

**UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
TEACHER PREPARATION FOR DIVERSE CLASSROOMS**

An Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis

By

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ABSTRACT

Understanding the Nature of Texas A&M University Teacher Preparation for Diverse Classrooms

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As students who felt impacted by multicultural education teacher education courses, we wanted to better understand contributions to teacher quality at Texas A&M University in relation to diverse pK-12 students. Nationally, it is estimated that by 2026, students of color will account for 55% of U.S. learners (McFarland et al., 2017), however, our program's pre-service teachers are 70% White and 90% female (Texas A&M University, 2018). To examine this gap, we are looking at the intersections of policies and practices at TAMU in teacher education recruitment, program acceptance, curriculum, and support systems, that can contribute to both diversifying the teacher workforce and preparing all teachers we send into the field to enact culturally

responsive and equitable practices in the workplace. This critical qualitative study is guided by the framework of critical race theory. This is the first cycle of our research after which we will focus on the strengths and issues we've identified, present initial recommendations, and make a plan for future research cycles involving participatory research.

NOMENCLATURE

CRT	Critical Race Theory
SES	Socioeconomic Status
TAMU	Texas A&M
TLAC	The Department of Teaching, Learning, and Culture
CEHD	College of Education and Human Development

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As students pursuing a career in teaching, our research focuses on a topic that is both personally and professionally relevant to us as well as other students at Texas A&M University (TAMU) and beyond. The research question guiding this study is: How are policies and practices in TAMU's teacher education program contributing to diversifying the teacher workforce and preparing culturally responsive educators? We investigate the nature of teacher preparation programs at TAMU and whether or not they are successful both in preparing students to work in diverse classrooms and supporting students of diverse backgrounds. As our programs are the primary way in which we imbue our students with the knowledge and skills needed to teach future generations, it is vital that they are accomplishing the goal of training students in multicultural knowledge and the understanding of diversity in classrooms (Rood & Ashby, 2018). The estimated racial breakdown of students in schools by 2026 will be 55% students of color, whereas pre-service teachers are predominantly White and female, which, according to the literature, means they are at more of a risk for being underprepared and causing harm to their underserved and diverse students (Grissom & Redding, 2016). To mitigate this, we first wanted to observe what we are doing as a university and how it compares to strategies that are proven to work in retaining diverse pre-service teachers, such as having GPA requirements, a cohort model of education, required meetings and support from faculty, and increased focus on diversity, which includes the hiring of teachers of color with experience in urban settings (Waddell, 2014). We began by looking into the TAMU requirements, specifically course requirements, for our pre-service teachers. These courses are important both in number as well as content because

research shows that after taking a multicultural education course, students overall had a positive orientation to diversity, but did not have a deeper understanding of the institutional oppression which is pervasive in society and negatively impacts minority students (Weisman & Garza, 2002). Thus simply having the courses in place to teach diversity may not be sufficient and our future generation of students will suffer as their ill-prepared teachers burnout and leave their students worse than whence they came (Bond, Quintero, Casey, & Di Carlo, 2017).

Our research focuses on what TAMU's teacher education program provides for recruiting and training culturally diverse and/or culturally responsive educators. Through this first cycle of action research, we will present recommendations on how to improve existing programs and curricula and make a plan for future research cycles that may involve qualitative and participatory research with students and other various local stakeholders. In this chapter, we begin with the background of our topic and a review of relevant literature.

A Felt Difficulty

The team's interest in this topic arose from our shared experience of taking culture and multicultural education courses taught by Dr. Rector-Aranda who is now our research advisor. Landry and Logan were enrolled in separate sections of *Introduction to Culture, Community, Society, and Schools* during fall 2017; Delaney and Kim were enrolled in the same section and Kelsey was in an online section of *Foundations of Education in a Multicultural Society* during spring 2018. One day in Kim and Delaney's *Foundations* class, students were given control over a discussion and told we could talk about any topic relevant to the course. This discussion revealed our classmates' and our mutual distaste for our lack of multicultural course requirements and the outside application of these skills. "With that said, with all the ideas that we're coming up with, I was almost kind of hoping that we were going to actively do something

because I felt that it was ‘all bark and no bite’,” says Kim. Later in the semester, the class used the Orpheus Process, “an original method that places democracy at the center of artistic execution” (Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, 2018), to attempt to come up with some solutions. Students searched the campus website for information about course offerings, course requirements, and so forth and created a Google document where we collected the information we found... Still, where was the action? This felt difficulty (Dewey, 1920/1933) is really where our study began.

