poverty schools, teacher preparation for high-poverty schools, distribution of teacher quality, and effective teachers in Title I schools. All sources are scholarly primary sources. The sources included peer reviewed research articles, books, and book chapters in the fields of multicultural education, urban education, and teacher education. The next chapter

discusses the methodology and procedures used to examine how elementary teacher candidates perceive their teacher preparation and how they understand the Title I institutions in which they may possibly teach.

Chapter Three

The purpose of this study was to explore how elementary teacher candidates with field experiences and internships in Title I schools perceived their teacher preparation in regards to preparing them to be highly qualified and effective teachers in Title I schools. As referenced previously, preservice teachers often report feeling unprepared in their ability to teach in low-income and/or poor schools (Whitney et al., 2002). There is a greater likelihood that as new teachers they will be assigned to teaching in these schools. With the growing population of students in poverty in U.S. public schools, the voices of teacher candidates add value to the preparation needs of prospective teachers of low-income students.

The primary aim of this study was to examine how teacher candidates made meaning; and consequently translated that knowledge in their practice. In addition, I also sought to understand how colleges of education are preparing prospective elementary teachers to teach in Title I schools. The combination of document analysis, photovoice, and semi-structured interviews using sense-making and critical theory theoretical lenses gave insight into how teacher candidates perceive Title I schools and to what degree they are prepared to teach in Title I classrooms.

This chapter presents the methodology and procedures used to examine how teacher candidates with field experiences and internships in Title I schools perceived their

teacher preparation and how they understood the Title I institutions. This section presents information regarding the purpose and design of the study. In particular, this section includes: a) the role of the researcher, b) the rationale for using qualitative research to conduct this study, c) discussion of the research sample, d) an overview of the information needed to answer the questions, e) the data collection method, and f) the methods of data analysis and synthesis.

Role of the Researcher

According to McCaslin and Scott (2003), “it is of no small matter for the researcher to have an understanding of the relationship the researcher has with the subject. As the researcher, you must identify and describe your perspective and recognize and deal with the biases you might hold on subjects” (p. 453). I have taught in a Title I school for 7 years and a non-Title I school for 1 year. As a researcher, I was aware that my past experiences and current realities could influence this qualitative study because I was considered the primary instrument for conducting the work. Merriam (1998) asserted, “the researcher must be aware of any personal biases and how they may influence the investigation” (p. 21). I remained conscious of my professional experience and of the similarities that existed between the participants and me.

As a current elementary classroom teacher and former Title I elementary teacher, I have a perspective on the struggles that many novice Title I teachers experience, the type of support needed to improve teacher performance, the challenges that can exist when teachers are unfamiliar with their students’ cultural backgrounds, and what teachers wish their education would have provided them to be successful with low-income

students. However, my responsibility as the researcher was to give voice to these teacher candidates and allow their experiences in the Title I classrooms to inform this work about teacher preparation. Therefore, I did not express my personal perspective or opinion during this study.

Rationale for Using Qualitative Research

A qualitative research approach was used in this study to investigate the perceptions held by participating teacher candidates concerning how their teacher preparation programs prepared them to teach in Title I schools. Qualitative research is considered by Merriam (1998) as an “umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible” (p. 5). An interest in wanting to know more about the field of education and improving the practice of educators can often be approached through qualitative research design.

In order to design a qualitative study, developing a logical strategy in advance and implementing it faithfully will not be successful (Maxwell, 2013). Qualitative research design is a “do-it-yourself” process that involves “tacking” back and forth between the different components of the design, assessing their implications for one another (Maxwell, 2013). According to Merriam (1998), research design must conform to the philosophical, as well as logistical, constructs of the particular nature of the research.

The problem and purpose of the study should be the primary factor in determining the best approach for a research study (Merriam, 1998). The qualitative methodology requires the researcher to collect multiple sources of data, use inductive reasoning,

recognize emergent themes, and present a holistic account for the phenomena or problem being explored (Creswell, 2012). When approaching a particular problem in qualitative studies, the researcher should consider a theoretical lens or conceptual framework informed by certain assumptions (Creswell, 2012).

Several findings in the literature inform this work. First, the literature suggests that urban schools continue to have challenges with recruiting and retaining qualified teachers (Ingersoll, 2004). In addition, research indicates teachers are not prepared to teach the increasingly diverse populations of low-income students in today's classroom (Nieto, 1992; Sleeter, 2001). Second, several educational-reform initiatives, such as *Excellent Educators for All*, *NCLB*, and *ESSA*, have required all schools to have highly qualified or high-quality teachers, making efforts specifically to place these teachers in Title I classrooms (Darling-Hammond, 2007; U.S. Department of Education, 2014b).

Teacher candidates who have field experiences and internships in Title I schools have invaluable insight into what teacher preparation programs need to do in order to prepare teachers for success in Title I schools. In most cases, their knowledge and expertise are not included in determining what teacher candidates need to be successful in Title I or high poverty classrooms. Therefore, teacher candidates' feedback about their experiences and preparation will provide colleges of education with information they need to know about preparing teachers specifically for students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

A qualitative research approach was appropriate for this study because this method of inquiry provided a complex description of a problem and interpreted the

problem through the voices of the participants (Creswell, 2012). A qualitative approach views meaning in the context of the phenomena and uses data-collection techniques that expose the underlying meaning (Merriam, 1998). This methodological approach gave support to a researcher that was interested in making heard the voices of a particular group or an aspect of a program (Creswell, 2012). For the purposes of this study, the meaning that teacher candidates assigned to teacher quality and school challenges in regards to Title I schools were of interest. Furthermore, the experiences that these teacher candidates shared about their preparation and Title I field and internship experiences were the core of this investigation.

Interviews were used as the primary source for examining the perspectives and experiences of these teacher candidates and how they believed their teacher education was preparing them to teach in Title I elementary schools. Moreover, interviews and the *photovoice* approach revealed what these prospective teachers believed they would need to be successful in Title I schools and the challenges they believed they would face while teaching in these schools. Qualitative research involves the researcher gathering and reviewing multiple forms of data, organizing them in categories or themes that cut across all data sources (Maxwell, 2013).

As previously stated, the three sources that influenced this work are document analysis of the elementary education course syllabi and course readings from the traditional university these teacher candidates attended, semi-structured interviews of both faculty members and teacher candidates, and a *photovoice* project with the teacher candidates. To maintain confidentiality of the university that these teacher candidates and

faculty members with which they were affiliated, the university is referred to as Traditional University (TU). The course syllabi from all courses in the Traditional University Elementary Education program were aligned to the teacher candidate participants and were analyzed from Fall 2013 to Fall 2016. This was the period of time when the teacher candidates attended the TU teacher preparation program and possibly took one of these courses. Because course syllabi do not provide everything that could take place during a semester, I interviewed faculty members in the Elementary Education department to get a better understanding of what was taught and discussed in the elementary education courses. Data from these various sources were summarized, compared, and, when appropriate, merged to address the research questions. This study was structured using a basic qualitative research design to understand in what ways teacher candidates made sense of their education in regards to preparing them to teach in Title I schools.

Basic qualitative studies, although found in all disciplines, are “the most common form of qualitative research found in education” (Merriam, 2009, p. 23). This is reasonable given that educational research often seeks to improve and/or understand how to improve the practice of education. This study looked at how current teacher candidates at different phases in their elementary education program perceived their teacher preparation in regards to preparing them to be effective highly qualified or high quality teachers in Title I elementary schools. In addition, this study shares what these teacher candidates believed they needed to be successful in a Title I school setting. Merriam (2009) characterized educational research as studies with a practical purpose that often

look to better the practice of education, this study was no exception. The next section provides the research questions used to guide this study.

Guiding Research Questions

This study was guided by two research questions, one having a part A, and two other questions that were answered using the *photovoice* methodology. Research questions in qualitative research help narrow the purpose of a study into specific questions (Creswell, 2012). Qualitative research questions are open-ended, general questions that the researcher would like answered during the study (Creswell, 2012). Yin (1981) explained that, “the key is to understand that your research questions have both substance – for example, What is my study about? – and form – for example, am I asking ‘who,’ ‘what,’ ‘where,’ or ‘how’ questions?” (p. 10). Table 1 provides the research questions that guided this proposed study as well as the method and data sources that helped obtain answers to these questions.

Table 1

Research Questions, Methods, and Data Sources

Research Questions	Method	Data Source (s)
1. What role does teacher education play in how teacher candidates understand Title I schools in regard to low-income students?	1. Qualitative Document Analysis, Semi-structured interviews	1. Traditional University’s Elementary Education Course Syllabi, interviews/surveys of teacher educators
a) How is this role reflected in course syllabi?		

2. Based on course work, field experiences, and internships do these teacher candidates believe their teacher preparation prepared them to teach students in a Title I school?	2. Semi-Structured interviews and <i>Photovoice</i> Activity a) What do teacher candidates believe they will need to be successful in Title I schools? b) What challenges do teacher candidates believe they will face while teaching in a Title I school?	2. Semi-structured interviews, transcripts, and teachers' photographs and writing submissions through the use of Photovoice
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Research Setting

I chose to conduct my research at a local university known for having an award-winning teacher preparation program because of its convenience. Traditional University is a public research university located in the Southeastern region of the United States. Traditional University has 12 schools and colleges offering various programs of study at the Bachelor's, Master's, and Ph.D. levels. For the academic year of 2016-2017, the university had 34,904 students enrolled. The student population had the following racial breakdown: 15% of the students identify themselves as Asian, 10% of the students identify themselves as Black or African American, 11% of the students identify themselves as Hispanic/Latino, 46% identify themselves as White, and 18% identify themselves as either Native American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Native Alaska, or Two or More.

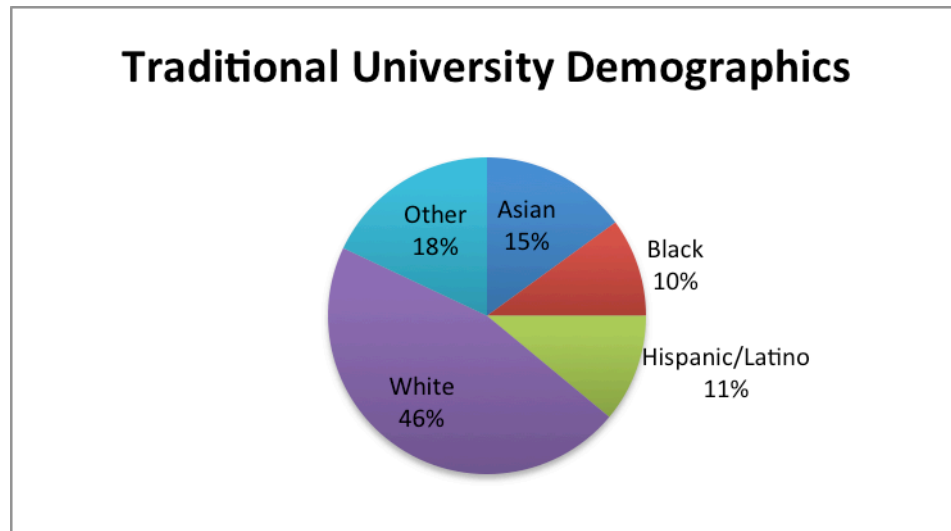


Figure 1. The chart depicts the population demographics of Traditional University.

Traditional University's College of Education is a nationally recognized leader in teacher preparation, special education, counseling, and school leadership, and is home to 11 research centers. Every year, more than 3,000 graduate students enroll in Traditional University's education programs. Traditional University's College of Education offers Bachelor's, Master's, Ph.D.'s, and certification programs. In order to become a licensed teacher, TU College of Education offers a Bachelor's/Accelerated Master's degree that leads to a teaching license in Elementary Education. Students complete the program by taking 39 credits of courses that will fulfill the state and the CAEP requirements. Students can choose from two routes with start dates in fall, spring, and summer semesters. All programs are in sequence and follow a cohort model. This model refers to a group of students that enter the program together and will remain together throughout the duration.

Traditional University has a Professional Development School (PDS) Network comprised of elementary schools in three surrounding districts. The Title I schools at which the research participants completed field experiences and/or internships serve as Professional Development Schools for students who attend Traditional University's College of Education. The partnering Title I PDS schools are located within 45 miles of Traditional University. The schools associated with the program are from three neighboring public school districts. According to 2014-2015 data, the three school districts have several Title I schools. To maintain confidentiality, the school districts are referred to as School Division 1, School Division 2, and School Division 3. School Division 1 had 38,788 students and 12,863 (33%) of that student population were identified as "economically disadvantaged" as of June 30, 2015. School Division 2 had 166,844 students and 52,638 (28%) of that student population were considered "economically disadvantaged" as of September 30, 2015. School Division 3 had 2,707 students and 1,499 (55%) of that student population were considered "economically disadvantaged" as of September 30, 2015.

The city where Traditional University is located had a population of 23,193. This city is located in a county with more than 1 million residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). The county had a median household income of \$111,079 and a poverty rate 5.8 % (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). This county had the largest concentration of technology jobs in the United States ranging over 142,000 technology jobs (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). Around 36.4 % of the population in this county spoke a language other than English (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). While the poverty rate is low and the county where Traditional

University is located had many wealthy residents, this university is within 30 miles of an urban city with a high poverty rate.

Permission to Conduct the Study

I sought institutional permissions by completing an application for Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects of Traditional University (IRBNet ID: 930105-1). I sought voluntary participation and signed consent forms from elementary teacher candidates and elementary education faculty prior to data collection.

Access to Participants and Sites

I used an overt approach to gain access, which required me to make my research known to all individuals involved with the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). I contacted the Elementary Coordinator at Traditional University to explain the purpose of this dissertation as it was related to the university's elementary education program.

Traditional University's Elementary Education Coordinator agreed to allow me access to the teacher candidates that were at different stages in Traditional University's Elementary Education program.

Research Participants

Decisions about where to conduct your research and whom to include in it are an essential part of your research methods (Maxwell, 2013, p. 96). According to Merriam (1998), "Selecting respondents on the basis of what they can contribute to the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon under study means engaging in purposive sampling (p. 83). Purposive sampling involves researchers intentionally selecting individuals and sites to learn and understand a central phenomenon (Creswell, 2012).

This form of sampling is “based on an assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (Merriam, 1998, p. 61). Because I am interested in studying how teacher candidates perceive their preparation for Title I/high-poverty schools, I used purposive sampling; I began with a specific interest and deliberately selected participants who met the selection criteria.

Merriam (2009) stated that when researchers consider the number of individuals to include within their sample that there is “no answer” (p. 80). However, she did suggest that the researcher continue sampling “until redundancy is reached” (p. 80). For the purpose of this study I interviewed teacher candidates that met the following criteria: a) enrolled in the TU Elementary Education program as a graduate student, b) had completed a field experience or was completing an internship at a Title I school, c) agreed to be interviewed at a location and time that was convenient for them, and d) agreed to complete a *photovoice* activity. In addition, I interviewed three elementary education faculty members.

In part, I used convenience sampling for this study. Convenience sampling occurs when a researcher selects a sample based on “time, money, location, and availability” (Merriam, 2009, p. 79). I had three participants, on whom I used convenience sampling. These participants were teacher candidates in the Traditional University Elementary Education program and each had field experience teaching in a Title I school. These teacher candidates were in a graduate class that I shadowed during the Fall 2016 semester. I was not the assigned instructor of the course and I did not share my research

foci at any time during the course until I asked for participants in this study. At this point, I shared the purpose of this study to recruit participants. I interviewed the three teacher candidates from this course, along with three other candidates. Therefore, my sample size consisted of six teacher candidates with field experience and/or internship experience in a Title I school. This sample size was a limitation for this study and discussed in the latter part of this chapter; however, this sample of participants reached redundancy in their statements.

Sixty teacher candidates with possible field and/or internship experience in a Title I school were invited to participate in this study to provide a diverse sample of participants. After sending invitations to twenty teacher candidates via email and speaking to three elementary education classes, eighteen students replied, but only six participants met the criteria and agreed to participate in this study. The participants were teacher candidates at different phases in their educational journey. Two candidates were in the beginning of the program, three candidates were in the middle of the program, and one candidate was in the internship phase of the program. Chapter 4 provides a detailed description of all study participants, which includes demographics of their educational and professional experience as well as their personal knowledge of Title I schools.

In addition to interviewing teacher candidates for this study, I interviewed elementary education faculty. Analyzing the course syllabus provided me a limited understanding of what could have happened in the actual courses offered in the elementary education program. Therefore, I sent invitations to seven TU Elementary Education faculty members, three replied and agreed to be interviewed for this study.

One of the faculty members was tenured, one was on the tenure-track, and the other faculty member was an adjunct. Two of the faculty members have taught the same courses and the other faculty member has taught the literacy methods courses. None of the faculty that taught science methods or math methods courses responded to the invitation to participate in this study. I contacted all the teacher candidates and elementary education faculty by email to solicit their participation (see Appendix E).

Data Collection

This study took place during the fall semester of the 2016-2017 academic year. The qualitative methods that I used for this study included demographic questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, photovoice, and document analysis. I obtained information pertaining to the age, gender, race/ethnicity, racial make-up, socioeconomic characteristics of early childhood home life, and education through a demographic questionnaire provided to participants during the interview. Pseudonyms were used to protect the anonymity of the participants and any information about individuals, institutions, and practices associated with them.

Documents. According to Bowen (2009), document analysis is a systematic method for reviewing or evaluating documents that are either printed or electronic material. This procedure requires an examination and interpretation of the documents in order to gain understanding, elicit meaning, and develop empirical knowledge (Bowen, 2009). For the purpose of this research study, document analysis of the course syllabi from the Traditional University Elementary Education program from Fall 2013 to Spring

2016 were used to gain understanding of how a specific teacher preparation program was preparing their prospective teachers to teach in Title I schools.

Only course syllabi from courses these teacher candidates could have possibly enrolled in were analyzed for this study. In order to gain this knowledge and understanding course objectives, learner outcomes, course assignments, and course readings were analyzed. Solely analyzing the course objectives, learner outcomes, and course assignments did not provide the information needed to determine what prospective teachers are learning about Title I schools and students. A second document analysis was conducted on the course readings to examine if the texts used for the courses provide teachers with information regarding teaching students from low-socioeconomic status backgrounds. The goal was to examine both the Table of Contents and introduction of each book to gain insight about the content in the book. In addition to the document analysis, I interviewed faculty in the Elementary Education department to gain insight into the extent to which they were concentrating on the objectives outlined in course syllabi.