Delaney and Dr. Rector-Aranda had already been meeting and unofficially discussing potentially doing some kind of research. In April 2018, the College of Education and Human Development announced it would be accepting applications for the Undergraduate Research Experience. Dr. Rector-Aranda sent an email to all current and previous undergraduate students to gauge interest in starting a research team. Several students got together to discuss ideas, very generally based on the discussions that had taken place in *Foundations*, as well as ideas from Landry and Logan who had been in *Intro*. That summer, we participated in an intensive seminar to learn the necessary skills and knowledge to conduct our own research study, which brings us here. We began with a literature review to better understand our topic of interest.

Literature Review

Recruitment Strategies

When looking at recruitment into the College of Education and Human Development, there was a lack of findings on what the college is currently doing. However, many other departments have given lead as to what strategies allowed their programs to flourish. 18.1% of students who enrolled in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences claimed that their influence for going into that school was parental influence (Rayfield, Murpiirey, Skaggs, &

Shafer, 2013). This leads to the questioning of parental involvement in the choice of major that students are choosing. A study done at Syracuse University found that parental involvement in children's domain-specific education exerts significant effects on children's college major choice (Ma, 2009). Parental factors are contributing to a majority of student decisions on major choice, but there are factors such as doing related field work or a positive role model influencing the decision, and students entering the field of Agriculture and Life Sciences reported a principal or administrator being the major choice influencer (Rayfield, Murpiirey, Skaggs, & Shafer, 2013). Schools positively promoting the specific major is also an influential factor in students choosing their major (Bachnak, Goonatilake, Chappa, & Kim, 2010). Recruitment into the college or field begins at a young age and can be encouraged as students develop. With that being said, recruitment initiative must begin with those in the education field promoting the rewarding career that comes from being an educator.

Retention of Students of Color

To undertake a proper comparison of TAMU's retention strategies, literature was reviewed regarding pre-service teacher support at other universities. A large and growing body of literature has investigated which structures being put into place at a university level are the most important to the success of ethnically diverse students. A common theme amongst the literature was that the teachers of color felt that they needed to be more involved with the faculty, that they needed better relationships with other faculty that were also teachers of color, and that they needed more effective mentoring from a faculty of color.

In the case of the study of the recruitment and retention for Black students as special education teachers conducted by Scott (2018), it was found that no more than 5% of students enrolled in the special education programs across three universities were Black students. The

study was conducted by interviewing these preservice teachers using a series of questions regarding retention and recruitment and the interviews were then categorized and relationships between each of the interviews were formed. In this study's case, five major themes were drawn from the investigation, which were: "feelings of isolation, effective mentoring from faculty members of color, support from other Black peers, deliberate missions of the PWI [predominantly White institution], and adequate financial support" (Scott, 2018, p. 143). Essentially, these themes demonstrate that the students felt that there was no connection to their program and that they thought they would like to work with more people of color, but they consistently did not get these opportunities. Participants commented that they had too much coursework and no opportunities to meet other students of color or they had no opportunity to meet a faculty member of color. One thing to note was the mission statements of the PWI because the Black students with disabilities had to face a lot of barriers and so it is important for the universities that they had a mission statement that aligned with these students' interests. It is worth noting this because it gives some need for thought about some of the current mission statements of institutions like TAMU. If an institution wants to improve/address current issues for its underserved students, it may be worth considering its mission statement.

Continuing on, a report by Hess, Gault, and Yi (2013) summarizes the findings and recommendations from a meeting organized by the Institute for Women's Policy Research wherein the issue of recruitment and retention of women of color in STEM academics career was addressed. Common recommendations included having access to faculty mentors of color and improving the balance of work to career for women of color in STEM. Essentially, in a similar sense to the studies conducted by Scott (2018) with its recommendation of mentors, Hess et al. (2013) found that participants in their discussions wanted to encourage contextualized

mentoring, meaning mentoring “which takes into account the specific challenges that women of color in STEM disciplines face” and considered how doing this could give the “support and guidance they need to stay in the field and advance through the ranks” (p. 33). In a different sense from the other mentioned study, improving the balance of work to career for women of color in STEM was one of the recommendations that came up because, in these participants’ case, “women of color stay in science if they can get out of science” (p. 28). Many women of color discussed that the reason some of them stayed in their field was because it allowed them to take breaks and give them time to do things like take vacations or church activities. There is a major underrepresentation of STEM female teachers of color and though it is not commonly said, there are definitely things that can be done to retain them and some of these recommendations are something to consider.

A recent study by Waddell (2014) looked specifically at a group of 41 students enrolled in an urban teacher education program, 71% of whom were students of color. Through interviews and various forms of written correspondence, Waddell found that four themes were critical to student success: use of “the cohort model, perceived focus on diversity, high expectations, and close interaction with and support from faculty” (Waddell, 2014, p. 266). The cohort model at the university was created in an attempt to give students a sense of community in the department and encouraged collaboration and fellowship by placing all incoming students together in every class during their first semester. Students in the study stated that they felt important and looked out for because of this model, which increased their success in both academics and social growth. A focus on diversity also contributed to student success and students appreciated how what they were learning in class was directly applicable to their future careers as multicultural educators (Waddell, 2014). Having high expectations also helped the students succeed and many of them

surpassed the GPA required to stay in the program, having an average GPA of “3.36 compared to the campus-wide undergraduate GPA of 2.28” (Waddell, 2014, p. 268). The last factor cited as being of great importance to the undergraduates was the support from faculty. Having mandatory meetings and general check-ins, the students met with their faculty members often and felt supported both personally as well as academically (Waddell, 2014).

In a study that set out to examine support for student of color in higher education, Luedke (2017) found that “White staff and administrators did not support Students of Color holistically” (p.43). This statement has great implications in our study and brings up other questions that need to be addressed, such as the racial makeup of Texas A&M faculty, the number of advisors of color, and the fundamental question of whether or not white mentors can appropriately support students of color. The results of this study indicated that the three themes most important to supporting students of color were nurturing students’ prior capital, maintaining complete honesty, and making themselves [staff] available (Luedke, 2017). Nurturing students’ prior capital was demonstrated in mentors’ valuing of student’s opinions and personal lives. This connection made students more comfortable contacting their advisors and also increased their ability to properly counsel the students on an individual level. Maintaining complete honesty also contributed to this sense of trust students had in their advisors. Students seemed especially appreciative of the straight-forward nature of their advisors and that they encouraged rather than put down their concerns (Luedke, 2017). The last major contributor to student success in relationships was mentors making themselves readily available to students. Whether through providing cell phone numbers, emailing about opportunities on campus, or simply showing up on time to meetings, the caring nature of the mentors positively affected the students in their academic pursuits (Luedke, 2017).

These studies were indicative of the literature studied and both came to similar conclusions regarding what is most important in supporting students of color (Ash & Schreiner, 2016; Museus & Ravello, 2010). The themes that were most similar between the articles were those of close relationships and support from advisors and staff. Other common themes found amongst the literature were a lack of relationships amongst teachers of color, accessibility to faculty of color, and a lack of involvement in the institution. If this is indicative of other studies, we may presume it will probably be the case at Texas A&M as well and so this is something that needs to be considered as the studies done to improve TAMU's recruitment and retention of teachers of color are conducted. This review provided us the understanding of what to look at in the department of education under review, particularly mentorship and relationships between students of color and faculty members.