Semi-structured interviews. This study focused on teacher candidates' perspectives regarding field/internship experiences in Title I elementary schools and their experiences in the Title I classroom. Therefore, semi-structured interviews were the primary source of data collection. Weiss (1994) stated, "Interviewing gives us access to the observations of others. Through interviewing we can learn about places we have not been and could not go and about settings in which we have not lived" (p. 1). The interview is arguably the most widely used method in qualitative research (Marshall &

Rossman, 2006). Semi-structured interviews are most appropriate for research in which specific topics are discussed with some flexibility in the participant's response (Creswell, 2007). Interviews "allow the researcher to capture the perceived experiences of the people and interpret their stories, recognizing that the accounts were filtered through the researcher's concept of reality" (p. 37).

Rubin and Rubin (2011) stated, "Qualitative interviewing is not simply learning about a topic, but also learning what is important to those being studied" (p. 15). The purpose of this study was to give these teacher candidates an opportunity to voice what is important in teacher preparation to ensure that teachers are not only highly qualified, but also prepared to teach in Title I schools. The purpose of faculty interviews was to provide in-depth information about what was being taught in the elementary education courses regarding preparing teacher candidates for Title I schools. Participants were interviewed both in-person and via Skype. Each semi-structured interview used the same protocol for each interviewee. I took notes during the interview process to assist with memory recall. When necessary, I probed both teacher candidates and faculty to prompt additional explanations. Just as Creswell (2012) suggested, the interviews were recorded and immediately transcribed. Researcher memos were written as post-interview reflections and as analytical memos. Maxwell (2013) described memos as, "one of the most important techniques for developing your ideas" (p. 20). He adds to think of memos as a way of "understanding your topic, setting or study" and recommends writing "lots of memo throughout the course of your research project" (p. 20). Memos were the primary strategy for developing my ideas and analyzing my data.

Photovoice. The *photovoice* approach was used in this study to provide a more in-depth understanding of how these teacher candidates with field and/or internship experience in Title I schools perceived how their teacher preparation was preparing them to teach in Title I elementary schools. *Photovoice* is a process that allows research participants to use visual images or photographs to share their stories or ideas. This approach was used to provide the teacher candidates in this study with an opportunity to discuss the successes and challenges they may face as teachers in a Title I school. The participants were asked to use photographic devices to capture: a) What do teacher candidates believe they will need to be successful in a Title I school? and, b) What challenges do teacher candidates believe they will face while teaching in a Title I school?

Participants took 3-5 photographs to answer these questions and provided written responses that explained their photographs. While these questions are open-ended, it provided these teacher candidates the opportunity to think about the role of a Title I teacher. In addition, this provided an opportunity for these teacher candidates to capture their perceptions using a different methodological approach.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is about “bringing order, structure, and interpretation to the mass of the collected data” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 154). In order to facilitate the analysis process, I used the following methods in the analysis, synthesis, and interpretation of the research data: data management, coding, memoing, data display, synthesis, and interpretation. Data management includes the collection, storage, and retrieval of data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I had a large volume of data; therefore, I used a digital voice

recorder to record the participant interviews and a redundant filing and saving system to store transcripts.

Semi-structured Interviews

For both teacher candidate and faculty interviews, I conducted all of my interviews face to face or via Skype and all interviews lasted between 20 to 35 minutes. I took handwritten notes during the interviews in order to develop probing follow-up questions. While conducting interviews I recorded the interviews using two separate digital voice recorders. The use of the digital voice recorder allowed me to download recordings of the interviews onto a computer as well as convert the files to MP3 files for download onto an Apple iPod for redundancy and convenience. I personally transcribed all interviews and then coded these instances. I also wrote analytical memos pertaining to these findings and my interpretations.

Miles and Huberman (1994) stated that “codes are tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study” (p. 56). Therefore, my primary method of analysis was coding. I began my coding as soon as I collected my first set of data and I coded before the next interview to work out any issues and to look for any additions and/or clarifications that I wanted to add to my interview. During the initial coding of the transcription data, I used open coding to allow for emergent themes. Themes are similar codes of that are aggregated together to form major ideas (Creswell, 2007).

I searched for key words or phrases (i.e. diversity, poverty, low-income, social class, diverse learners, Title I, marginalized students, free and reduced lunch) throughout

the transcriptions. Initial coding creates a starting point to provide the researcher with analytic leads for further explanation (Saldana, 2015). From the initial coding, I developed categories and themes based on the transcription data using a categorical coding matrix. During the second cycle of coding, I made sense of the themes pulled from the initial coding cycle and I reorganized and reconfigured themes in order to create categories and broader themes.

Document Analysis

A document analysis of Traditional University's elementary education course syllabi using critical theory as a framework provided insight on what prospective teachers were learning in order to help them become effective teachers in Title I schools. The initial phase included an analysis of the learner outcomes, professional standards, required readings, course assignments, and course calendar. I analyzed each component to identify any evidence of teacher candidates being prepared to teach students from low-income backgrounds. The second phase included a query of key words such as diversity, poverty, low-income, socio-economic, diverse learners, Title I, marginalized, free and reduced lunch, and social class using NVivo (a qualitative data analysis software) throughout the course syllabi. The query searched all components of the course syllabi including course description, learner outcomes, professional standards, course readings, course assignments, and course calendar. These components were analyzed to search for examples of how social class, diversity, students from impoverished backgrounds were being presented in each course or if they were being discussed at all in these courses. I developed themes based on the coding of these components. The themes that emerged

were used to create organizational categories (i.e. social class, diversity, poverty, etc.) for semi-structured interviews and frame questions for interview protocol.

Photovoice Analysis

The *photovoice* projects completed by teacher candidates were analyzed using open coding. The *photovoice* questions were used to group the *photovoice* submissions. Once these submissions were placed under the correct question, the *photovoice* written responses were analyzed and themes emerged that were later grouped into broader categories. Themes from the semi-structured interview transcripts, document analysis of course syllabi, and *photovoice* were compared and contrasted to provide an answer to the research questions that guided this study.

I used NVivo (a qualitative data analysis software) to code all the data in this study. All interviews and course syllabi were uploaded into NVivo. Using NVivo allowed me to code each participant's transcribed interview and Traditional University's elementary education course syllabi. I ran queries looking for units of meaning that were similar in all participant responses. I was able to run queries to look for specific phrases and words to better connect participant responses to the themes that emerged.

I used the theoretical frameworks (Sense-making and Critical Theory) to inform my data analysis in that I sought to determine how these elementary education teacher candidates' perceived their college preparation for the Title I institutions in which they may work. Furthermore, when looking at the course syllabi of the participants, I sought to determine how teacher candidates were being taught about Title I students and schools.

Ethical Consideration

Creswell (2007) noted, “A qualitative researcher faces many ethical issues” (p. 141). The ethical issues in qualitative research are bound in the relationship between the researcher and the participants (Creswell, 2007). For this study, the relevant ethical considerations were grounded in the issues of the participants’ rights, their informed consent in their participation in the study, researcher respect, and confidentiality. I made protecting the rights of my participants a top priority and maintained the safety and well-being of the participants. I assessed all the elements of the research study for potential risks – physical, psychological, social, economic, or legal (Sieber, 2004 as cited in Creswell, 2007). I obtained approval from the IRB prior to beginning interviews and photovoice, guaranteeing that I adhered to all IRB standards.

In order to ensure participants’ rights in this research study, I included a detailed consent form that clearly communicated to all participants their right to withdraw from the research study at any point in the process. I provided the participants with relevant details about the purpose of the research and why it is relevant. Providing participants with the purpose of the research, and why it is relevant, gave them the opportunity to better understand the study, anticipated outcomes, and its possible impact on them. By revealing the process and sequence of the study, it helps individuals know what to reasonably expect during the research and from the study and affords them the ability to ask questions (Creswell, 2007).

I have protected the privacy of the participants by using pseudonyms on and within interview transcripts and on *photovoice* forms. In addition, I kept the decoding

legend that links pseudonyms to participants, as well as all other research materials, in a locked desk drawer in my home where only I have access. I deleted the audio-recorded interviews from my iPad and kept the downloaded audio files on my Apple MacBook in an encrypted file and folder. All participants received a summary of the findings and information on how they can access the whole study once completed.

Issues of trustworthiness. Trustworthiness in qualitative inquiry should support the argument that the inquiry's findings are "worth paying attention to" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Maxwell (2013) noted reactivity and researcher bias are two specific validity threats. Maxwell (2013) argued that triangulation is the means of addressing validity threats. Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed criteria for judging the soundness of qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In order to address trustworthiness for this study, it was important to use these criteria.

Credibility. In order to address credibility, I first identified my own perspective as a researcher. I am an African-American doctoral candidate and teacher with experience teaching in Title I elementary schools. While I have interest in teacher candidates with field and internship experience in Title I schools and their perceptions of their teacher preparation, my research goal was to understand the nature of these teacher candidates' development and whether they felt prepared to teach in the Title I schools. I sought emergent contradictions and consistencies from the data rather than pursuing a specific outcome. Patton (2002) noted, "Credibility of the inquirer affects the way findings are received." I reported any personal and professional information that may

have affected the data collection, analysis, and interpretation – either negatively or positively – in the minds of the users of the findings (Patton, 2002).

Second, I used multiple data sources to achieve triangulation. Patton (2002) noted, “studies that use only one method are more vulnerable to errors linked to that particular method (e.g., loaded interview questions, biased or untrue responses) than studies that use multiple methods in which different types of data provide cross-data consistency checks.” Data that was derived from the interviews, document analysis, as well as *photovoice*, have been compared and crosschecked so that all significant findings are reported in the findings. Third, I reviewed and discussed my findings with other doctoral candidates, my dissertation committee members, other faculty, and my methodologist, to protect bias and blind spots that I may have regarding issues or topics that may emerge from the findings. I used “method checking” (Patton, 2002) during the finding process.

Transferability. Transferability is the degree to which the results of a qualitative research study can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Marshall and Rossman (2006), the researcher must clearly present the methods used in a study so that comparable results can be obtained using similar conditions and research questions. I have thoroughly described the relevant research context in this study. By using verbatim quotes from the transcriptions, I captured the voices of each participant. I also provided an audit trail that chronicled the data collection and analyses processes. These strategies helped me address trustworthiness through transferability.

Dependability. The most important aspect about dependability in qualitative research is the emphasis on the researcher to account for the dynamic and fluid context within which the research occurs (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). I kept detailed project plans that outlined processes and procedures, my rationale, and documentation of the changes in my thinking. I kept three electronic research journals where I wrote memos from the teacher perspective, an advocate perspective, and from a researcher perspective in order to help me record my thinking and record where there may be possible shifts in my thinking. My paper trail provided transparency throughout the study, detailing decisions, strategic changes in methodological approach and research framework, and personal reflections on all aspects of the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In addition, I provided a detailed methodological description of the project study, which contained an in-depth description of the setting and participants, an explanative timeline, and data collection and analysis methods.

Conformability. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2008), conformability suggests that “findings are the result of the research” rather than the outcome of researcher bias. In order to address issues of conformability I documented how I check data throughout the research process, asked members of my committee, faculty, and doctoral colleagues to challenge my assumptions and document this process, looked at and described incidents that contradict my findings, and asked my colleagues or advisor to conduct a data audit to examine data collection and make judgments about possible bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Limitations of the Study

Limitations of the study are derived from the conceptual framework and design of the research study (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). While the research design of a small qualitative study provided the experience of learning details about each participant, the small sample size automatically limits potential generalization. The sample and the environment from which the sample was selected could present possible limitations in this study. I asked teacher candidates to participate that are attending Traditional University and have field experiences or interning in Title I schools. This only allowed me to garner a small pool of teachers.

Another limitation is the challenge of self-reporting. The topic that I discussed with these teacher candidates required them to reflect on their coursework experiences and share both positive and negative experiences in the program. The level of comfort for these participants may have prevented them from being truthful during the interview or *photovoice* process. The third limitation was my bias and subjectivity. I taught in Title I schools for seven years; therefore, I have personal opinions based on experience about how teacher preparation programs prepare prospective teachers for Title I schools and what teachers need in order to help low-income students. I documented my thoughts after each interview and reading *photovoice* experience, and then discussed these thoughts with a colleague to make sure I was not allowing my biases to affect the data analysis or findings.

I did not know the teacher candidates personally, but because I teach courses at the university, I may have worked with these students throughout my doctoral

experience. This raises a concern about reactivity. Reactivity is the influence of the researcher on the setting or individuals being studied (Maxwell, 2013). Maxwell (2013) noted, “while there are some things you can do to prevent the more undesirable consequences of this...what is important is to understand how you are influencing what the informant says, and how this affects the validity of the inferences you can draw from the interview.” I was explicit about noting my possible biases in the study and continuously kept this issue in mind to protect the data gathering and analysis process.

In this chapter, I presented the methodological rationale, research design, research questions, research setting, selection of participants, data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations, and the researcher’s role. Chapters 4 and 5 provide discussion of the findings and conclusions drawn from this study.

Chapter Four

The previous chapter provided the research questions, described the research design, and clarified data collection and analysis from the document analysis, *photovoice*, and interviews. This chapter will present the study's findings.

The findings in this chapter are divided into four sections that provide an analysis of the coursework in TU's elementary education program and describe the participants in the study. In addition, the findings address how teacher candidates perceived their preparation in regards to preparing them to be effective and highly qualified teachers in Title I schools, and the recommendations teacher candidates have in order to improve teacher preparation programs. These sections answer the two research questions stated in the methodology. The first section will provide an analysis of the course syllabi and faculty participants' perspectives about the courses they taught at Traditional University. During my analysis, I found that there were discrepancies between the learner outcomes and professional standards listed in the course syllabi and what teacher candidates said was taught.

The second section will provide an analysis of how teacher candidate participants perceive Traditional University in regards to preparedness to teach in a Title I school. During the semi-structured interviews with teacher candidates, I became increasingly aware that the participants' backgrounds and personal experiences had a vital impact on

their perceptions of Title I schools and their teacher preparation program. Furthermore, the *photovoice* activity provided a more in-depth understanding of how teacher candidates perceived Title I schools. Section three of this chapter presents the coursework and/or experiences that participants of the study viewed as effective from their teacher preparation program in regards to preparing them for teaching in a Title I or high poverty environment. In addition, this section will discuss areas of concern expressed by the participants as challenges experienced during teacher preparation program: a feeling of disconnect between collegiate coursework and the reality of Title I classrooms, problems with the collegiate curriculum, and the need for more field experiences. This section is key to unlocking the mystery of how colleges of education can provide teacher candidates with how to give students in poverty equal access to learning.

The fourth section will also examine responses regarding preparedness to teach in a Title I setting and identify the recommendations made by the participants in order to effectively prepare educators to teach in high poverty schools. As findings of the research are reported, they are distinguished between findings taken from teacher candidate interviews and those from the *photovoice* activity.

Section I: Document Analysis on Traditional University Course Syllabi

Traditional University offers ten 3-credit courses that include a capstone course that focuses on research in assessment in elementary education, and a 6-credit internship course.

Table 2

Traditional University Course Options

Course Name	Course Description
EDUC 542: Foundations of Education	Examines the historical, philosophical, and sociological foundations of education as they relate to elementary schools, with a particular emphasis on teaching a culturally diverse population. Students will develop an understanding of the relationship between society and education.
EDUC 543: Children, Family, Culture, and Schools, 4-12 Year Olds	Examines child and family development and ways children, families, schools, and communities interrelate. Links children's developing physical, social, emotional, and cognitive abilities to planning curriculum and developing instructional strategies.
EDCI 555: Literacy Teaching and Learning in Diverse Elementary Classrooms I	Provides research-based introduction to literacy teaching and learning for younger children. Emphasizes language development; reading and writing processes; emergent literacy; culture, families, and literacy; and literacy integration in the curriculum.
EDCI 544: Curriculum and Methods of Teaching in Elementary Education	Introduction to general methods of teaching in elementary schools focusing on planning, teaching strategies, management, assessment, and differentiation.
EDCI 545: Assessment and Differentiation	Provides a research-based introduction to differentiated instruction for children in grades PK-6. Emphasis on the assessment of learners and differentiation of instruction to meet the needs of all learners.
EDCI 554: Methods of Teaching Social Studies and Integrating Fine Arts	Focuses on the design and delivery of standards-based integrated curriculum centered on the social sciences. Includes integration of fine arts and examines the central role of the arts in learning.
EDCI 557: Integrating Technology in PreK-6	Studies the development and integration of technology in the elementary education curriculum including the use of technology to address the learning needs of diverse students.

EDCI 552: Mathematics Methods for the Elementary Classroom	Introduces methods for teaching all children topics in arithmetic, geometry, algebra, probability, and statistics in elementary grades. Focuses on using manipulatives and technologies to explore mathematics and solve problems.
EDCI 553: Science Methods for the Elementary Classroom	Develops skills and abilities in science teaching methods, applications of technology, safety practices, and creation of integrated science curricula. Examines science teaching based on contemporary theory, practice, and standards.
EDCI 556: Literacy Teaching and Learning in Diverse Elementary Classrooms II	Provides research-based introduction to literacy teaching and learning for older children. Emphasizes literacy and language processes and development; connections among cultures, families, and literacy; and literacy integration in curriculum.
EDCI 559: Research and Assessment in Elementary Education	Provides teacher candidates an understanding of research paradigms utilizing systematic evidence to improve practice and further skills in assessment of learning outcomes. Emphasizes linking research and practice, making instructional decisions based on systematically collected data.

These courses were analyzed using a critical lens that answered the following research question:

1. What role does teacher education play in how teacher candidates understand Title I schools in regard to low-income students?

a) How is this role reflected in course syllabi?

Each course syllabus from Fall 2013 to Fall 2016 was individually analyzed to understand the learner outcomes, professional standards, required readings, assignments, and course calendars. In addition, the course syllabi were uploaded to Nvivo and a text

search query was run to search for the following words: *diversity, poverty, low-income, socio-economic, diverse learners, Title I, marginalized, free and reduced lunch, and social class*. The analysis of the course syllabi will be shared below.