Preparation for Urban and Diverse Schools

In the literature on pre-service teacher preparation for urban and diverse schools, there was a focus on how to incorporate diversity and inclusion into classrooms. This has been the question across all universities and curricula, however, for the most part, students are learning about diversity in abstract and do not really understand the issue until after class when they get the opportunity to see what really goes on in schools around them (Boske, & Elue, 2018). Boske and Elue (2018) describe a department meeting with professors who had 30 years of experience in K-12 suburban schools discussing diversity and what it meant to include it at the university, which led to professors at the meeting not understanding and questioning the importance of being an inclusive university.

In another study done by the University of Alicante and the University of Minnesota, researchers found a connection between the methods educators use to make meaningful

connections to their placements and how the university equipped them with such strategies (Cardona-Moltó, Tichá, & Abery, 2018). The study concluded that the development of teaching identity is learned through experience and must be adjusted and reinterpreted throughout one's teaching career. However, many of the teachers believed that the school's environment did not match what they learned in their coursework, especially about inclusion and diversity (CardonaMoltó, Tichá, & Abery, 2018).

Lastly, a study on diversity education in initial teacher preparation programs found that preparing teachers for diversity is a global concern because teachers would avoid using what they were taught when integrating diversity into their classrooms (Rood & Ashby, 2018). Therefore, teachers in urban and diverse schools are struggling to find an answer to “how” to incorporate diversity and inclusion into the classroom and school environment. With that being said, preparation for urban and diverse schools must start with educating the teachers about diversity, finding strategies for successful inclusion at the university, and incorporating an emphasis on inclusion and diversity across students' coursework.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

To understand what it means to use culturally responsive/culturally relevant pedagogy, literature was reviewed over pre-service and in-service teaching to form a background knowledge. Nash (2018) uses the intersections of critical race theory (CRT), critical whiteness studies, and culturally relevant pedagogy to confront racism. Nash adopts her CRT tenets from Ladson-Billings (1995), which “seek to unveil and explore racism, engage in storytelling and give witness to historically-marginalized voices, and evaluate neoliberal laws and policies and their effects on curriculum, instruction, assessment, and policy” (p. 154). Nash's use of critical whiteness studies is important because it provides whites the ability to learn about their own privileges and status within a racist society. Culturally responsive/culturally relevant pedagogy is

grounded in three tenets: “an ability to develop students academically, a willingness to nurture and support cultural competence, and the development of a sociopolitical or critical consciousness” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 483). In Nash’s study, four pre-service teachers were observed throughout two semesters in an early childhood methods course. There were some common emerging themes seen in the narratives given by the teachers: collaboration, seeing students as individuals, and adapting to one’s classroom setting. One pre-service teacher felt that there were only two courses in her degree plan that had prepared her for the classroom, and the “best preparation for being a culturally relevant/culturally responsive teacher was to be immersed in the culture” (Nash, 2018, p. 159). However, some issues still existed within the narratives, which were binary and deficit thinking.

Samuels (2018) completed a study with volunteer in-service teacher participants to learn about culturally responsive pedagogy. The teachers attended two three-hour professional development sessions. The first session taught the teachers knowledge, skills, and strategies to become more equitable in the classroom. The second session served as a focus group of 4-5 members discussing perceptions and characteristics of what they believe a culturally relevant classroom looks like (Samuels, 2018). The in-service teachers spoke highly of embedding culturally responsive/culturally relevant pedagogy; they believed that it encouraged strong relationships, built self-esteem, enhanced a feeling of safety in the classroom, and that students were more willing to take risks (Samuels, 2018). Even still these in-service teachers voiced their opinions regarding the challenges surrounding the time involved in researching topics they were unfamiliar with and the decreased likelihood they would embrace the framework. Others had anxiety and even spoke of avoiding topics rather than cause tension in classrooms when it came to such topics as *Black Lives Matter* and *Blue Lives Matter* (Samuels, 2018). When pre-service and in-service teachers can be reflective, they can work to transform their systemic mindsets

toward a socially just thought process. The participants also noted the need to be reflective of their work, but also “potential biases and inequitable practices” (Samuels, 2018, p. 26). But since this might reveal characteristics teachers are uncomfortable with confronting, they do not want to go through with this process (Samuels, 2018).

Wallace and Brand also utilize CRT while exploring culturally responsive pedagogy and its effectiveness in classrooms. Because research shows that many white teachers feel illprepared to teach culturally diverse students (Martin & Lock, 1997). Wallace and Brand sought to seek out answers, to how effective white teachers were succeeding in predominately African American classrooms. Their main question “Is a critical awareness of societal constructions of difference or characterizations of race pivotal to teaching African American students?” (Wallace & Brand, 2012, p. 347). This study was conducted using observations and narratives that kept the spirit of the CRT study, as narratives give voice to people of color and those that are marginalized (Wallace & Brand, 2012; Nash, 2018). Three themes emerged:

Teachers’ background experiences provoked a critical awareness of societal constructions of race; Teachers’ critical awareness of the influence of societal constructions of race influenced their teaching philosophies; and Teachers’ sociocultural awareness informed their perspectives of students’ academic needs and behaviors. (Wallace & Brand, 2012, p.

351)

Even though there is an increasing amount of literature over culturally responsive pedagogy, there seems to be a gap when it comes to voicing the challenges that come along with implementing the pedagogy and philosophy as a teacher, as well as a gap in pre-service knowledge and research.

Conclusion and Implications

The literature review undertaken by our research team looked at culturally responsive pedagogy, teacher preparation for urban and diverse schools, and retention and recruitment strategies for pre-service students of color. Each topic brought forth its own recurring themes regarding what universities are doing to effectively or ineffectively create diverse, equity-minded educators. As far as retention and recruitment of diverse students is concerned, the most important factor discovered was that of close relationships with faculty and staff who attended to students first as people, and then as students. In preparing students to use culturally responsive pedagogy in the classroom, the findings suggest an inconsistency between preparation and practice, with students learning a small amount about equitable education, but then being either still too uninformed or too afraid to tackle issues of bias in their own classrooms. Preparing students ready to work in an urban or diverse school showed similar trends to those displayed in preparing teachers to use culturally responsive pedagogy in the classroom. Again, students were being taught some about how to teach in a diverse classroom, but had minds wrought with misconceptions that they did not have addressed until they entered the field. The review of recruitment as it pertains to the College of Education and Human Development provided us with more questions than answers, however reviews of other universities and majors suggested that parental influence and early exposure had large impacts on the field of study students gravitate towards in college.

In each relevant topic we performed a literature review on, there were gaps where new research can add to the existing knowledge to create a larger scope of understanding regarding pre-service teacher preparation. While there was plenty of literature surrounding educational equity in a broad sense, there were gaps regarding how universities provided their students with

quality mentorship and guidance, the relationship between the type of diversity in education courses taught and the successfulness of the pre-service teachers in said programs, and how our current department of study is actively recruiting diverse students in high school and below. Our research aims to tackle each of these issues in turn, examining the policies that ensure diverse students have appropriate mentors, how what we teach here at TAMU is fulfilling or falling short of the broad goals of multicultural education, and what recruitment efforts are currently in place within CEHD. A review of data regarding current levels of representation on a college and university level will be examined as will syllabi and other relevant documents.

CHAPTER II

METHODS

This collaborative educational action research study (Anderson, Herr, & Nihlen, 2007) is undertaken through the lens of Critical Race Theory (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) using a critical qualitative case study methodology (Carr & Kemmis, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2020). We examined existing data such as demographics of the student body over time, documented standards, procedures, and other policies for recruitment and program acceptance of teacher education majors, and their required course work while in the program. In future action research cycles, we may also collect qualitative data from/with local students and stakeholders, such as interviews, questionnaires, or participatory-methods data, to gain insights from members of the university community, and potentially the Bryan-College Station community, where a large number of TAMU graduates find employment in local schools.