EDUC 542: Foundations of Education. The EDUC 542 course syllabi were aligned with the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education Program Standards for Elementary Teacher Preparation (NCATE), the Association of Childhood Education International Standards (ACEI), and the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium Standards (INTASC). The NCATE standards that are aligned with this course focused on the candidates' knowledge and understanding of individual student engagement in learning. The ACEI standards that were aligned with this course focused on the "adaptation to diverse students."

ACEI standard 1.2 stated, "Adaptation to diverse students---Candidates understand how elementary students differ in their development and approaches to learning, and create instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse students." This ACEI standard used the term diverse students, which means this standard requires teacher candidates to learn how to develop instructional opportunities for diverse student groups. In addition to the ACEI standard, INTASC standard 2 shared, "The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards." Both the ACEI and INTASC standards shared in the course syllabi emphasized that teacher candidates were taught how to instruct students from diverse cultures and communities. Based on the professional standards that were used in all EDUC 542 course syllabi,

teacher candidates should be provided with knowledge and understanding of how to teach students from diverse backgrounds.

The analysis of the EDUC 542 course syllabi revealed that this is not the case in all the sections of this course that have been offered from Fall 2013 to Fall 2016. While most of the course syllabi are similar there are some faculty that have focused more on social class, students from impoverished backgrounds, or diverse student populations that would possibly attend a Title I school than others. All of the EDUC 542 courses from Fall 2013 to Fall 2016 used the texts *American Education* by Joel Spring and *Big Lies of School Reform* edited by Paul Gorski and Kristien Zenkov.

The book *American Education* presented the historical, political, social, and legal foundations of education and the profession of teaching in the United States. Throughout the book, Spring discussed the conflict between a skills approach and cultural diversity, social mobility and equality of opportunity as related to schooling, and student diversity in schools. This text provided students an opportunity to critically think about education and challenge perspectives and biases.

The book *Big Lies of School Reform* is a series of essays that each identified one “lie” about a notorious school reform initiative. These essays were written by key scholars in the field of education such as Deborah Meier, Jeannie Oakes, Gloria Ladson-Billings, and Jim Cummins who discussed how reform movements affect teachers and administrators. This book covered topics on common core standards, tracking, alternative paths to licensure, and the disempowerment of teachers’ unions. Teacher candidates who

use this book were provided with an opportunity to critically examine educational reform initiatives and consider ways to improve educational opportunity for all students.

These texts provided an overview of issues that teacher candidates needed to be aware of before entering the classroom and beginning to teach. Some of the professors took their instruction further and added books such as *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America* by Jonathan Kozol which provided insight to what occurs in many inner-city schools. Kozol discussed the history of education and the effect of *Brown v. Board of Education* on black children. He used the voices of children, principals, and teachers to discuss the challenges that face urban systems. This text was used by most courses from Fall 2013 to Fall 2015. After Fall 2015, only two faculty members used this book. One of the adjunct faculty members, Dr. Washington taught EDUC 542 and when asked why she did not use Kozol in her course, responded:

I think I decided to take out the little bit of Kozol and again it is interesting because I am trying to find a good text that doesn't just say kids living in poverty live only in urban areas, because that's the thing, its like they may not be teaching in urban areas, I think of like Alexandria City and its like urban, but still not urban like the way that we have kind of contrasted urban like Chicago or Baltimore or DC, right, but still what does that look like for these kids in these more suburban areas, I think that is what has been hard is to find that resource of like you can still be poor in the suburbs, what does that look like?

Taking out Kozol because teacher candidates should learn about poor kids in the suburbs

rather than poor children in urban areas of metropolitan cities is a difference of opinion between faculty members. When asked about the importance for prospective teachers to learn about teaching in Title I or high-poverty schools, even though most of the teacher candidates may be teaching in schools that are not Title I schools, a discussion about the Kozol text was brought up by Dr. Penn, a tenure-track faculty member. Dr. Penn felt the opposite of her colleague in regards to using the Kozol text, she explained:

I guess you can call it an argument or debate or whatever you want to call it with one of our adjuncts. I feel very strongly that our students should read Kozol and I feel really strongly that they should be disturbed by that book and I feel really strongly that if we could, I have tried multiple ways to get them to engage in some field experiences in the inner cities of DC, because its right around the corner or some of the lower socio-economic regions of Alexandria where there is a high population of immigrant families. I think that is really important because I do believe that central to teaching, our how teachers navigate there implicit biases and once the biases are so rooted and your interactions with people, your perceptions of people, your assumptions of people, and those are not challenged unless you engage experimentally in some critical opportunities that push those assumptions and boundaries...

Dr. Penn further explained:

...the adjunct introduced a new book that just came out, so even if in suburban areas, there are inequities and unfairness within schools, and I think that is important to note, but I think when you are so geared to having an educational

experience like many of our teaching populations, meaning the candidates are so geared to a lens that is very sheltered in the capacity of what is going on across all the contexts of our educational system, I think that exposure is very critical.

Dr. Penn shared that being exposed to text such as Kozol is critical. The book that the adjunct professor, Dr. Washington chose to use beginning Fall 2016 instead of the Kozol book that is being discussed by Dr. Penn was a book written by Amanda Lewis and John Diamond titled *Despite Their Best Intentions: How Racial Inequality Thrives in Good Schools*. This book shared five years' work of interviews and data gathering at Riverview High School. Riverview High School had a population of affluent, diverse, and liberal students. This school is well funded, has teachers that were well trained, and many of its students were high achieving. Yet, the authors highlighted how white and Asian students were academically outperforming their Black peers. Diamond and Lewis situated their research in this suburban school and looked at what factors within the school itself could be causing the disparity. While this book did not share the experience of urban students like that of Kozol, this book provided clarity and data into the debate that is too often dominated by stereotyping, race baiting, and democracy. Dr. Penn considered this book to "shelter" teacher candidates' learning experiences. Dr. Washington was asked how she determined what textbooks she chose for her course and she responded:

I knew from last year that we didn't necessarily have a vastly diverse, diverse as in ethnically diverse, linguistically diverse, racially diverse group that I worked with and they were also going into schools in Northern Virginia which are increasingly becoming so, but also the experiences that I was getting from them

was that they were very suburban experiences so I wanted; one of the big things and something that came out of the group last year was that they really were interested in the issues around racial achievement gap, so in order to address that better like there is this piece of like understanding privilege, understanding identity, but that was, even though that was like an underlining thing of what I had studied, it was like, how can I teach white people about their identity and their privilege, I never had to do that. So, that book was one that I adopted to show them hey here is a school where technically, everybody should be doing well. It is a suburban school, everyone is middle class, uh professional, middle class professional or even higher and why are the black kids and the Latino kids academically lower and practically lower than the white kids. I have no idea, so just from that experience I adopted that textbook to decide ok this is how we are going to break it up, and when I read the book it broke things down into certain issues we were talking about like tracking, discipline, things dealing with families and parents. The idea of privilege, white privilege going through it, like that's so I think in that way its like I have the flexibility to adapt certain texts into that.

The disconnect between faculty book choices and what teacher candidates should understand about teaching in schools with a high-poverty population is evident through the course readings listed on the syllabi and the faculty interviews. The course syllabi used by one professor assigned the Kozol text, as well as the Gorski and Zenkov readings, and gave students an option to read either Gloria Ladson-Billings book *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African-American Children* or Lisa Delpit's book

Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom. Gloria Ladson-Billings' book shared the lives of teachers who are exemplars of good teaching. These teachers demonstrated culturally relevant teaching and worked with the strengths a child brings into the classroom. Lisa Delpit's book shared ideas about ways teachers can be better "cultural transmitters" in the classroom. In addition, she suggested that many academic problems that attributed to children of color are actually the result of miscommunication. Both of these books provided teacher candidates with a different perspective of students from diverse backgrounds, which is important for teacher candidates to experience.

Overall, the textbooks used in EDUC 542 provided knowledge and understanding of students from diverse backgrounds and could be used to have class discussions regarding how to effectively teach students from Title I backgrounds. All of the courses mentioned having additional articles for students to read which were posted on Blackboard. These articles depended on the course topics that were assigned each week. When comparing what was covered Fall 2013 to Fall 2014 to what was covered Spring 2015 to Fall 2016, the topics covered in EDUC 542 changed. The topics on the EDUC 542 course calendar from Fall 2013 to Fall 2014 included:

- Introduction to "Minority" Education
- Gender and Sexuality in Education
- Social Class in Education
- Native American Education
- African American Education
- English Language Learner Education

- Students with Disabilities Education
- The state of education today and current issues
- Implications for today
- Culturally responsive teaching

These topics provided teacher candidates with the knowledge and understanding of diverse student populations. The topics covered social class in education along with other topics that were often overlooked in teacher preparation programs. In Spring 2015 the EDUC 542 topics began to differ and changed to the following topics:

- Who are we as future teachers?
- Who are our students and how are they different from/alike each other, us, and peers from decades past?
 - Considering Race, Gender, Special Needs, Global migration, Poverty
- Federal, State, and Local policies impacting schools today
- What should students be taught?
- What is important for our students to learn?
- What is the evidence of student learning?
- What is the best evidence of teacher success?
- What are the most pressing issues with which we must be concerned as future teachers?

While these topics may be used to address how to effectively teach diverse student populations, they are not as focused on specific groups of students that teacher candidates may not have experience teaching.

All EDUC 542 courses required teacher candidates to complete a final assignment called a *Reflective Practitioner Paper*, this assignment provided teacher candidates with the opportunity to research a topic of interest and become reflective about that topic. The course syllabi described the assignment as one that gave candidates an opportunity to be reflective and analyze a current issue/initiative of their choice. The course syllabi read:

In order to become reflective practitioners for a multicultural classroom, candidates must reflect on a variety of professional issues that teachers confront in their day-to-day teaching as well as the broader educational and social context, which affects the work of the public school teacher. To this end, the candidates will analyze a current issue/innovation around race and culture, gender equity, special education, social class, or language diversity. They will then relate it to historical and sociological trends/perspectives as well as to their own experiences.

Providing teacher candidates with an opportunity to analyze a current issue/innovation gives them a deeper understanding of a current critical issue in education. However, because the focus was only on one issue, candidates could possibly be missing learning and discussing other current educational issues. When asked how she determined what will be covered during the course of the semester for EDUC 542, Dr. Washington asserted, “I feel like I did change the way I teach the curriculum because I know that some of them (teacher candidates) will not be teaching in those schools and will be mainly in the suburbs where it may be just above Title I and it will probably shift as the population changes because schools can be designated Title I for all types of reasons. It is related to the income of the surrounding areas, but it can be because you have a high ELL

population, or maybe you have a higher special needs population.” Teacher candidates need to be taught about Title I schools and ways they can be effective in these environments. Although, Dr. Washington shared that a Title I school can be defined many ways, the free and reduced lunch percentage of students is what defines a Title I school. This is important for teacher candidates to know so that they can begin to consider ways they will be able to relate to their students.

Candidates were required to complete other assignments throughout the course, which included *Beliefs Statement/Education Autobiography Journal*, *Current Events News Story Assignment*, and *Journal Entries about their field experiences*. The faculty member who taught EDUC 542 Spring 2014 focused on cultural diversity and social class in all the assignments more than any other faculty member that taught this course from Fall 2013 to Fall 2016. The faculty member required students to complete an Education Autobiography Journal where candidates submitted the following four journal entries:

- 1) “Getting At My Beliefs” (1-2 pages): a) What do you believe to be the goal/s of PK-12 public schools in the United States?, b) What is learning? How do students learn? Do culturally- and neuro-diverse students learn differently?, and c) What does “good” teaching entail?
- 2) “Where My Beliefs Come From” (1-2 pages) a) Reread your first journal entry adding more details as needed. b) How did you develop your beliefs on the goals of school; what learning is and how students learn; as well as what “good” teaching entail? What learning experiences did you have or teaching

performances did you observe within PK-12 schools that helped form these beliefs?

3) “My Beliefs Revised” (1-2 pages): a) Where do your beliefs on learning and teaching fit with the major educational philosophies and theorists we learned in this course? Keep in mind that your beliefs may perfectly align with one philosophy or may be a combination of several.

4) “Culturally Diverse Students” (1-2 pages): a) What has been your experience with culturally diverse populations (e.g. race, social class, English language learners, etc.)? What successes or struggles have you encountered educating culturally diverse populations within U.S. schools?

This instructor required students to be reflective about their educational beliefs and think about their experiences with diverse populations including social class. The course focused on social class and race, which are important for teacher candidates to be taught about in order to be successful in a Title I school.

EDUC 542 is one of the first courses that teacher candidates took when they entered the elementary education program at TU. The course was designed to give candidates an overview of education. Based on these analysis, teacher candidates were exposed to diverse student populations, however what specific groups were being focused on varies. The textbooks used for this course provided possible insight into what may occur in a Title I classroom, however there was not any evidence in the course syllabi that the textbooks were used for discussion about teaching in Title I schools. In addition to EDUC 542, teacher candidates were enrolled in EDUC 543: Children, Family, Culture,

and Schools, 4-12 Year Olds.

EDUC 543: Children, Family, Culture, and Schools, 4-12 Year Olds. One of the professional standards for this course was the same as that of EDUC 542. The ACEI Standard 1.2 stated, “Adaptation to diverse students—Candidates understand how elementary students differ in their development and approaches to learning, and create instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse students.” This course used this standard to explain what it helped teacher candidates learn and understand about teaching students from diverse backgrounds. The learning outcomes for EDUC 543 were to have students:

Demonstrate an understanding of the interconnections between culture, family, community, and school, and the dynamic interaction between teachers, parents and community members necessary to promote children’s growth and learning.

According to the course syllabi, this course was designed to provide teacher candidates with the opportunity to do the following:

- Observe the diversity of students and their families and demonstrate effective anti-bias educational approaches for use in classrooms with diverse learners.
- Develop competency in observing and assessing development and learning in classroom settings using performance-based methods that are sensitive to students’ unique cultural/ethnic backgrounds.
- Appreciate the teacher’s role in working with families in culturally diverse communities and fostering their involvement in their children’s education.

In order to meet the learning outcomes two books were used for this course, *Child*

Development and Education by Teresa McDevitt and Jeanne Ormrod, as well as *Yardsticks: Children in the Classroom Ages 4-14* by Chip Wood. The book *Child Development and Education* described developmental phenomena for infants to adolescents by facilitating observations of and analyses of what children say, do, and create, in order for educators to know how to make informed decisions that meet children's adolescent's needs. This book included a section that discussed support for teacher licensure preparation where teacher candidates were presented information about developmental concepts and theorists they need to know, and were provided practice test questions and case studies to review.

The second book that was used for this course is *Yardsticks: Children in the Classroom Ages 4-14* by Chip Wood. This book provided a narrative description of developmental traits, charts summarizing physical, social, language, and cognitive growth patterns for children 4 years of age to 14 years of age. Both of these books were used for instruction in EDUC 543. While the book *Child Development and Education* discussed sensitivity to the cultural and bio-ecological nature of development, these books did not mention possible factors that could affect students who are from low-income backgrounds or scenarios teachers could face if they decide to teach in a high-poverty or Title I school. The books discussed the development of children who were from environments where they were not living in poverty or facing exogenous factors that could hinder their development. The book took this "one size fits all" stance in child development. One faculty member did not use the book *Child Development and Education*, but instead used the book *Educational Psychology: Theory and Practice* by

Robert Slavin. This book provided prospective teachers the intellectual grounding and practical strategies they need to be effective instructors. The book made connections between theory and practice explicit and helped students to transfer what they learned to their own teaching. The book contained several examples and case studies that could help students gain an understanding of what to expect in the classroom. This book was similar to the two other books discussed previously, when it comes to not being focused on students from diverse backgrounds instead it focuses on all children in general.

Although the readings were used to provide knowledge and understanding of child development, they were not the only way students gained information about child development. The teacher candidates were given assignments that provided them with the opportunity to learn more about students and the communities in which they live. In the Spring 2013, teacher candidates in the EDUC 542 course were asked to complete three assignments. The assignments were *field observations* based on their 15-hour field experience in a school. A *Case Study Comparison* which allowed candidates to work in groups to prepare a comparison of their case study, and a case study where candidates had to write a detailed case study of a child with a different cultural background from the classroom in which they observed. While these assignments asked candidates to write about a child's socio-cultural context (family, school, community, and ethnicity) and choose a student from a different cultural background to work with, the course assignment lacked knowledge and understanding of how students may differ between those who attend a Title I school and those who do not attend a Title I school. The candidates looked at one student in their case study who differed culturally from them,

but that one student did not represent a whole culture. The assignments were not specifically focused on providing candidates experiences and knowledge in both a Title I and non-Title I school setting. These course syllabi were used several times from Fall 2013 to Spring 2015. Also, this course has been taught by several different faculty members, therefore, the assignments changed based on the preference of the faculty member teaching the course. From Fall 2015 through Fall 2016 some faculty required teacher candidates to complete a *Community Mapping Activity* assignment. This assignment provided candidates with the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the myriad of factors that influence students' daily school experiences. In order to complete the assignment, candidates completed their field experience at a school and created a brief presentation that shared the following aspects of their assigned school:

- a visual tour of both your school and the surrounding community
- school description/demographics
- community description/demographics
- aspects of your school that make it unique
- intersection of course readings/discussions with your school experiences

This assignment allowed teacher candidates to become reflective about the experiences of the students that attended the school where they were and what teachers can do to make sure students are academically successful in these schools.

The course syllabi for EDUC 543 revealed that there were five different faculty members who have taught this course from Fall 2013 to Fall 2016. Two of the five faculty members spent three classes throughout each semester discussing culture and

biases, while the other faculty solely focused on child development. One of the two faculty members taught this course for the first time Fall 2016. For one class during the beginning of the semester, the faculty member used the questions, “What is culture?” and “What are our personal biases of culture?” as a topic. To address these questions students were assigned to read the articles: *Towards a Conception of Culturally Responsive Classroom* by Geneva Gay and *But That’s Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy* by Gloria Ladson-Billings. The second-class discussion was based on the question “How does teachers’ cultural biases impact children’s development and learning?” Towards the end of the semester, the faculty used the question “In what ways can you support the developmental and cultural influences of student learning within your classroom environment?” to guide the third class discussion.