The question guiding this study is: How are policies and practices in TAMU's teacher education program contributing to diversifying the teacher workforce and preparing culturally responsive educators?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework we are using to guide our research is Critical Race Theory, or CRT. CRT provides our inquiry with a non-apologetic look at racism in society and at a university level. The major tenets we draw from CRT include the ideas of whiteness as property, counterstorytelling, interest convergence, racial realism, and racism as normal. Each tenet contributes its own set of standards and guiding principles to our research.

The idea of whiteness as property asserts that having white skin is akin to owning property or having wealth, it brings its own privileges to those who have it. As white skin color is an unearned privilege, it provides unfair advantages to those who happen to be born into this privileged group (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Counterstorytelling (Solórzano, & Yosso, 2002), another tenet, provides researchers and proponents of equity alike with the freedom to create and contribute to narratives that counter the mainstream versions of truth. This paper has the potential to become a counternarrative to the preconceived notion that “all is well” in higher education and pre-service teachers are being taught what they need to be successful in all classrooms.

Interest convergence refers to the idea that those in power only accommodate marginalized communities when it serves their own personal interests (Bell, 1995a). This contributes to our outlook by giving us a critical lens through which we view TAMU’s practices related to multicultural education, allowing us to review who is being served by our requirements, the university or the populations we claim to serve.

Racial realism asserts that racism will likely never be completely overcome, but to make any substantial change towards equity in society, we must confront racism head-on (Bell, 1995b). This paper seeks to do just that, absorbing each truth we find with courage and the desire to make changes when we see the opportunity.

The last tenet we draw from is the idea that racism is normal (King, 1991; Rector-Aranda, 2016). Without this, our research would have no value. Acknowledging that racism exists and permeates our personal and professional relationships is the lynchpin of our study. We are going into our project with the understanding that racism surrounds us at this university, and in this state, country, and the world. Racism is entrenched, but through our efforts and those of other researchers maybe one day we will set the standards for embracing diversity.

Methodology

Educational action research centers on “altering curriculum, challenging common school practices, and working for social change by engaging in a continuous process of problem posing, data gathering, analysis, and action” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 40). The contextual and often localized nature of action research creates both relevant professional and personal growth while politically linking these local struggles and developments to larger social and global contexts (Noffke, 2009). Viewing the professional and personal as forms of and inseparable from the political is key to critical approaches to emancipatory action research, as promoted by Carr and Kemmis (2009), who argue that such action research is “constituted and constitutive of the values and principles of the democratic form of social life it seeks to foster and achieve” (p. 74).

For this project, we utilized a critical qualitative case study methodology. It is qualitative because we focus on “the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured,” and “seek answers to questions that stress *how* social experience is created and given meaning” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 17). A case study is the study of a “phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context,” in this case, the TAMU teacher education program (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2020, p. 24). It is critical because we pay special attention to the role of our own perspectives and existing understandings and how these might influence our decisions and interpretations, as well as the professional and political implications of our work (Carr & Kemmis, 2009).

Researcher Positionalities

Because we are taking a critical approach and paying particular attention to topics of race and power, we have chosen to discuss how our various positionalities have and continue to influence our work. “Positionality refers to the stance or positioning of the researcher in relation

to the social and political context of the study--the community, the organization or the participant group. The position adopted by a researcher affects every phase of the research process” (Rowe, 2014, p. 627). Furthermore, understanding researchers’ racial and cultural positionalities, according to Milner (2007), involves “researching the self, researching the self in relation to others, engaged reflection and representation, and shifting from self to system” (p. 395). Below, we each consider how our own positionalities relate to this study.