The two faculty members shared with teacher candidates’ information that could help them become successful in diverse classrooms and provided students with the opportunity to discuss their biases. The other three faculty did not show in their course syllabi discussions about culture and biases other than one class where the topic was “Family, culture and community Genetic foundations, prenatal development, birth: Biological beginnings.” Teacher candidates were getting two different experiences depending on what EDUC 543 course they were enrolled in. Two of the five faculty members were focused on preparing candidates to teach in diverse settings, which is what the professional standards for this course were. The other faculty members were not focused on culture, which is based on the course syllabi.

EDCI 544: Curriculum and Methods of Teaching in Elementary Education.

Teacher candidates took this course their second or third semester depending on when their cohort started. The course syllabi shared the learner outcomes for this course which included, “Plan for meeting the needs of diverse classroom populations including disabilities, SES, ethnicities and race, gender, and linguistic diversity” and “Plan for and use various instructional strategies including presentation, direct instruction, concept teaching, cooperative learning, problem-based learning, and classroom discussion and adapt each to meet the needs of diverse students.” The learner outcomes emphasized that teacher candidates should learn how to meet the needs of diverse student populations including students from various SES backgrounds.

This course was based on professional standards which Interstate Teacher Assessment & Support Consortium (INTASC) and ACEI/NCATE program standards for elementary teacher preparation. The INTASC standard aligned with this course is INTASC standard #2: Learning Differences. This standard states, “The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.” The ACEI/NCATE standard that was aligned with this course was Standard 3.2 *Adaptation to Diverse Students*, which was the same standard that was used for both EDUC 542 and EDUC 543. This standard states, “Candidates understand how elementary students differ in their development and approaches to learning, and create instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse students.” According to the syllabi for this course, this course

was designed to provide candidates with knowledge and understanding to teach students from diverse backgrounds.

The textbooks used for this course focused on classroom management and teaching in the elementary classroom. The only textbook that focused on teaching in urban classrooms or students from low-income backgrounds was the book *Create success! Unlocking the Potential of Urban Students* written by Kadhira Rajagopal. This book discussed Rajagopal's CREATE model of instruction which held students accountable for their own learning, taught at an appropriate level and in familiar language, and embraced culturally responsive instruction. This book provided candidates with personal insights and what Dr. Rajagopal calls "battle-tested" strategies that promote student achievement. Dr. Rajagopal's book was used only once during summer 2013. This same cohort (Summer 2013) was assigned the textbook *Educating Esme: Diary of a Teacher's First Year* by Esme Raji Codell. This book shared the diary of the author who recorded her first year teaching in a Chicago public school. Esme's diary provided a window into a real-life classroom from a teacher's perspective and revealed what it takes to be an exceptional teacher. There was only one faculty member **who** that used these textbooks that specifically discussed culturally responsive classroom management and teaching in diverse classroom settings.

Although none of the textbooks were focused on culturally responsive teaching and teaching in Title I schools, the class topic for at least one week for EDCI 544 was culturally responsive classroom management during the Spring 2013, Summer 2013, and Fall 2013 courses. These were the only courses that discussed the topic of culturally

responsive classroom management. The other courses focused on classroom management in a general form without discussing how classroom management may be different depending on the student demographics or type of school.

The class assignments for EDCI 544 from Fall 2013 to Spring 2015 were based on creating lesson plans, classroom management reports, and creating an instructional resource review. The instructional resource review assignment required teacher candidates to review an instructional strategy or curriculum and share a literature and ways this strategy or curriculum could be implemented. The course syllabi listed topics such as culturally responsive curriculum and urban education, which could have been used by candidates as topics for their assignment. While these topics were listed for consideration, students were not required to consider class, race, or any other topic that provided knowledge about teaching in a Title I school.

In Fall 2015 the assignments for EDCI 544 changed to assignments that required students to use *Edthena*, a video system that can be used to help teacher candidates monitor their teaching during their field experience. Based on their field experience candidates completed a physical activity report assignment. This assignment required candidates to track the movement and physical activity of the K-6 students they worked with and used this information to create an activity or series activities to foster healthy life styles for these students. In addition to this assignment, students were taught three lessons to the students in their field experience classroom. The candidates coded these lessons and reflected on their professional development and discussed implications for the future. While these assignments provided candidates with the opportunity to create,

execute, and reflect on these lessons, teacher candidates were not asked to consider working in high poverty schools or Title I schools. Students being able to experience teaching in a Title I classroom and comparing it to teaching in a non-Title I classroom for these assignments could provide the candidate with two different experiences that could benefit them in any classroom setting.

EDCI 544 provided teacher candidates with classroom management experience, however the course did not consider differences candidates will face in Title I schools compared to non-Title I schools. The only semesters that culturally responsive classroom management or urban education was discussed in course syllabi were Spring 2013, Summer 2013, and Fall 2013. After these semesters the courses focused more on one way of managing a classroom. There was no emphasis on the differences that teacher candidates would face in diverse classroom settings. One of the courses that teacher candidates took with EDCI 544 is EDCI 555. This course was one of two literacy courses that teacher candidates had to take in order to complete the program.

EDCI 555: Literacy Teaching and Learning in Diverse Elementary

Classrooms I. This course was designed to provide teacher candidates with a research-based introduction to teaching and learning for younger children. According to the course syllabi for this course, two of the twelve learner outcomes discussed teaching diverse populations, these outcomes were:

- Students will describe the literacy needs of diverse learners, including English Language Learners and students with other special needs, and they will adapt lesson plans to meet these needs.

- Students will explore and explain the role of families, communities, and schools in children's literacy learning.

Based on the learner outcomes, in this course candidates will learn how to meet the literacy needs of English Language Learners and students with other special needs, but the needs of students in Title I schools or in high poverty schools were not addressed.

The analysis showed that all of the courses from Fall 2013 to Fall 2016 are aligned with the following professional organization standards: Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC); International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE); and International Reading Association (IRA) Standards for Literacy Professionals and Paraprofessionals. The professional standard that addressed diversity was INTASC Standard 2 which stated, "The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards." The syllabi showed this standard being aligned with field experiences, read aloud lesson, guided reading, and student assessment assignments.

All of the assignments and required textbooks for this course were solely focused on literacy content. From Fall 2013 to Fall 2015 the course syllabi showed the assignments as a literacy vision statement, children's literature collection, strategic read-aloud lesson plan, and a guided reading lesson plan. After Fall 2015 the literacy vision statement assignment was replaced with a book club assignment (teacher candidates discussed course readings) and a student assessment assignment (candidates held conferences with guided reading group in the fieldwork classroom to assess student

learning). None of the assignments required teacher candidates to consider possible experiences working with students in high poverty or Title I schools. The assignments seemed to focus on teaching one particular group of students instead of providing opportunities for teacher candidates to think of students that may come from low-income backgrounds or possibly teaching in schools where there are not adequate resources to teach literacy.

The assigned textbooks for this course all focused on some aspect of literacy. The candidates were required to read books that focused on phonics, writing instruction, spelling instruction, guided reading, and teaching comprehension. None of the books assigned to students discussed curriculum bias, helping struggling readers in high poverty schools, or strategies and techniques that can be used when a school does not have the resources to help students learn to read. In the course syllabi there was one class out of fifteen classes that discussed teaching diverse learners. This class categorized diverse learners as English Language Learners or students with special needs. There was one faculty member who taught the course Spring 2016 who did not include this discussion in their course syllabus. The fact that only one class discussed diverse learners, and only focusing on identifying English Language Learners and students with special needs highlighted a need for consideration on how this course can align more with the professional standards that call for teacher candidates to have learning experiences with diverse populations. Moreover, the term “diversity” was used in the course syllabi, but was limited to only two groups of students.

Overall the course syllabi revealed that faculty members who teach literacy courses are teaching the same information and that the course is focused solely on literacy content. There is nothing in the course syllabi that discussed social class, teaching in high poverty or Title I schools, or ways to help struggling readers from low-income backgrounds. The course presented a “one size fits all” way of instructing students as opposed to considering many different groups of diverse students. In order to gain more information regarding the focus of this course, Dr. Peppers a tenured professor at TU who teaches both Literacy Methods I and II was interviewed. According to Dr. Peppers, he “repeatedly and consistently teaches literacy methods for the elementary education program and that is a two course sequence that consists of literacy methods one and literacy methods two and those are both preparing teachers to teach in diverse settings.” When asked how he determined what content needed to be taught in courses, Dr. Peppers stated, “It’s a combination of standards that drive the courses in our program so INTASC standards, and for thinking specifically about the two literacy courses we consult the IRA, ILA standards for reading professionals. So those standards are one piece, but also my professional knowledge of the field and ongoing research taking place in literacy teaching and learning.”

Based on Dr. Peppers response and the course syllabi, although the phrase “diverse learners” is included in the course title, there is no discussion about students at Title I schools besides English Language Learners and students with special needs. When asked if Dr. Peppers is asking teacher candidates to think about ways to teach students in

diverse settings, he responded, “probably not in literacy methods as I should.” He further explained:

Maybe I am making excuses for myself but it just seems that in literacy there is so much that they have to learn in the ways of how kids learn to read. I infuse differentiation in the different cultural knowledge background that the kids are going to bring with them through learning literacy so I try, I guess I do infuse it some but not to the degree that, not a big picture, its more like when we were talking about word study and alphabetic knowledge if students are coming from a, they grow up speaking Spanish like here is the source of understanding that are totally, you know they are totally going to miss them so think about how you are going to adjust your instruction so we have conversations about that. But it’s all embedded within learning reading and writing.

Dr. Peppers acknowledged the lack of instruction on teaching students from diverse backgrounds, but he mentioned in the interview that there are other courses in the program that focused on teaching students from diverse backgrounds. He further explained:

I know that we have a couple of courses in our program where that is almost exactly what the entire objective of the course is to get the sense of your background and that makes you who you are and that is awesome. But who you are is not the same background and perspective of the kids, so we really try to get teachers to reflect on their bias and reflect on their privilege and to be able to turn that around and say that this privilege and this bias that I bring is not a universal

perspective and it may be far different than the children that we serve day in and day out. So I know our foundations course takes a look at that, and we teach a differentiation and assessment course where we really focus on meeting diverse student needs and social studies due to the nature of the content in social studies, I know that previous instructors have really infused that sort of cultural awareness into social studies instruction because that content fits nicely into it.

The courses that Dr. Peppers was referring to are EDUC 542: Foundations of Education, which based on the course syllabi, addressed teaching students from diverse backgrounds including those from impoverished backgrounds. In addition to EDUC 542, Dr. Peppers also mentioned EDCI 545: Assessment and Differentiation and EDCI 554: Methods of Social Studies for Elementary Classrooms and Integration of Fine Arts which have both been analyzed and revealed only one or two classes each semester depending on the course instructor focused on instructing diverse learners.

Dr. Washington, one of the instructors who taught EDUC 542 was interviewed and asked about how she brought discussions and activities about teaching low-income students into EDUC 542, Dr. Washington responded, “There is one time when we deal with it explicitly, but to bring that thread back around and get more explicit in certain other courses...” Dr. Washington believed that other courses are explicitly teaching teacher candidates about teaching low-income students and Dr. Peppers thought that teacher candidates are learning about teaching these students in the course Dr.

Washington teaches. This illustrates a disconnect between faculty when it comes to what is being taught in each course in the elementary education program.

Based on the analysis and interviews, some faculty shared that teacher candidates are being exposed to how to teach diverse student populations. Dr. Peppers expressed that while he may not include a lot of content regarding meeting diverse student needs, he believes Traditional University's Elementary Education program "does better than most." He further explained, "I think we have been very intentional on how we have designed our program to be clinically based, emphasizing teaching all students and even the literacy courses I know best, there names are intentional it is literacy methods one teaching reading and writing, or teaching literacy in diverse classrooms. There is a specific focus even in the course title of meeting diverse students needs." The notion of "doing better than most" is important only when there is evidence that teacher candidates are being exposed to how to teach students who attend Title I schools are from impoverished backgrounds, and are taught how to teach in schools that lack necessary resources to successfully teach students how to read and write. Based on the course syllabi these topics are not covered.

EDCI 555 focused on providing literacy teaching and learning for younger children. The course syllabi did not address teacher candidates learning what to do when students are starting school with no exposure to letters or sounds because of their circumstances outside of school. This course is the first literacy course that teacher candidates were exposed to in the program. In addition to this course, teacher candidates have to take EDCI: 556, which continue the topics, discussed in this course.

EDCI 556: Literacy Teaching and Learning in Diverse Elementary Classrooms II. This course differs from EDCI 555 because it provides literacy teaching

and learning for older children as oppose to younger children. This course was aligned with the International Reading Association (IRA), INTASC, and the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) professional organization standards. While one of the twelve learner outcomes stated, “Students will describe the literacy needs of diverse learners, including English Language Learners and students with other special needs, and they will adapt lesson plans to meet these needs,” the course syllabi showed only one class per semester focused on multilingual learners. There was not any assignments or class discussions included on the course syllabi that focused on diverse learners except for the one class previously referred to that focused on multilingual learners.

The textbooks used for this course were the same ones that were used for EDCI 555: Literacy Teaching and Learning in Diverse Elementary Classrooms with the exception of one writing text. Teacher candidates were assigned hunts and sorts, writing book club presentations, writing lessons, and a spelling analysis. Based on the course syllabi this course focused on preparing teachers to teach writing. Candidates had to form a book club and selected a text from a provided list that they read, discussed, and presented. One of the books for this assignment was entitled *Literacy Instruction in the Multilingual Classroom* by Lori Helman. This book demonstrated for elementary school teachers how to create multilingual classroom communities that support every learner’s success in reading, writing, and general literacy development. It provided checklists as well as photographs of linguistically diverse classrooms modeling how to create a language-rich classroom environment, scaffold reading and writing tasks to match

students' needs, and used students' backgrounds as a bridge to literacy learning in English.

Teacher candidates were provided with strategies and techniques that equipped them for a diverse classroom, however this book was only an option for the book club assignment. None of the assigned books for this course focused on preparing teacher candidates to meet the needs of elementary literacy learners from diverse backgrounds. The course title included "diverse learners", however there was no evidence of teacher candidates being prepared to teach any group from a diverse background other than students who are multilingual. The next course that teacher candidates took in the elementary education program is EDCI 545, which discussed assessment and differentiation.

EDCI 545: Assessment and Differentiation. With the exception of Fall 2013, Spring 2014, and Fall 2014, this course offered sessions during the summer. Since Fall 2013 this course has been taught by six different faculty members, one being an adjunct professor. There was only one learner outcome from this course out of seven outcomes that related to teaching in a Title I school. That learner outcome stated, "Students will be able to generalize course content to reflect how the multicultural, special needs, gifted students and other diverse populations within classrooms have their needs met via the application of the skills, strategies, and knowledge of this course." This was the first course that students had taken in the program that used the term "multicultural."

In Fall 2013 the course was aligned with the INTASC and International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) professional standards. The INTASC standard that

was used for this class was Standard #2, which states “Learning Differences. The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.” In Summer 2015, NCATE/ACEI Standards for Elementary Teacher Preparation were aligned with this course. The NCATE/ACEI standard that was used is Standard 3.2 Adaptation to diverse students, which states “Candidates understand how elementary students differ in their development and approaches to learning, and create instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse students.” According to these standards this course should prepare teacher candidates to teach students from diverse cultures and how to adapt their instruction to diverse students.

The textbooks for this course focused on assessment, grading, and differentiation in mixed ability classrooms. From Fall 2013 to Spring 2015 the textbooks used for this course were *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed Ability Classrooms (2nd ed.)* by Carol Tomlinson and *How to Assess Authentic Learning (5th ed.)* by Kay Burke. Tomlinson’s book shared how teachers used readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles to address student diversity. The book written by Burke provided K-12 teachers with information on how to build response to intervention checklists for struggling students, construct rubrics, create tests that focus on higher order thinking skills, and develop unit plans using differentiated learning and assessment strategies. These books focused on preparing teachers to differentiate and assess students in a general education-learning environment. In Summer 2015 the book *Differentiation and the Brain: How Neuroscience Supports the Learner-Friendly Classroom* by David Sousa and Carol

Tomlinson were used. This book answered questions regarding what is a mindset and how does the brain function. The authors of this book provided information that could help teachers decide whether certain curricular, instructional, and assessment choices are likely to be more effective than others. In addition to this book Tomlinson's book *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms* was used for this course.

The Summer 2016 instructor used the book *Yardsticks: Children in the Classroom, Ages 4-14* written by Chip Wood. This book was used in the EDCI 544 course as well. In addition to the book *Yardsticks: Children in the Classroom, Ages 4-14*, students were required to read *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners* by Carol Tomlinson. This book explained the theoretical basis of differentiated instruction, explored the variables of curriculum and learning environment, shared instructional strategies to effectively instruct students of various backgrounds. While this book did not specifically mention teaching students in Title I schools, chapters 3 (Rethinking How We Do School---and for Whom) and 4 (Learning Environments that Support Differentiated Instruction) in the book discussed learning environments and provide strategies to support differentiated instruction that could be applied to Title I classrooms. Although the textbooks did not specifically address how to differentiate instruction between non-Title I schools and Title I schools, there were several strategies offered in these books that could work in both learning environments.

The analysis of the EDCI 545 course showed that only two assignments that required candidates to consider teaching students from diverse backgrounds. The first assignment was the *Differentiation and Assessment Plan*. This assignment required

teacher candidates to work with teams to outline a plan for a differentiated unit of instruction. The syllabi described the assignment the following way,

You will design the differentiation and assessment plan to promote equity in learning opportunities for all students. This means that intentional decisions will need to be made to consider student readiness, interests, and learning profiles.

You will need to consider how content, process, and/or products of the lesson will be different for different groups of students depending on their strengths. All of these decisions will be driven by your knowledge of students from your field placement and couched in the readings you have engaged in throughout the semester. Your outline will also include a plan for measuring student learning prior to and throughout the unit.

The use of the phrase “promote equity in learning opportunities for all students” required teacher candidates to consider the racial ethnicity, social class, and linguistic background of the students that they may have to teach. In addition to this assignment students had to complete a *Student Learning Profile* assignment. This assignment required candidates to work with a student during their field experience and learn about the student academically, personally, and socially.

Candidates were required to use a variety of methods to learn this information and used this information to complete the *Differentiation and Assessment Plan* assignment. The assignments for this course required teacher candidates to build relationships with the students in their field classrooms in order to better understand the students’ backgrounds and learn how to effectively teach these students. The strategies, skills, and

knowledge that teacher candidates gained while completing these course assignments could be useful for them if they were to teach in a Title I school.

The analysis of EDCI 545: Assessment and Differentiation syllabi showed that one out of the fifteen classes offered each semester addressed the topic of how to differentiate teaching of diverse students. However, according to the parentheses that were located next to the phrase “diverse students” in the course syllabi, the term “diverse students” only referred to students with disabilities or English Language Learners for this course. There was no mention of students from impoverished backgrounds, social class, or Title I schools. The phrase “diverse students” was defined the same way in EDCI 555. Based on the course syllabi teacher candidates were gaining experience in the field and learned how to get to know students in order to differentiate instruction. However, there was no requirement for teacher candidates to work with students in Title I schools or consider the social class of the students that they will be working with. This showed a lack of exposure for teacher candidates to work in Title I school environments and learn about how to differentiate instruction for students in high poverty and Title I schools. The next course that teacher candidates completed after EDCI 545 was EDCI 554, which provided them methods for teaching social studies.

EDCI 554: Methods of Teaching Social Studies and Integrating Fine Arts in the Elementary Classroom. According to the course syllabi, the purpose of this course was to help teacher candidates understand the standards, objectives, and materials of elementary social studies instruction. Also, this course included integration of fine arts and examined the role of the arts in learning. EDCI 554 was aligned with INTASC,

NCATE/ACEI, and National Content Standards for Arts Education. INTASC Standard #2 was the only professional organization standard used for this course that involved teaching diverse learners and adapting instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners. The other professional organization standards were content specific.

This course was offered every semester and from Fall 2013 to Summer 2016 was taught by only two instructors. Therefore, the course syllabi have not changed much from Fall 2013 to Fall 2016. In Fall 2016, a new instructor began teaching the course, but used the same course syllabi that the previous instructors used. The learner outcomes for this course have remained the same from Fall 2013 to Fall 2016. Based on the learner outcomes, teacher candidates had “examine issues related to multiculturalism and their relevance to teaching elementary students and differentiate for culture, ethnicity, and race.” Teacher candidates discussing culture, ethnicity, and race are not clearly written in the course syllabi, however the course assignments and readings lend themselves to possible discussions regarding these topics.

Teacher candidates were required to read the book *Social Studies in Elementary Education* written by Walter Parker. This book introduced teachers to the world of social studies teaching and learning in elementary and middle schools. Also, it discussed geography, history, and government. In addition, the book included a chapter on multicultural issues and the changing demographics of the American classroom. This book was used in all of the EDCI 554 courses except for the EDCI 554 course taught in Fall 2014 and Summer 2015. The instructor for the Fall 2014 EDCI 554 course required students to read *Dynamic social studies for constructivist classrooms: Inspiring*

Tomorrow's Social Scientists by George Maxim. This book provided new teachers with the most effective ways to teach social studies to elementary school students. Also, it used a constructivist framework, key instructional approaches, and illustrative classroom scenarios to help teachers' social studies curriculum.

Unlike the book *Social Studies in Elementary Education*, this book did not have a chapter that focused on multicultural issues and was only used one semester. The Summer 2015 EDCI 554 course did not require a textbook, but instead used articles that focused on social studies. Each book chapter and article was aligned to a class topic. The class topics addressed defining social studies, global issues, democratic citizenship education, historical thinking, geographic thinking, and the role of current events and social problems in K-6 social studies. While these topics did not specifically mention diverse learners, urban education, students from impoverished backgrounds, or Title I students, these topics could be used to discuss diverse learners and what is happening in low-income communities. The analysis of the course syllabi revealed that the two courses taught Fall 2013 and the one course taught Fall 2016 discussed economic thinking and how it could be integrated into a K-6 classroom. Teacher candidates were required to write a reflection that answered the following question:

Which group do you think it would be most challenging to teach economic concepts like needs/wants to: children from wealthy families or children from low income families? Why?

The Fall 2016 course syllabus taught by the new professor was the only course that assigned students to read Paul Gorski's article entitled "Building a pedagogy of engagement for students in poverty". This article was used to discuss how global issues can be integrated into a K-6 classroom." With the exception of the reflection question and article reading, all of the assignments for this course focused on creating social studies lesson plans, unit plans, and distinguishing between primary and secondary sources.

The major assignment for EDCI 554 is a Social Studies and Fine Arts Integrated Unit Plan. The unit plan included five lesson plans, additional resources, or possible field trips. In addition, candidates created a website for these resources and links using an online template. In order to receive an exemplary score for this unit plan for the content and standards section, the rubric stated, "content is accurate and inclusive of multiple and/or marginalized perspectives when completing the unit guide." Teacher candidates were required to consider marginalized perspectives, however course syllabi showed that these perspectives are not being discussed in throughout the course. Candidates were required to provide opinions on a topic that the course syllabi did not show they have been prepared to share. This illustrated a disconnect between what is being taught and what is being expected when it comes to making sure candidates are prepared to teach in Title I settings.

In addition to the social studies methods course, teacher candidates were required to take science, math, and additional literacy methods courses. The math methods course was EDCI 552 and the science methods course is EDCI 553, these courses were solely focused on content knowledge.

EDCI 552: Mathematics Methods for the Elementary Classroom. This course was intended to provide teacher candidates with methods for teaching all children topics in number sense, computation, geometry, statistics, and probability. According to the course syllabi this course is aligned with both INTASC and ACEI Standards. From Fall 2013 to Fall 2016, the only textbook used for this course is *Elementary and Middle School Mathematics: Teaching Developmentally* by John Van De Walle and Karen Karp. Several editions of this book were used over the course of these semesters. All of the assignments for this course were geared towards creating lesson plans, mathematics curriculum, and assessment analysis.

There was not any evidence in the EDCI 552 course syllabi that showed that the content focused on students from low-income backgrounds or students who attended a Title I school. While math is a broad topic, there was no discussion in this course on what to do in schools where there might not be adequate resources to teach math lessons effectively. Furthermore, this information could be important for teacher candidates who are going to teach in high-poverty schools. The math methods course was not the only course solely focused on content, the science methods course EDCI 553 was similar.

EDCI 553: Science Methods for the Elementary Classroom. The purpose of the science methods course was to provide teacher candidates with practical experience, theoretical background, and pedagogical skills that would prepare them for their future classrooms. This course focused on the creation of integrated science curricula. Instead of using textbooks for this course, teacher candidates had access to the state science curriculum via Blackboard. The professional standards for this course does not mention

teaching students from diverse backgrounds, all of the INTASC and ACEI standards used in this course aligned with science instruction. This course is offered every summer and fall semester, and in the Summer 2016 semester was taught in conjunction with EDCI 545: Assessment and Differentiation during a 6 week summer session. The course assignments for this course were lesson plans, unit plans, teaching plans, and assessment description. While teacher candidates were provided an overview of the science curriculum in this course, there is not any evidence of class discussions or assignments that have teacher candidates think about how they can effectively teach science in school settings where there are no resources or students who do not have the means to purchase the necessary materials for experiments. Science methods for elementary classrooms is the last methods course teacher candidates have to complete before starting EDCI 790: Internship in Education and EDCI 559: Research and Assessment in Elementary Education.

EDCI 559: Research and Assessment in Elementary Education. This capstone course for degree provided teacher candidates with an understanding of research paradigms using systemic evidence to improve practice and further skills in assessment of learning outcomes. This course was aligned with the same INTASC and ACEI professional organization standards that the other courses in the program were aligned with. The required textbook for this course was *Action Research: A Guide for the Teacher Researcher* written by Geoffrey Mills. This book provided examples of action research papers and teacher-centered research. The author included a research based step-

by-step outline of how to do action research and guides teachers through the action research process.

The assignments for this course were holistic reflections, critical incident analysis, and an action research report. The action research report was based on a topic that the teacher candidates chose to research and the research takes place in the PDS school where the teacher candidates were completing internships or field experiences. This course provided teacher candidates with an opportunity to learn how to conduct research. There was no requirement for teacher candidates to work with a specific population, however assigning candidates to work at specific schools where there were diverse populations would have provided them with a greater understanding of what it means to work with diverse student populations. In addition to the capstone course, teacher candidates had to complete either a yearlong or a semester long internship in a Traditional University PDS school.

EDCI 790: Internship in Education. This was an intensive, supervised clinical experience for 16 weeks in one of the Traditional University PDS schools. Before teacher candidates enrolled in this course they must have passing scores on the Praxis II and VCLA. In addition, candidates must have completed all endorsement requirements and coursework. During this internship teacher candidates observed, assisted, and taught lessons. A University Facilitator and/or Advanced Mentor Teacher/Mentor Teacher supervised the internship experience. There were bi-weekly seminars held at the school site where the teacher candidate interned with the University Facilitator and/or Advanced

Mentor Teachers/Mentor Teachers, this was an opportunity to examine and discuss the role of teachers and students in a classroom environment.

This document analysis examined all the courses offered in Traditional University's elementary education program. This analysis revealed that most of the courses were aligned with professional organization standards that focus on preparing diverse learners, however texts, assignments, and class discussions lacked the focus on diverse learners that was being referred to in the professional standards. There were only two courses (EDUC 542: Foundations of Education and 543: Children, Family, Culture, Schools, 4-12 Years Old) that focused on teaching students from diverse or impoverished backgrounds for more than one class, out of the fifteen classes in a semester. While EDUC 554: Methods of Teaching Social Studies and Fine Arts in the Elementary Classroom discussed teaching students in poverty for one class this is not enough to prepare teacher candidates to teach students from impoverished backgrounds.

When asked if teacher preparation programs are doing enough to prepare teacher candidates for Title I or high poverty schools, as previously stated Dr. Peppers responded with Traditional University is "doing better than most." However, Dr. Penn's response differed because she did not make a comparison to what other universities are doing. She instead stated:

I don't think we get our teachers to empathize with the various different structures of our educational system and open the door to the realities that where they lived and where they grew up is not the way everyone else is living. The other piece is when you think about schools that are in some of the most marginalized

communities, urban and rural, I don't think our candidates, I think they pass an assumption or a judgment on these school and don't recognize that there are very many of the same things and desires going on for those school communities as for others, but they're not exposed to it.

Based on the interviews and course syllabi, colleges of education have to improve how they are preparing teacher candidates to work with and teach students from diverse populations, specifically students from low-income backgrounds. This document analysis of courses at Traditional University showed that only four of ten courses include one to two classes discussing teaching students from impoverished backgrounds. Two of these courses are courses that are taught when teacher candidates begin the program. One can therefore surmise that teacher candidates are not being exposed to how to teach content in Title I schools in every course and this is evident through the class discussions and assignments. Further, this analysis revealed that the topic of social class is dismissed in this teacher preparation program.

This section shared a critical analysis of the course syllabi from Traditional University's Elementary Education program and shared faculty's perspectives regarding what they taught and how teachers were prepared to teach diverse student populations. The next section of this chapter will illustrates how teacher candidates perceived their experiences at Traditional University in regards to preparing them to teach in a Title I school.

Section II: Teacher Candidates Backgrounds, Education, and Professional Experiences

To guarantee that teacher candidates' identities are protected and the confidentiality of the data collected, the teacher candidates were assigned a pseudonym. In an effort to provide the characteristics, backgrounds, and educational experiences of these teacher candidates a demographic questionnaire was completed by all teacher candidate participants.

Aubrey. Aubrey is a biracial (Black and White) female who is between 21-25 years old. She is completing her first semester in the program and has finished 15 hours of field experience in a Title I Kindergarten classroom. Aubrey described this school as having a high Hispanic population and describes the staff as being culturally aware. Aubrey grew up in a middle-class home and throughout her K-12 experience attended school with Asian, Black, White, and Hispanic middle-class peers. When asked why she decided to become a teacher, she replied, "I admired my elementary school teachers and wanted to positively affect other children's outcomes like my teachers had done for me." Aubrey would love to teach in a Title I school and hopes that Traditional University prepares her to do this. While obtaining her undergraduate degree Aubrey worked at a daycare with children from low-income backgrounds. While she has only taken a few classes, namely EDUC 542 and EDUC 543 in which one class discussion ~~was~~ covered teaching students from impoverished backgrounds, Aubrey does not think those classes alone will prepare her to teach in a Title I school.

Arleen. Arleen is a White, 50+ female. She has worked in the field of business and decided to become a teacher because she believes she is capable. Arleen is completing her year-long internship and has 30 hours of field experiences spread

throughout kindergarten, second grade, and fourth grade in a Title I school. Arleen grew up in a middle-class home and attended private school with White, upper middle class peers. Other than her field experiences she has not had any experience working with diverse student populations. While Arleen is excited about almost being finished with the elementary education program, she is not truly convinced that she is prepared to teach in a high-poverty or Title I school. She considers the Title I schools where she completed her field experiences to be modest because they were mostly comprised of 45%-50% of the students who received free or reduced lunch.

Matilda. Matilda is a White, female between the ages of 26 and 30. She completed 15 hours of her field experience in a fifth grade Title I class and is in her third semester of the program. Matilda is from a low-income background and raised by both of her parents. Growing up Matilda attended schools with high percentages of free-reduced lunch and high percentages of English Language Learners. Matilda chose to become a teacher because she has always wanted to teach, adored her teachers and wanted to be like them. Throughout her interview Matilda emphasized the importance of teacher preparation programs preparing teachers to teach low-income students.

Elizabeth. Elizabeth is a White female, between the ages of 41-45. She is completing her second semester of the program. Elizabeth completed her 15-hour field experience in kindergarten and fifth grade classrooms in a Title I school. Elizabeth is a career changer and chose to teach because she has a passion for working with children. She was raised in a middle class home and had limited contact with people from other

racess and social classes. Elizabeth hopes that her field experiences and coursework will prepare her to work with diverse student populations.

Maggie. Maggie is an Asian female between the ages of 21-25. This is her fourth semester in the elementary education program and she has had 15 hours of field experience in a Title I third grade classroom. Maggie grew up in a middle class home and during her high school years experienced the loss of her mother. Maggie considered this to be a “dark time” in her life and helping children who feel alone or voiceless became her passion. Maggie is from a small, predominantly White rural town, where she was the minority and there were few other minorities. While Maggie has experience working with diverse youth because of her part-time job, she does not believe that she is prepared to teach in a Title I school based on the courses she has taken so far in the elementary education program.

Ron. Ron is a White male between the ages of 21-25. This is his third semester in the elementary education program and he has completed 15 hours of field experience in various grades in a Title I school. Ron grew up in a middle class home and attended a predominantly White K-12 public school. During high school he began to have contact with people from other races and social classes. Ron chose to become a teacher because he believes that he can make a difference in the lives of children. His comments during the interview reflected his overall disappointment with various aspects of his teacher education experience as it relates to preparing him to work with students that attend Title I schools.

Conclusion of Individual Profiles. The demographic questionnaire revealed that the teacher candidates were only slightly diverse in terms of race, only two of the candidates considered themselves to be a race other than White. However, there were not any Black or Hispanic students in the classes where I recruited participants. Three of the six teacher candidates acknowledged that they have had limited contact with people from social classes which differed from their own backgrounds outside of their field experiences. All of the teacher candidates have a bachelor's degree and are working towards obtaining their Master's degree in Elementary Education. Two of the participants received their bachelor's degree from Traditional University, while the rest of the participants obtained their bachelor's degrees from universities throughout the United States.

Influences on Teacher Candidate Perceptions of Poverty and Title I Schools

Two of the teacher candidates reported not having any experience working with diverse student populations up until the time when they were completing their field experiences in this program. All of the participants except for one reported being from a middle-class or upper middle-class family. While three of the teacher candidates have had interaction with people of different races, their interactions with people of a different race and social class was limited. Being reared in a traditional middle-class lifestyle helped these participants form strong ideas about people from socioeconomic classes different from their own. According to Dervin (1983), the sensemaking theory is defined as how individuals use the observations of others as well as their own observations to construct their pictures of reality and use these pictures to guide behavior. This theory

was used as a framework to understand what has influenced teacher candidates' perceptions of poverty and Title I. Media, race, and limited experiences outside of their environment have helped to frame these opinions that have been created over a lifetime. Teacher candidates in this study described several factors that influenced their perceptions of Title I or high-poverty schools.

Seeing is Believing: Media. Two of the six teacher candidate participants made reference to influences of their perceptions and specifically the extent to which media molded their perceptions about Title I or high-poverty schools. Both candidates mentioned that their field experience was their first time visiting a Title I school and the only reference they could make prior to their visit was from movies or television. Maggie referred to the influence of movies on her perceptions:

So teaching in Title I or a high-poverty school kind of reminds me of Hillary Swank's role in *Freedom Writers*. She is coming in to an environment with these poor kids and she does a lot of things to help them forget where they are from, forget who you are, and let them know they are all learners. Seeing her work in these schools with students who are poor, Black, and Hispanic was amazing to me because here she is a white woman being effective in a school where she is the minority.

One other teacher candidate, Arleen shared how the media influenced her perceptions about poverty and Title I schools. She explained:

I don't know if you are old enough to remember, but I watched the movie "Lean on Me" many years ago, decades ago. In this movie the first scene was the song

“Welcome to the Jungle” playing and it gave a tour of this Black school with fights, drugs, kids sleeping, kids making out, and it looked pretty scary and trashy. Sad to say this is how I have always imagined poor schools or Title I schools. I know the movie was an exaggeration, but I believed that there were great similarities. I believed there was this struggle and that many of the kids that attended these schools lived in what some people will call the ghetto, which is a high poverty community. When I think of children who are attending Title I schools I am thinking of them coming from similar backgrounds. I did not grow up with people who were not White or people who were not upper-middle class so movies or television is where I got most of my ideas about what it means to be poor or what it means to be another race.

While both teacher candidates referenced a movie to understand Title I or high poverty schools, both agreed that the Title I schools where they visited were nothing like the schools in the movies that they previously referenced.

Race. Throughout their interviews teacher candidates were asked follow-up questions about their perceptions of Title I schools and students in poverty. Four of the six teacher candidates made a connection between race and their perceptions of Title I or students in poverty. These participants overwhelmingly referenced “Title I schools are filled with minorities” or “most of the children in high poverty schools are Black or Hispanic” coupled with various aspects of Title I (e.g., poor schools, no parental support, failing schools, lack adequate resources).