As a current student in the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Culture (TLAC) at Texas A&M University (TAMU), I, Delaney, live and breathe the culture of my department and university each day. When I sit in class each day I look through the lens of the dominant class in my major; white, middle class, early twenties, and female. The only real outsider perspective I have on the department is that of a transfer student who spent two and a half years as a mechanical engineering student surrounded by white males. I also have personal experience with mental illness and disability which provides me with a profound empathy for the world around me and the diverse population who inhabits it. My identity as a female provides me with an interesting stance in regards to this project. As a female, I have personally experienced discrimination and know what it feels like to inhabit systems and spaces which are not built around my needs and experiences. However, as a female in TLAC I occupy a privileged space in both gender and race, meaning that when I look around I never feel personally excluded or afraid. I think the dichotomy that exists between my typical status as the oppressed when it comes to gender as opposed to the dominant status I hold in TLAC is what allowed me to see the dissonance between what is espoused and what is practiced in TLAC. My background alone does not give me insight into our policies which serve to discriminate or preference, as I have always been on the receiving end of the benefits of the systems in place. That stated, my knowledge of privilege and power, which I have accrued through intimate discussions with those in the

oppressed group on campus, provide me with an outlook I would otherwise not have. In short my experiences do not do much to inform this project, but my insider knowledge gleaned from deep discussions with my peers makes my stance on the issues at hand much more pessimistic when it comes to expecting equity from the university.

Currently, I, Landry, am a student at Texas A&M University (TAMU) in the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Culture (TLAC) in the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD). Every time I enter a classroom, I sit down, look around, and I notice that almost all of my peers look like me; a white, middle class, female in her early twenties. I have been a part of the TLAC department since I began school at Texas A&M in the fall of 2017. Even though I am your typical student, I am usually the youngest in my classes, activities, and social circles. I am ahead in school and scheduled to graduate early. With that being said, I don't necessarily face discrimination, except for in group projects where I am expected to take the lead because I have not reached the stage of "senioritis" that my classmates have. This provides me with a good work ethic, but also empathy for those who have to work harder than others to be able to get a task done. I work for an after school care program by the name of Kids Klub in College Station Independent School District (CSISD). As I look at my co-workers, I also see similarities between us. Eighty-eight percent of us are female, fifty-six percent are white, and eighty-eight percent are education majors at Texas A&M University. This is specifically at my campus. There are around eighteen Kids Klub campuses in CSISD and overall there are thirty male workers. Five of the thirty are in leadership positions and the rest hold a counselor position like myself. The need for diversity is present everywhere. I have a unique take on this project because I am able to see schools, after school care programs, and overall school districts with a lack of diversity in their staff members. Through the hiring process at Kids Klub, we always receive an email asking us to "get more males involved." Children respond better to those who

are like them, and the majority of students are not white, middle class females, but that is the majority of the pre-service teachers in the TLAC department. Seeing a need for diversity not only in our classrooms, but in our schools is where my heart for this project comes into play. Providing the best opportunities for children and educators everywhere is my main goal of being on this team.

As a current student in the Department of Chemistry at Texas A&M University (TAMU) who is minoring in applied STEM and as someone in aggieTEACH, my experience in seeing culture is “interesting” to say the least. As an Asian female in my early twenties, majoring in a STEM field, I, Kim, have some experience in working in an environment surrounded by predominantly white males. I wouldn’t necessarily say that I have experienced discrimination, but it was a big change for me to come to TAMU as I came from a 5A school district (Port Arthur Independent School District) where it had predominantly African American and Hispanic students, and quite literally only one or two White students in each grade level. Coming to TAMU, the experience is a bit more flipped for me (as TAMU is a predominantly White school) and now I get to see and understand what it is like to be the minority in a sea of majorities. With that said, as an outsider to the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) and the Department of Teaching Language and Culture (TLAC), my perspective is based on what I know in the STEM field and as such, my approach is more STEM (scientific) based rather than education (humanity) based. The connection I have to CEHD and TLAC is, as stated earlier, because of my minor in applied STEM and aggieTEACH. Essentially, because of aggieTEACH, I am able to take education courses alongside my chemistry courses so that I may eventually take the teaching certification test, pass it, and thus be able to graduate with my degree in chemistry and a certification in teaching. Because of this, I know that because I am a STEM major with a minor in applied STEM and not primarily an education major, the perspective I bring to this research is

unique. With it, I am able to glean knowledge from both fields and the use of knowledge from both fields is on my mind when I am conducting research. Along with this, and also as a minority, I know that I may have personal biases coming into this as this research topic carries a personal significance to me, and as such I will take that into account when I am looking over data and maintain an open mind, a degree of skepticism, and bit of optimism.