For instance, when asked about his first experience in a Title I school Ron

replied, “I was surprised because when I hear about Title I, automatically I think of these schools that have only Black or Hispanic students in most cases, but this school had White students too. I went to a mixed high school, but it was just interesting that I think of Title I schools one way and got to a school where there were a lot of races.” When asked about her field experience in a Title I school Arlene indicated, “I did a field experience in a class with mostly Ghanaian, Hispanic, Middle Eastern, Black, and two White students. I was not shocked by the race and ethnicities represented in the classroom because after all I was in a Title I school.” These responses not only shared how teacher candidates perceived Title I schools, but also the race of the students in these schools. Besides race, students’ limited experiences outside of their environment was another influence of the teacher candidates’ perceptions of Title I schools.

Students’ Limited Experiences. Four of the six teacher candidates mentioned during their interviews effects of Title I students’ limited experiences. The teacher candidates shared that Title I students are not “exposed to the world in a way that will help them learn better” or “can understand most curriculum without the use of outside resources.” In regards to students’ limited experiences Arlene stated, “I think Title I kids don’t have the background or schema, I think that their parents don’t talk to them the way middle class parents do, I think that they have fewer learning experiences.” Ron also mentioned Title I students having fewer learning experiences, he asserted, “I do not think that Title I students have the experiences outside of the classroom to help them connect things that they are learning. I think that the fact that some of them never leave their

homes, like areas where they live shows that they lack a view of what the world is. They have very few learning experiences outside of school.”

While Arlene and Ron shared their opinion of how students who attend Title I schools have limited learning experiences, other teacher candidates shared that students’ limited learning experiences may keep them from wanting to teach at a Title I school. Elizabeth stated, “I know that Title I students do not have the same ways of life as students who do not live in their communities. I was not raised in their communities and this interview really has me thinking about whether I am able to work in a Title I school. I have nothing in common with those students. I will really need some more education and information on how to teach in that kind of school.” In Elizabeth’s comment, she mentioned “those students” a phrase she used many times throughout her interview. This phrase showed that Elizabeth does not view all students the same. Maggie expressed that she is “nervous about teaching in a Title I.” She went on to say, “I asked myself if I believe I can help students who really don’t have the same background or experiences as myself. I do not know if I will be able to relate to them or if they will be able to relate to me because they haven’t been where I have been and seen what I have seen. Many of these kids haven’t left their community.”

Unlike the four teacher candidates who believed that Title I students had limited experiences, Aubrey shared that Title I students have too much exposure and experience. Aubrey stated, “I think Title I students are exposed to things that middle-class students are not exposed to as early. They are exposed to many adult situations. So they may have experience raising siblings, cooking dinner, cleaning the house, and things like that. They

may not have taken trips and be limited in that area when it comes to academic stuff, but they are not limited when it comes to things that help them survive. I don't believe middle class students are exposed to those things. Some of the Title I kids have their parents working lots of hours to where they can't spend as much time doing reading or helping with homework because they are just trying to make sure that their students are fed." Aubrey brought a different perspective because she discussed the experiences that Title I students have as opposed to just sharing the experiences that they lack. She further explained that Title I students have experiences that middle-class students do not.

Conclusion of Teacher Candidates Backgrounds and Professional Experiences. In this section teacher candidates' backgrounds, education, and professional experiences were shared, along with what influences their perceptions of Title I schools. Teacher candidates' childrearing and personal experiences have influenced how they perceive Title I schools and the children that attend these schools. It is important for teacher preparation programs to consider this information and allow teacher candidates the opportunities to discover and assess their personal beliefs and reflect on their biases. The following section will focus on additional aspects of the perspectives of teacher candidates regarding their teacher preparation for Title I schools, in particular what has worked for them in their current teacher preparation program and what teacher candidates need in order to be successful in a Title I school.

Section III: General Perceptions of Teacher preparation

In order for teacher preparation programs to effectively prepare teacher candidates to teach in Title I schools, they must know and understand what teacher candidates find

effective and what they believe needs to be improved in their program. The voices of these teacher candidates provided insight that could lead to changing how teacher preparation prepares teacher candidates for the diverse classrooms that await them. This section illustrates the teacher candidates' general perceptions of Traditional University's elementary education program. In addition, this section covers research question two: "Based on coursework, field experiences, and internships do these teacher candidates believe their teacher preparation prepared them to teach students in a Title I school?"

Student and staff diversity. The majority of the teacher candidates agreed that the elementary education program at Traditional University lacked both student and faculty diversity and as a result, there was a lack of diverse perspectives in class discussions. For example, Aubrey stated, "When it comes to student diversity in our program I would say mildly diverse, I would say needs improvement that is how I would describe it, definitely needs improvement." Arleen agreed that the program lacked diversity and further explained, "In our class we have two guys out of twenty, we have half a dozen Asian women, and no black students. We don't have any, I think in our two cohorts we have one black student. I think in our cohort, I saw one tall black guy. I think there might be a Muslim woman in the other cohort, but we never see the other cohort." When Claire was asked if she believes the teacher preparation program was diverse she replied, "Do I think the cohort is diverse? No, was that a trick question to see if I am paying attention?" Both Maggie and Ron agreed with the other candidates that the elementary education lacked student diversity. However, Matilda was the only teacher

candidate that expressed, “Yeah, I mean it’s not 100% diverse, but I think there is a good bit of difference.”

Teacher candidates were asked to reflect on the faculty with whom they have taken courses or have worked with while in the program and share if they believe the faculty in the program is diverse. Although all the participants agreed that the program lacks diverse faculty, Claire elaborated more in her response. Claire explained:

Well, in terms of diversity no, I feel like I have had a very narrow band of diversity so far, but I feel like the caliber and quality of the academic sort of, I mean I compare it to my first experience. I have the luxury to be able to do that and I was twenty-something that time around...I think our cohort is really not diverse and I think our instructors to date mirror our cohort a little bit. I think that what they lack in diversity, they make up in competence. Which is sort of a reflective piece for me, I will lack the diversity wherever I go. However, it is the competence that I am gaining through this program, the rigor, and the standard that is set for me that I will mirror and do that when I leave. So I may not be as diverse, however, I will be very well trained and will always keep learning and growing and sort of cultivating these underpinnings that I have and they are giving me the tools.

Claire acknowledged the program lacked diverse students and faculty, but she believed that Traditional University has provided her so far with what she needs to be a successful teacher. Unlike Claire who shared that what faculty lacked in diversity, they made up in competence, Ron thought that the lack in diversity is what is keeping teacher candidates

from gaining insight on how to successfully teach in diverse classroom settings. Ron asserted:

While I don't believe that black students can only learn from black teachers and white students can only learn from white teachers, I do believe that is important for their to be a mismatch somewhere. Basically what I am saying is that if we had faculty that was diverse we could possibly learn how to teach students who are diverse better, because we would have that insight from professors who knows and has a diverse perspective. Right now, all of my professors have been White and I am White so there is not going to be too much more that I will get that is different for the most part. I am not saying all White people are the same, but there is something that I believe a diverse pool of professors would bring.

Teacher candidates were eager to provide feedback about student and faculty diversity. The majority of the candidates expressed how important it is for teacher preparation programs to recruit diverse students for the program and hire faculty from diverse backgrounds.

If it's not broke then don't try to fix it: What works in this teacher preparation program?

While teacher candidates have acknowledged that their teacher preparation program lacked both student and faculty diversity, there were two common areas they have experienced during this program that teacher candidates found effective and believed were working well in the program. These common areas were coursework and faculty. The fact that the faculty in the elementary education program was not racially

diverse has nothing to do with how well they teach their courses. All of the teacher candidates agree that the faculty at Traditional University were knowledgeable and provided quality instruction. In addition, these candidates shared that they were being provided effective instruction in regards to preparing them to teach in a non-Title I school.

Faculty. Teacher candidates overwhelmingly agreed that the faculty at Traditional University were both professional and knowledgeable. For example, Maggie explained, “I think they are all really great, I think I learned a lot from each one of them, especially my first class that we took over the summer, the whole “Willing to Be Disturbed” thing. This really kind of opened your eyes to different things. I think everyone has something to bring to the table, they are all kind of knowledgeable and all very flexible, and I mean it has been great so far.”

Another teacher candidate, Arlene, expressed her perceptions of faculty. She explained, “If I had to use three adjectives to describe faculty, I would describe them as being professional, knowledgeable, and inspirational.” Ron shared similar sentiments and stated, “I honestly believe that the faculty here are cool. They are pretty knowledgeable and committed to helping students become great teachers. I can email or visit them and they are all willing to help me with whatever. I like how they challenge you, but also let you know that you belong.”

Matilda explained, “I feel like through this program so far the faculty has been extremely supportive and have shown that they are knowledgeable when it comes to teacher education. All of the faculty make themselves available and this is important to

me because I have heard horror stories from friends about never being able to get in contact with their professors.” Both Elizabeth and Aubrey responded when asked about faculty noted that the faculty members were knowledgeable and that they had been very pleased with the faculty so far in the program. While faculty play a major role in teacher preparation, the courses that are offered to teacher candidates play an equally important role.

Courses. Teacher candidates agreed that although they are not ready to teach in Title I schools based on their preparation, there are aspects of their teacher preparation program that equipped them to teach in a Title I school. For example, Ron explained, “Where I am right now in the program in my third semester, I do not feel like I can teach in a Title I school, but I do think that some of the things that I have learned in classes like Foundations has really helped me to understand the students who attend these schools. We read Kozol and that opened my eyes. It showed me many things that kids in these schools go through. I am happy we got to read and talk about that in Foundations and I hope another class will discuss stuff like this.” A majority of the teacher candidates referenced their Foundations of Education (EDUC 542) course as the course that has provided them with information about students who would attend Title I schools.

In terms of what works in the program in regards to preparing teachers for Title I schools, Maggie explained:

I mean there have been our first couple of classes with Dr. Penn in 542 and 543 we talked about low SES....we did community mapping and all that stuff, we talked about redistricting and you know the school borders and how that affected

the students from low SES... so that class I think that...her whole thing with “Willing to Be Disturbed” I think that is where you don’t realize these students come from these backgrounds and it is a mind blown kind of thing, because you learn to empathize more, I think at least with that class you learn to and these different field experiences, I think I have used that class a lot, I refer back to that class a lot.

Another teacher candidate, Arlene stated:

I mean I think we are really looking to teach everybody and I mean differentiation is absolutely huge, so reaching each kid where they are is ...that’s huge, so that would cover any kind of school. In a Title I school you are going to have more remedial students as I told you, so I guess I think the whole differentiation push really answers your question. And so that is going to catch up everybody at the bottom. Assessment is important. You know the importance of using assessment to put kids learning at the level they need. That is something that has come out of this program.

Matilda expressed:

So in 544, I think the teacher language part of it really...I got a lot more love and feely things out of the teacher language you know like I am all about your language is used to inspire and all that other kind of stuff. I really went in that direction, but you know? I mean it also has to be clear and concise and that seems to be more of the technicalities of it, other than you know the purpose of it. These are things that I got out of 544 and I think this is something that I can take with

me and become a teacher in a Title I school, this is something that works in the program.

The majority of these candidates referenced either EDUC 542 or EDCI 544 as courses that helped provide them with knowledge and insight of what they will need in order to teach in a Title I school.

Missing the Mark: What teacher candidates believe is missing in teacher preparation

In most cases students that attend Title I schools have exogenous factors that can have an affect on their academic success. It is imperative that teacher candidates understand how to teach, but also emphasize with students from impoverished backgrounds without lowering their expectations. Teacher candidates expressed concerns with their abilities to assist Title I students with their academic needs. The following areas were identified by teacher candidates as missing in their teacher preparation program and can affect how they interact with diverse student populations.

Disconnect between coursework (methods courses) and reality. Teacher candidates agreed that there was not a clear connection between the course content, in particular the methods courses and what is actually taking place in Title I elementary classrooms. Three teacher candidates articulated their thoughts regarding this issue, Ron explained:

I understand that we have to cover the important stuff when it comes to math, social studies, science, and reading classes. Like that is the foundation to teaching, you have to know how to teach. However, I feel like the program fails us when it

comes to talking about what we do if we are teaching these subjects in Title I schools. Yeah, it is important to teach reading, but what do I do if the student doesn't know how to read because their parents are working day and night and they have to care for brothers and sisters. I believe this could be a situation that happens in low-income communities. We don't talk about this. I want to know what books can I have students read to catch their attention in Title I schools. I want to know what math strategies I can use to get them engaged. This isn't touched at all in the program.

Another teacher candidate, Matilda articulated a similar point:

I think the easy answer is that I don't believe we are getting enough information that directly relates to what we will need in a Title I school or high poverty school. I would have loved to hear about behavior management and juggling a Title I classroom. Because you are in a Title I school you are vastly going to have students from lots of different backgrounds and varying structures of disciplines and expectations from home. I think that being exposed to what we can do as teachers who may be teaching in these types of schools will be helpful. I wish we had more of that.

Maggie stated a similar point of view:

At this moment, I feel like I would be a little hesitant to teach in a diverse setting, especially a Title I setting. I feel like I have gained a lot of knowledge so far, but not necessarily through my methods classes, if that makes sense. I guess with the field hours, we are expected to use that as our Title I experience. Even in that it is

optional where you want to go, it is not mandatory. I feel there hasn't been a whole lot of focus in our methods courses about what to do if you teach in Title I schools or in high-poverty schools. So just right now, I don't feel comfortable stepping into a place.

A couple of the teacher candidates spoke specifically about their coursework not teaching them to make connections with students who attend Title I schools. For example, Arlene stated, "I honestly don't know what to do if I was the teacher in a Title I school. Right now, I am interning and I am doing a pretty good job, but there are times when I feel like I am not connecting with my students. It is at times like this that I wish we discussed what we could do to build relationships with Title I students or students from high-poverty backgrounds." Elizabeth echoed this sentiment:

My concern is that I do not know how well I will be able to relate to the students in Title I schools. I think one thing this program is missing is preparation that focuses on what teachers should do if they decide to teach in a Title I school. Like what can I do in math, reading, science, or social studies to engage my students.

The focus has not been on Title I schools or students and I find this to be important.

Teacher candidates generally agreed that there was a seeming disconnect between the courses being offered and the reality of a Title I classroom. In addition to the disconnection between coursework and reality, teacher candidates shared a need for more field experiences in Title I schools.

Need for more field experiences in Title I schools. Based on the analysis of the course syllabi, faculty interviews, and teacher interviews there was no clear requirement for teacher candidates to obtain field experience hours in Title I schools. Teacher candidates were consistent with the perspective that they needed to be given more opportunities to gain field experience in Title I school environments. For example, Aubrey shared:

I think that our program definitely needs to have us get more experience in Title I schools. I think it is important for all students, especially with our program lacking diversity to be able to work in a Title I environment. This can really challenge some of our personal biases and help us gain a different perspective about teaching students from low-income backgrounds. Like there is an option to get field experience in a Title I school, but I don't just want to be there shadowing, I want to be able to have class discussions about the experience with my cohort because we all got the same type of experience.

Both Ron and Maggie mentioned the importance of hands-on learning experiences that field experience in Title I schools lacked. Ron mentioned:

Both of the PDS sites that I worked at were not Title I. I feel like we should have had experience in both a Title I school and then a school that is not Title I. This way I would have 30 hours, but 15 and 15 split among two different kinds of schools. This way we could be in the school learning and being taught about the issues that are going on there. This would give me the hands-on experience in a Title I school that I need because right now I do not have it.

Maggie also mentioned hands-on learning:

I learn better, when I am involved. My field experiences my first semester in the program were not in Title I schools, but I think that having one of them being a Title I school would have helped me understand the stuff I was learning in 542 and 543 better. I am a hands-on person, and I would have loved to be able to be in a Title I school while learning this stuff and applying what I am learning to my class.

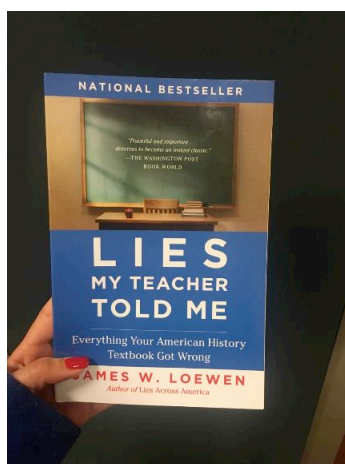
The teacher candidates consistently agreed that they needed more field experiences in a Title I school. Elizabeth mentioned, “I would love to have more experiences in a Title I school. Some of my classmates and I have talked about how we can’t really relate to students in Title I schools because we lack the knowledge and field experiences in these environments, so if I had to choose today what school I wanted to teach in, I would not choose a Title I school. If I had more opportunities to learn in these schools then I would teach in one.”

Although, Traditional University has several PDS partners that were Title I elementary schools, the consensus among the teacher candidates was that they have not received enough field experience hours in these schools. Not providing teacher candidates with an adequate amount of experience in Title I schools could have a big impact on how teachers feel prepared to teach in Title I classrooms. This was not the only component of the program that teacher candidates believed was missing. Teacher candidates agreed that their program failed to address what teacher candidates would face once they begin teaching in Title I schools.

Failure to address the challenges of teaching in a Title I school. Throughout their interviews, teacher candidates mentioned the challenges that they may face as teachers in a Title I school. They expressed their desire for coursework that connected with the realities of a Title I classroom and field experiences that could give them hands-on learning experiences in a Title I classroom. In addition to the hands-on learning experiences, teacher candidates expressed needing a platform to discuss their Title I experiences. A common theme throughout the interviews was teacher preparation programs' failure to address the challenges teacher candidates would face in Title I schools. All of the teacher candidates agreed that their teacher preparation program did not provide them with possible challenges they could face in a Title I school and how to be successful in spite of these challenges. One of the teacher candidates, Ron explained, "I believe it is important for teacher preparation programs to discuss what teacher candidates could possibly face in a Title I school. I am starting to think that maybe the professors don't know what is going on in those particular schools and that is why we are learning how to teach one audience. I think knowing the challenges will help professors know how to teach us."

In order to provide teacher preparation programs with a more in-depth understanding of the challenges that teacher candidates believed they would face in Title I schools and provide teacher preparation programs with ideas of what they need to address, teacher candidates used photo elicitation as a response. This photo elicitation is called *photovoice*. This methodology allowed teacher candidates to provide a response to a question with a photo and short paragraph explaining the connection between the photo

and their response to the questions. Teacher candidates were asked to use *photovoice* to illustrate what challenges they could possibly face in Title I schools and what teacher preparation programs need to know in order to help them succeed in these schools. For example, Aubrey responded:



“Figure 3: One-Sided Education”

I believe one of the challenges teacher candidates will face while teaching in a Title I school is making curriculum multicultural and relatable to students. I believe that a lot of American curriculum is one sided. This means that white males/majorities are pictured in a positive light, while minorities are presented in a servitude position. It is paramount that teachers locate outside material in order to educate students in a more robust way. For example, when kindergartners are taught about the importance of safety and looking to the right and left before crossing streets they should also be taught about Garrett Morgan, a black American who invented the traffic signal. Having students see themselves within the Curriculum will not only build their self-esteem, but also intrinsically motivate them to care about the curriculum.

When Aubrey was asked about the challenges teacher candidates could face while teaching in a Title I school during her interview she responded, “I think a challenge

would be making sure that every student is learning. You have so many students in a classroom, but just making sure you are purposefully making sure you are using the students' backgrounds to make a connection is important.”

Using *photovoice* allowed Aubrey the opportunity to reflect and elaborate on the challenges that teacher candidates could face in a Title I classroom. This information is valuable to teacher preparation programs because it provides insight of what needs to be addressed in coursework. Aubrey was not the only teacher candidate that found making curriculum relatable as a challenge, Ron shared the same sentiments:

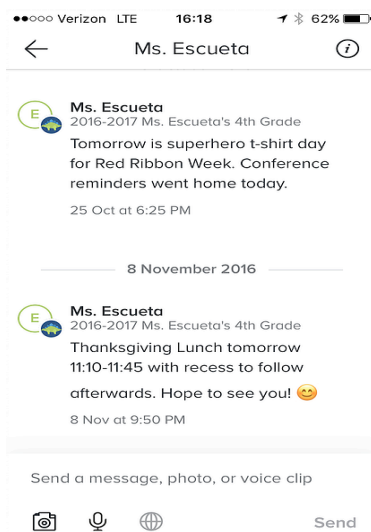


“Figure 4: Flip the Channel”

I think that one of the challenges teacher candidates will face while teaching in a Title I school is making sure that the curriculum is engaging to the students that they are teaching. These students are a different race and come from a low SES background compared to them. I think of flipping the channels on a TV. We have to learn how to flip the curriculum until we find the right way to teach the students in these schools. I think this is something that our college has to work on.

When asked in his interview about the challenges that he may face in a Title I school,

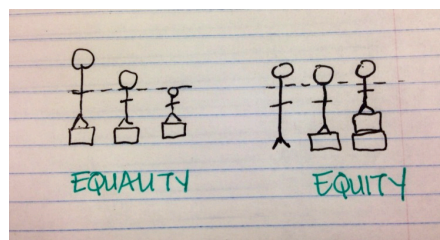
Ron stated, “I think on of the challenges will be reaching my students.” Ron’s *photovoice* response shared a more in-depth response to this question. Both Aubrey and Ron agreed that teacher preparation programs needed to address ways teacher candidates could make the curriculum engaging for students who attend Title I schools. In addition to these challenges, another teacher candidate, Arlene shared what she believed could be a challenge in a Title I school:



“Figure 5: Silent Treatment”

I know that there are so many ways to stay in contact with parents. However, when I think of teaching in a Title I school I always hear about how hard it is for teachers to get involved. It is kind of like you are getting the silent treatment from parents. I have learned several ways to communicate throughout my coursework and now in my internship, but I want to know what ways work when teaching in a Title I school. I think this is a big challenge and somewhere along the way we should have addressed this in our coursework, but didn’t.

One of the challenges that Matilda thought she might face as a teacher in a Title I school is how to provide an equitable education for her students. Matilda explained, “I know there is a difference between equality and equity. I think a challenge for me will be making sure that I am giving my students equity all the time because I realize if I teach in a Title I school they will not have a lot of the things that the students that we learn to teach have.” Matilda’s *photovoice* response expounded upon her interview response, she further explained:



“Figure 6: Level the Field”

Some students come to class with the tools they need, and others we will have to work a lot harder with to get them to the same place. Treating each student “equally” is not “equity” for all of them. At a Title I school, this even more important as you really don’t have any control over what background skills they come to your classroom with. Their ability to access the curriculum can also change day by day depending on what is going on in their lives. Truly knowing your students and treating them as individuals and providing a leveled playing field is necessary. I believe this is a challenge that teacher preparation has to address.

Another participant Maggie responded:



“Figure 7: Will I Fit?”

One of the challenges that I believe I may face if I were to teach in a Title I school is fitting in with the students. The racial backgrounds and social class is something that I have been thinking about a lot so, I don't feel like I have enough experience in these areas to teach in a Title I school. I want to be able to relate to my students and fit in with them. I want to know their backgrounds and help them put their lives together.

Teacher candidates provided their perceptions and opinions regarding what worked in their teacher preparation program and what was missed in their teacher preparation program. There cannot be any change in teacher preparation without listening to the voices of teacher candidates who will be future teachers in the field of education. The responses that teacher candidates gave regarding what works in the program should be used to continue to meet the needs of teacher candidates throughout their teacher preparation program. Additionally, if the responses that teacher candidates gave regarding what is missing in the program and the challenges that teacher candidates believed they will face in Title I schools can be addressed, there is a possibility that teacher candidates could be better prepared to teach in Title I schools.

Section IV: Teacher Candidates Recommendations to Improve Teacher Preparation

Program

As demonstrated in the interviews and *photovoice*, the teacher candidates shared that their teacher preparation program provided quality education, however they are lacked opportunities to gain knowledge about Title I schools and students. All of their responses indicated that candidates understood how to teach students in a non-Title I school, but did not have the knowledge and understanding to teach students in Title I schools. This section featured recommendations that could potentially improve teacher preparation programs, as presented by the teacher candidates.

Understanding Title I schools. Several of the teacher candidates' recommended that their teacher preparation program add curriculum that focused on understanding Title I schools. For example, Ron explained, "I think it would be helpful for our program to assign readings or assignments that involve knowledge of Title I schools. We had a big assignment in 542 where we had an option to study Title I schools on our own, but I chose charter schools. I think that topic should be mandatory and not just for those who feel like learning about it." Aubrey shared the same sentiments:

We have talked about Title I schools in 542 and I have plenty more of the program to complete, but I think that Title I is something that we should hear about in every course. If professors aren't talking about Title I in their courses they should add it to their syllabus or schedule. There are too many kids that are poor or minority and attend these schools; we need to know how to teach these students.

Arlene advocated for the program to immerse Title I school experiences and

understanding into the courses that are offered. She explained:

I am about to graduate and I can't remember a course after 542 or 543 that spent a lot of time or anytime maybe on what goes on in Title I schools. Even after we do field experiences in those schools, we don't come back and discuss what we learned or differences in our experiences compared to non-Title I schools. I think that if they incorporate Title I information into the regular coursework, I think that they would prepare teachers better to teach in these kinds of school...so yeah, an improvement should be having courses focus on both non-Title I and Title I schools.

All of the participants were in consensus that if they had coursework and curriculum that discussed Title I schools and students, they could be better prepared to use this knowledge to effectively teach in a Title I school. The majority of the teacher candidates revealed in their interviews that there was a difference between an effective teacher in a Title I school and an effective teacher in a non-Title I school. They agreed that they need to learn how to be effective in Title I school settings. For example, when discussing the difference between an effective teacher in a Title I school and an effective teacher in a non-Title I school Aubrey explained:

An effective teacher is someone who knows his or her audience, I think that is the first step to being an effective teacher.

When asked about being an effective teacher in a Title I school, Aubrey responded:

So it would be the same type of teacher, a teacher who gives to her students, students low-income, socio-economic, low SES they have a lot going on, they

might have more pressure or a lot more background, things happening in their life versus someone who isn't in a low-SES. So basically that teacher would get to know her students, get to know the parents of the students, all the ecological systems that revolve around the student and basically should be devoting a lot of their soft skills up and playing into the interests and what they know and making sure of what they know and then building on what the students know.

Arlene was asked what are the characteristics of an effective teacher in a non-Title I school and she replied:

Somebody with a lot of background knowledge, umm...and a lot of enthusiasm...umm...for that material...umm...I think being organized is very helpful. Umm... I think being able to work in a team, in a collegial fashion is very valuable. In other words, umm...I think umm...ideas can be brought to a better state when a lot of people put their ideas in and so then if that person has no ideas and others is able to contribute to them some creativity. Umm...to be creative like that got to keep up professionally.

When Arlene was asked to describe an effective teacher in a Title I she responded, "I think in a high-poverty and Title I school to be effective you need to be even more of all those things, especially the creative part."

Teacher preparation providing candidates with an understanding of Title I schools and students is important. Teacher candidates believed that there is a difference between what makes them effective in a non-Title I school and what makes them effective in a Title I school.

Classroom management. In addition to understanding Title I schools, several of the candidates expressed that they are concerned about classroom management and this could affect how effective they are in a Title I school. For example, Ron explained:

I am a guy so I figure it might be easier for me to teach in a Title I school because students tend to listen to guys. I could be a mentor and gain their respect. But, I feel like initially it is going to be hard to build that respect. I am not going to say scared, but I am worried about how the kids are going to behave. Like, I am not from their background in most cases so I don't know if they will listen to me. We haven't discussed in our classes what to do if that happens.

Matilda shared similar sentiments:

I think the easy answer is talking about behavior management and juggling that in a classroom and because you are in a Title I school you are vastly going to have students from lots of different backgrounds and varying structures of disciplines and expectations from home. Its just more like that you are going to have more conflict throughout the year, it is going to be a case by case thing, so it is not if the kid does this, then you do that...so its hard to say, I wish we had more of that but I don't think it is possible to have the right amount, but I don't know. I think for the most part, we got a variety of teaching methods, the empathy piece of it, I think a lot of thee foundation was made, it is just up to us to move forward.

Several of the teacher candidates suggested that the program add a course that focuses on classroom management with diverse student populations to help teacher candidates develop the skills needed to provide a structured classroom environment if they were to

teach in a Title I school.

Field experiences in Title I schools. The teacher candidates recommended required field experience in Title I school settings. Maggie proposed:

I think throwing us in a Title I school, low SES and being like listen not every school has doors on their bathroom stalls, things like that, its not the same...its so different, even my friend who teachers down in New Orleans, she'll tell me the same thing. It's different, it's just a different experience teaching in a Title I school. She teaches with KIPP academy down there, so yeah I think throwing us into that, I mean immerse yourselves and learn as much as you can. Just do the same things we do in our observations and field study with other schools and those types of schools, which I am sure they all are probably different.

Aubrey suggested:

Just based on me and also my classmates, I think going to a Title I school would really give everyone a reality check of what it looks like and maybe the lack of diversity that is often in a Title I school unfortunately. If you have never seen it, its kind of hard for you to envision it, so just to take a step at looking at what that would look like, or having someone from a Title I school speak and talk about it, bring pictures, I think that would be helpful.

The majority of the teacher candidates mentioned in their interviews a need for more field experiences in a Title I school. Ron expressed, "I don't think we will really be effective in Title I schools unless we get the opportunity to be in these schools. I think that we

have to have more required field experiences in Title I schools and then be given an opportunity to talk about our experiences.”

Recruitment of diverse teacher candidates. All of the teacher candidates have shared that their teacher preparation program lacks diversity. Many of the teacher candidates expressed that recruiting a pool of diverse teacher candidates can provide different perspectives that could help with their understanding. For example, Maggie explained:

I think our program seriously lacks diversity. I don't want to be too candid, but it is like White faculty teaching White students and there is only one perspective. I am not saying that faculty shouldn't be the same race as their students, but what I am saying is that having diverse teachers in the program can really make a difference. I think our class discussions will be different, I think even the way we view kids would be different. I say this because minority teachers will bring a different perspective, one that many can't relate to. I wish there were even more minority faculty, that would make a huge difference.

Ron echoed these same sentiments:

When you are in a program like ours, you can't help but notice there are not a lot of minority students. Like I haven't seen a Black guy in our program, I honestly don't think I have seen a Black woman besides you. I think that getting more minority teachers will be helpful to this program. I think it mixes things up and provides diverse opinions and gives us a different way of viewing like education.

Matilda recommended:

I think it would be a good idea to possibly recruit teachers from Black colleges to be in the program being that it is a Master's program. I think there is a lot of Whiteness in the program. I mean it is fine, but it really doesn't help when it comes to issues of diversity and getting perceptions about teaching.

It was clear in the teacher candidates' responses that they shared the program needs to focus on recruiting teacher candidates from minority backgrounds.

The four recommendations provided by the teacher candidates included courses integrating knowledge and understanding about Title I schools, courses that focus on classroom management in Title I schools, increasing field experiences in Title I schools, and recruiting diverse teacher candidates.

In this chapter a document analysis revealed what the courses at Traditional University offered to students lack content that focuses on preparing teacher candidates for Title I schools. While EDCI 554: Social Studies Methods for Elementary Classrooms discussed poverty in one class, EDUC 542: Foundations of Education and EDUC 543: Children, Family, Culture, and Schools, 4-12 Year Olds were the only courses where two of the classes focused on teaching students from low-income backgrounds. Based on the document analysis the majority of the courses offered at Traditional University did not address poverty, social class, or Title I schools or students.

The document analysis was supported by the opinions of faculty in the program who agreed that there was a lack of discussion about social class, poverty, and Title I. Faculty members shared what they do in their classes and areas where they could improve to ensure teacher candidates were obtaining knowledge pertaining to Title I

schools. I used critical theory as a lens for the document analysis because critical theory seeks to determine how things are, suggests how things should be, and offers a plan for change (Bronner, 2011). The teacher candidate interviews shared a plan for change in regards to how the courses in the program need to improve.

This chapter presented the findings of this study. Teacher candidates who are at different stages in the program were interviewed and asked to share how they perceived their teacher preparation so far in the program. Sense-making was the framework used to understand how these candidates made sense of their experiences in the teacher preparation program. These candidates shared general perceptions of the program, what was working in the program, what they believe was missing in the program, and recommendations to improve their teacher preparation program. The recommendations that the teacher candidates provided can facilitate further discussion in an effort to strengthen the experiences in the program of teacher candidates. The purpose of this chapter was an attempt to give teacher candidates a voice. Based on these findings, the implications of this study and conclusions will be discussed in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five

This chapter will summarize the literature review and methodology, as well as summarize the findings of this dissertation study. The summary of the study highlights generalizations developed in the analysis of the data: (a) the disconnect between coursework (methods courses) and reality of Title I classrooms; (b) the need for more field experiences in Title I schools; (c) the need for teacher preparation programs to address the challenges teacher candidates believe they will face in Title I schools; and (d) the lack of diverse teacher candidates. The chapter then offers implications for improving traditional teacher preparation programs, as well as recommendations for future studies.

Summary of the Literature Review and Methodology

The two research questions in this study investigated the role teacher education played in how teacher candidates understood Title I schools, specifically in their course syllabi. Also, the research questions examined how, based on coursework, field experiences, and internships did teacher candidates believe their teacher preparation prepared them to teach students in a Title I school. The main purpose was to provide teacher candidates with an opportunity to express what they believe they will need from their teacher preparation programs in order to effectively teach in a Title I school.

It is the responsibility of colleges of education to provide teacher candidates with the skills and knowledge necessary for them to be comfortable and effective teaching in a

Title I school. This study critically examined Traditional University Elementary Education course syllabi to determine if teacher candidates are being prepared to teach students from low-income backgrounds. Also, this study interviewed faculty to gain insight about some of the courses offered. Teacher candidates were interviewed and completed *photovoice* projects which allowed them to share their perceptions of how they believe they are being prepared to teach in Title I schools.

Chapter Two provided a review of the related literature. The review of the literature concentrated on four major topics: 1) The challenges teachers face in Title I/high poverty schools; 2) teacher preparation for high-poverty schools; 3) distribution of teacher quality; and 4) effective teachers in Title I schools. Both critical theory and sense-making theory were used to frame this study. While the critical theory framework was used to analyze the document analysis of the course syllabi, the sense-making framework was used as a basis for the *photovoice* activity and interviews. Data collection for this study was followed by data analysis which was conducted to interpret the data and give meaning to the findings.

Six teacher candidates participated in this study. All participants were currently enrolled at different stages in Traditional University's Elementary Education program. The participants consisted of five females and one male and included individuals who identified as White, Bi-racial, and Asian. There were four White participants in this study. Three faculty members participated in this study. The faculty members consisted of one adjunct professor, one tenure-track assistant professor, and one tenured associate professor.

This study was intended to provide teacher candidates with an opportunity to voice their perceptions about their teacher preparation, in regards to preparing them to teach students from low-income backgrounds and students that attend Title I schools. Both faculty and teacher candidates were interviewed individually. Teacher candidates participated in a *photovoice* activity for a more in-depth understanding of how they perceive Title I schools. In order to answer the research questions for this study and make meaning of the data, qualitative methodologies were the most appropriate.

Summary of the Findings

The first component of the findings described the backgrounds of the teacher candidate participants and discussed their experiences with Title I students or schools. The findings showed that most of the teacher candidates believed they have not had enough coursework that addresses social class or how to teach students that attend Title I schools. Also, the teacher candidates were not prepared to teach in Title I schools based on the field experiences they had completed. Not having an adequate amount of education that focuses on how to teach students from low-income backgrounds can negatively impact these teachers' success when teaching in today's diverse classrooms. As a result, this can have a negative impact on student performance, achievement and success. While field experiences and coursework did not address social class and Title I schools throughout every course, teacher candidates did express that they were pleased with the faculty and the coursework.

Another component of the study focused on what teacher candidates believed were missing in their teacher preparation. Teacher candidates discussed the disconnect

between coursework (methods courses) and the reality of Title I classrooms, the need for more field experiences in Title I schools, and teacher preparation programs' failure to address the challenges teacher candidates could face in Title I schools.

The last component discussed the recommendations that were provided by the teacher candidates for improving teacher preparation programs. Teacher candidates reflected upon their current teacher preparation and how teacher preparation could provide future teachers with the knowledge and experiences that will prepare them for Title I schools.

Conclusions

The data analysis resulted in three conclusions: (a) the disconnect between course work and the reality of a Title I classroom; (b) the need for more field experiences in Title I schools; and (c) the need for teacher preparation programs to address the challenges teacher candidates could face in Title I schools. These topics provided a framework to suggest implications for the study.

The disconnect between coursework (methods courses) and the reality of a Title I classroom. The majority of the teacher candidates had not been exposed to students in Title I schools until they began the program and completed field experiences in Title I schools. Although they were in these schools observing the day-to-day operations, these teacher candidates had not spent more than two classes in three of the ten required courses learning about Title I schools. There is a steady increase of students in poverty attending public schools and teacher preparation programs need to focus on social class and how teachers can be effective when teaching students from low-income

backgrounds. The teacher candidates shared in their interviews that their coursework did not focus on being effective teachers in Title I schools. Also, these teacher candidates shared that their teacher preparation program could integrate an understanding of Title I schools by focusing on ways to make connections with Title I students in their methods courses and classroom management courses. All of the teacher candidates agreed that the three courses that mentioned students in poverty and social class provided them with an understanding about students from low-income backgrounds that is necessary for their success with working with students from low-income backgrounds. However, three courses that focus on these topics once or twice a semester is not enough for teacher candidates to feel prepared to teach in Title I schools.

Need for more field experiences in Title I schools. The teacher candidates expressed that they were pleased with their field experiences overall. However, they all agreed that there needs to be required field experiences in Title I schools for all teacher candidates. The candidates shared that their program did not require them to complete field experiences in Title I schools and they could benefit from more exposure to this particular group of students. There was a consensus among the teacher candidates that they did not believe they were prepared to teach in Title I schools. Teacher candidates did not only want to be placed in Title I schools for field experiences, but they also desired the opportunity to discuss what they observed in the Title I schools in which they are completing their field experiences with faculty and mentor teachers. Allowing teacher candidates to complete their field experiences in Title I schools and providing them with

opportunities to have discussions with effective teachers in the schools could provide them with greater insight about teaching in a Title I school.

Teacher preparation programs have to restructure their programs and provide teacher candidates instruction and experience focused on working with students from diverse student backgrounds, specifically students that attend Title I schools. These programs must provide prospective teachers with coursework, field experiences, and internship opportunities that will allow them to gain an understanding about Title I schools and the needs of the students that attend these specific schools. This research study revealed that teacher candidates did not believe that their teacher preparation has prepared them to teach in Title I schools. A third of the research participants during their interviews referenced fictitious characters or scenes from movies when asked about teaching in Title I schools. There were no comparisons made to real teachers that they have met in Title I school settings.

According to data collected from *photovoice*, teacher candidates acknowledged that their teacher preparation program failed to address what challenges they believed they could face teaching in a Title I school. The majority of teacher candidates shared that they were concerned about how they will connect with their students if they choose to teach in a Title I school. The teachers recognized that they have different backgrounds from the students they could possibly teach in a Title I school and questioned whether they will be able to connect with their students. Another challenge that was shared by teacher candidates was how they would make connections with parents from low-socioeconomic backgrounds. All of the teacher candidates believed their teacher

preparation program needs to discuss how to emphasize with students that attend Title I schools. Learning to make connections with students that attend Title I schools cannot be addressed in one or two courses in a teacher preparation program, but instead must be consistently discussed in all courses.

The conclusions of the study provided great insight concerning what teacher candidates need teacher preparation programs to do in order for teacher candidates to be successful in Title I schools. These conclusions can be used to provide implications for teacher preparation programs.

Recommendations for Teacher Preparation Programs

The purpose of this dissertation study was to advance research that values the perspectives of teacher candidates, specifically research that is related to issues in Title I schools. This study provided implications that will provide teacher preparation programs with what they need to do to effectively prepare teacher candidates for Title I schools. In addition, this study analyzed course syllabi from Traditional University and the perceptions of teacher candidates, which provided insight from which faculty and the elementary coordinator can draw implications. The following implications are for teacher preparation programs regarding preparing prospective teachers to be effective in Title I schools.

Teacher preparation programs need to focus on providing teacher candidates with insight and understanding about Title I schools. Teacher candidates continuously shared in their interviews that they did not feel prepared to teach in Title I schools. The teacher candidates indicated that there was a difference between being an

effective teacher in a non-Title I and being an effective teacher in a Title I school, and believed they needed more coursework would provide them with information on how to teach in a Title I school. There is a notion that teachers hold on to prior knowledge and beliefs about others making it difficult for them to release preconceived notions regarding diversity and social class (Causey, Thomas, & Armento, 1999). Since these teacher candidates lacked experiences other than their field experiences in Title I schools, they did not feel confident about teaching in a Title I school.

Teacher preparation programs should focus attention on the redesigning courses so that they will be better suited to integrate information about Title I schools into their curriculum. It is the responsibility of teacher preparation programs to make sure that they are effectively preparing teacher candidates to teach in all settings, this includes Title I schools with students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds. Teacher preparation programs can no longer offer one or two courses that mention social class or poverty. These programs are going to need to integrate topics about social class, poverty, and Title I schools throughout their courses.

Teacher preparation programs must acknowledge the changing demographics in today's public school classrooms and make changes to their program in order to make sure teachers are not only highly qualified, but effective in all classrooms. While there are not any professional standards that require teacher preparation programs to prepare teacher candidates for Title I schools, there are several professional standards that require teacher educators to teach candidates how to work with diverse learners. Students in Title

I schools are diverse learners and they need teachers that are experienced, effective, and prepared to help them succeed.

Teacher candidates in this study have limited coursework focusing on teaching in Title I schools. Course readings and assignments must provide teacher candidates with the knowledge and skills that will prepare them to teach in Title I schools. Teacher preparation programs need to modify elementary education courses in order to implement ways teacher candidates can be successful building relationships with Title I students, manage their classroom, and be empathetic towards their students. Teacher candidates need to be aware of their biases and be reflective of these biases in order to understand the backgrounds and needs of Title I students. Teacher preparation programs should require faculty to integrate in their courses a focus on biases and self-reflection in order to help teacher candidates become and stay aware of their beliefs and ideologies regarding students from low-income backgrounds. This will require teacher preparation programs to provide faculty with training that addresses diversity, social class, and cultural competence. Both teacher candidates and faculty will need to work together to make that teacher candidates feel comfortable managing a Title I classroom.

There needs to be mandatory field experiences in Title I schools which include open discussions with effective Title I teachers. All of the teacher candidates continuously mentioned that their teacher preparation programs should require teacher candidates to have field experiences in Title I schools. In addition, teacher candidates shared that having open discussions with effective Title I teachers would provide them with a greater understanding of Title I schools and what they need to be successful in

these settings. Modifications that include mandatory field experiences could be beneficial to teacher candidates in the program who lack experience working with low-income students. Teacher candidates should observe an effective and experienced teacher in a Title I school and after their observations be allotted time for reflecting on their experience. Then teacher candidates can discuss with assigned teachers at these schools and faculty their Title I classroom experience. This could provide teacher candidates the opportunity to discuss the challenges they believe they will face and ask any questions that will better help them understand the Title I classroom environment.

For teacher candidates to be effective in Title I classrooms, they must understand how to effectively teach in these classrooms and how to build relationships with the students who attend Title I schools. These teaching practices only come from experience in these Title I classroom settings. In order to guarantee that teacher candidates are effective and knowledgeable with students from low-income backgrounds, teacher preparation programs need mandatory field experiences in Title I schools to provide teacher candidates with these experiences. Traditional University works with several PDS schools, therefore it would be a matter of reaching out to the Title I schools in the network and discussing the plan to provide all teacher candidates with a Title I school experience.

Recommendations for Further Studies

In order to better prepare teacher candidates for Title I schools further research is needed. The following recommendations would be meaningful in this pursuit:

1. Research that focuses on novice (teachers in their second to fourth year teaching) Title I elementary teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to teach in Title I elementary schools following completion of their teacher preparation program. This dissertation study focused on how current teacher candidates perceived their teacher preparation programs in regards to preparing them to teach in Title I schools. The findings of this study are important because it provided valuable information about what teacher candidates believe they need to be successful in Title I schools and what their teacher preparation lacked in regards to preparing them for Title I schools. However, another valuable and important perspective for understanding what teacher candidates need in order to be effective teachers in Title I schools, is the perspectives of novice Title I teachers. Novice Title I teachers could provide teacher preparation programs with important information regarding what these programs can do to make sure teacher candidates are prepared to be effective teachers in a Title I school. Interviews and focus groups consisting of novice Title I teachers could be conducted to determine the best strategies, methods, techniques, and relationship builders to effectively teach Title I students. Teacher preparation programs must be willing to implement changes to existing teacher preparation models in order to better prepare teacher candidates to teach in a Title I school.

2. Research that focuses on how colleges of education can redesign their courses to better prepare prospective teachers to teach in Title I classrooms and focus on social class. Teacher candidates overwhelmingly agreed that they did not believe their program prepared them to teach in Title I schools. Based on these teacher candidates'

prior experience, backgrounds, and beliefs concerning poverty and students from low-income backgrounds, these teacher candidates will need courses that focus on social class and how to meet the needs of students in poverty. It is my suggestion that teacher candidates be given a survey upon entering the elementary education program to determine their beliefs, attitudes, and experience working with students in Title I schools. Also, this survey can ask teacher candidates what they believe they will need, if anything to effectively meet the needs of Title I students. Based on this survey the elementary education program will have an idea of how they can design their courses to better prepare teacher candidates to teach in Title I classrooms.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter summarized the literature review and methodology, as well as summarized the findings of this study. It also provided four conclusions determined to be relevant from the data analysis: (a) the disconnect between coursework (methods courses) and reality of Title I classrooms; (b) the need for more field experiences in Title I schools; (c) the need for teacher preparation programs to address the challenges teacher candidates believe they will face in Title I schools; and (d) the lack of diverse teacher candidates. In addition, this chapter provided recommendations for teacher preparation programs and recommendations for future research.

This dissertation study examined current teacher candidates' perceptions of their teacher preparation program in regards to preparing them to teach in Title I schools. Course syllabi from Traditional University were analyzed to provide an understanding of what teacher candidates learned in their elementary education courses. Also, faculty

interviews were conducted to gain deeper insight about what was being discussed in elementary education courses in regards to preparing teacher candidates to teach in Title I schools. Through interviews and *photovoice* activity, the study provided better insight regarding what was working in teacher preparation, in addition to identifying specific concerns of the teacher candidates.

While there is no way to guarantee that teacher candidates will be fully prepared to teach in Title I schools, recommendations offered by the teacher candidates of the study and myself could improve the future of teacher preparation programs. The number of minority and low-income students is steadily increasing in our public schools, it is now more important than ever that teacher candidates are prepared to effectively teach and establish relationships with students from these backgrounds. It is the responsibility of teacher preparation programs to make sure that prospective teachers are adequately prepared to teach students from low-income backgrounds. The document analysis on elementary education course syllabi, faculty interviews, and teacher candidate interviews revealed that while two or three courses mention students in poverty or students from low-income background, discussions on class are dismissed in the overall program. While the sample size is small and data results are not generalizable, the study is worthy because teacher candidates have shared what they need from their teacher preparation programs to be effective in Title I classrooms.

Teacher preparation programs have to begin focusing on preparing prospective teachers to teach low-income students. In order to restructure teacher preparation programs, faculty must be trained on topics of social class, poverty, equity, and social

justice. In addition, teacher candidates need to participate in mandatory field experiences in Title I schools, where they will be provided an opportunity to have open discussions with current effective Title I teachers. In order to strengthen the teaching profession and provide all students with an opportunity to succeed, teacher preparation programs have to focus on preparing teacher candidates to teach all students, in particular students from low-income backgrounds. If teacher preparation programs do not begin focusing on preparing prospective teachers to teach students from low-income backgrounds, these teachers will not be prepared to teach in Title I schools and class will continue to be dismissed.

Appendix A

IRBNet Approval Form



Office of Research Integrity and Assurance

Research Hall, 4400 University Drive, MS 6D5, Fairfax, Virginia 22030
Phone: 703-993-5445; Fax: 703-993-9590

DATE: September 27, 2016

TO: Marjorie Haley
FROM: George Mason University IRB

Project Title: [930105-2] Class Dismissed!: An examination of how teacher candidates are prepared for Title I schools

SUBMISSION TYPE: Amendment/Modification

ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: September 27, 2016

EXPIRATION DATE: August 4, 2017

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

Thank you for your submission of Amendment/Modification materials for this project. The George Mason University IRB has APPROVED your submission. This submission has received Expedited Review based on applicable federal regulations.

Please remember that all research must be conducted as described in the submitted materials.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by the IRB prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to the Office of Research Integrity & Assurance (ORIA). Please use the appropriate reporting forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed (if applicable).

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to the ORIA.

The anniversary date of this study is August 4, 2017. This project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. You may not collect data beyond this date without prior IRB approval. A continuing review form must be completed and submitted to the ORIA at least 30 days prior to the anniversary date or upon completion of this project. Prior to the anniversary date, the ORIA will send you a reminder regarding continuing review procedures.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of five years, or as described in your submission, after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Katie Brooks at (703) 993-4121 or kbrook14@gmu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within George Mason University IRB's records.

Appendix B

Teacher Candidate Consent Form

Class Dismissed!: An examination of how novice elementary teachers are prepared for Title I schools

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

IRBNet ID: 930105-1

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

This research is being conducted to understand how GMU Elementary Education teacher candidates that have completed field experiences or internships in a Title I school believe their teacher preparation prepared them for the realities of the Title I classrooms that they will teach in. In addition, this research project aims to understand Title I schools in regards to low-income students. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign this consent form, complete a demographic questionnaire lasting 5 to 10 minutes, participate in a face-to-face interview lasting 30 to 45 minutes, and complete a photovoice project that will require one or two hours over the course of two weeks. As a participant you may not take identifying photos of other individuals to use for this project.

The interviews will be audio recorded and take place at a time and location most convenient for you. After the interview, the recording will be transcribed, which means it will be typed exactly as it was recorded word-for-word, by the researcher. The audio recording will be destroyed at the end of the study. Pseudonyms (fake name) will be used to protect confidentiality. The only identifying information will be your printed name and signature on this consent form.

RISKS

There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research.

BENEFITS

There are no benefits to you as a participant other than to further research in understanding the nature of GMU teacher candidates who have completed field experiences or internships in Title I schools perspectives on teacher preparation for Title I schools and contribute to this understanding for the profession.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The data in this study will be confidential. You will be given a pseudonym on your demographic questionnaires, interviews, and *photovoice* projects. Your interview information, photographs, writings, and other elements of your projects may be used in reports, presentations, and publications. Verifying information and any photos that identify individuals will be removed and not used in this study. The audio recordings will be accessed only by the researcher and will be placed in a secure location on Mason property until the interviews have been transcribed. All audio recordings will be transcribed within 30 days and deleted immediately following transcription. While it is understood that no computer transmission can be perfectly secure, reasonable efforts will be made to protect the confidentiality of your transmission.



Project Number: 930105-2
Date Approved: 9/27/16
Approval Expiration Date: 8/4/18

IRB: For Official Use Only

Page 1 of 2

PARTICIPATION

Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study, there is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. There are no costs to you or any other party.

CONTACT

This research is being conducted Shamaine Bertrand from the College of Education and Human Development at George Mason University. She may be reached at 540-903-5173 or sbazemor@masonline.gmu.edu for questions or to report a research-related problem. The faculty advisor for this research is Dr. Marjorie Haley from the College of Education and Human Development at George Mason University. Dr. Haley may be reached at 703-993-8710 or mhaley@gmu.edu for questions or to report a research-related problem. You may contact the George Mason University Office of Research Integrity & Assurance at 703-993-4121 if you have questions or comments regarding your rights as a participant in the research.

This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures governing your participation in this research.

CONSENT

I have read this form, all of my questions have been answered by the research staff, and I agree to participate in this study.

Name

Signature

Date of Signature



Project Number: 930105-2
Date Approved: 9/27/16
Approval Expiration Date: 8/4/18

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Appendix C

Faculty Consent Form

Class Dismissed!: An examination of how novice elementary teachers are prepared for Title I schools

IRBNet ID: 930105-1

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

This research is being conducted to understand how GMU Elementary Education teacher candidates that have completed field experiences or internships in a Title I school believe their teacher preparation prepared them for the realities of the Title I classrooms that they will teach in. In addition, this research project aims to understand Title I schools in regards to low-income students. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign this consent form and participate in a face-to-face interview lasting 20 to 30 minutes.

The interviews will be audio recorded and take place a time and location most convenient for you. After the interview, the researcher will transcribe the recording. The audio recording will be destroyed at the end of the study. Pseudonyms will be used to protect confidentiality. The only identifying information will be your printed name and signature on this consent form.

RISKS

There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research.

BENEFITS

There are no benefits to you as a participant.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The data in this study will be confidential. You will be given a pseudonym on your interview. Your interview information may be used in reports, presentations, and publications verifying information will be removed. The audio recordings will be accessed only by the researcher and will be placed in a secure location on Mason property until the interviews have been transcribed. All audio recordings will be transcribed within 30 days and deleted immediately following transcription. While it is understood that no computer transmission can be perfectly secure, reasonable efforts will be made to protect the confidentiality of your transmission.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study, there is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. There are no costs to you or any other party.

CONTACT

This research is being conducted Shamaine Bertrand from the College of Education and Human



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Development at George Mason University. She may be reached at 540-903-5173 or sbazemor@masonlive.gmu.edu for questions or to report a research-related problem. The faculty advisor for this research is Dr. Marjorie Haley from the College of Education and Human Development at George Mason University. Dr. Haley may be reached at 703-993-8710 or mhaley@gmu.edu for questions or to report a research-related problem. You may contact the George Mason University Office of Research Integrity & Assurance at 703-993-4121 if you have questions or comments regarding your rights as a participant in the research.

This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures governing your participation in this research.

CONSENT

I have read this form, all of my questions have been answered by the research staff, and I agree to participate in this study.

Name

Signature

Date of Signature

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Biography

Shamaine Kyann Bertrand graduated from Lumberton Senior High School, Lumberton, NC in 2000. She received her Bachelor of Science in Parks, Recreation, & Tourism Management from North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC in 2004. Shamaine received her Master's in Elementary Education from the University of Mary Washington, Fredericksburg, VA in 2009. She has been a fourth grade teacher for eight years in both a Title I and non-Title I school.