I, Kelsey, am an important agent taking part in the research, and it would be naïve of me to think that I have no biases or previous assumptions. Being aware of where I stand puts me in perspective of where I am at in relationship with the data. I am white, married to a Hispanic man, the mom of two children, and a woman with a hidden disability. Growing up I had the opportunity to travel while my dad was in the military. This gave me experiences to learn about others and put me in a position to always observe in my new surroundings. I take these experiences with me because I was constantly the new student in my younger years, so now I am constantly aware of others and how they feel in their social situations; I want them to feel welcome and engaged in all areas. Growing up I did not realize that being white was socially constructed for me to get ahead. It was not until I was in my twenties that I gained an awareness for the white privilege that I was experiencing. Even though I felt white guilt, being cognizant of the oppression and real racism in the world was a critical factor in driving my research. The TLAC department is primarily white female 18-22, I fit into this criterion except for the age, I am older than most students. Even though I might have white privilege, I can say, that when it comes to being at a school where I am older than most of my classmates, I have experienced ageism. Even though I have not personally experienced, racism, I have experienced discrimination, against me because I am a female. I do not claim it to be the same amount of suffering, but the goal of this research is to open the door to understanding the social injustices faced by special populations. Taking a step towards multicultural education is taking a step

towards educating those like me who may have not realized their white privilege; Being aware is the first step. Even though my past experiences have helped to influence who I am today, I will remain reflective throughout the research process considering my personal biases.

As a current student in the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Culture at Texas A&M University (TAMU), I, Logan, have the opportunity to see the culture around me on the campus everyday. I am a white female student, 21 years old, and thus the “typical” college student. I have had personal experience with being in diverse primary schools. I was a student in Spring ISD all of my primary education and this will give me a unique perspective when it comes to this project, as I spent my primary education being a part of the minority. Spring ISD is a diverse, Title 1, district that has 40.1% African American, 2.1 % American Indian, 3.0% Asian, 44.1% Hispanic, 0.4% Pacific Islander, 8.9% White, and 1.4% mixed races attending schools in their district (The Texas Tribune). Also, I have personal experience with discrimination and know what it feels like to not be included based on my class in my primary education. In the department of TLAC, I have felt included and accepted and never felt that I didn’t belong or was different from anyone else. This was a hard transition because I was so used to being different from my classmates and teachers. Through this lens, I will be able to see the differences in the diversity at TAMU and use this knowledge to look at this project on a broader outlook without personal bias.

As we are aware that our background will affect how we view the data we will use this self-knowledge to remain critical of our interpretation of the data, minimizing any potentially harmful bias from our research. This critical consciousness should allow us to undertake a full examination of relevant content and not neglect information that may not align with these beliefs. Research is, in nature scientific but also human and thus acknowledging our humanity at

the outset should provide us the best opportunity to bring in concrete data and lived experience to create a holistic view on the matters discussed.

Ethics

All researchers on the team have completed CITI training, and this phase of the study received a “not human subjects” determination from TAMU IRB. In addition, we have chosen to use the Structured Ethical Reflection method for aligning the project with our values as researchers and educators (Brydon-Miller, Rector-Aranda, & Stevens, 2015). We questioned the project at each stage of the research to be sure our actions aligned with such values as commitment, adaptability, inclusiveness, and respect (see full SER in Appendix A).

Data sources

In this first cycle, we wanted to establish a baseline of existing information, therefore, we limited our data collection to items we could freely access via the university and department websites or other public locations. This included analyzing syllabi for required courses for those in teaching fields, i.e., those in the Teaching, Learning, and Culture (TLAC) degree tracks of EC-6 generalist, 4-8 math/science, 4-8 English language arts/social studies, and the aggieTEACH program for those in STEM fields wishing to teach high school. It is worth noting that students intending to teach high school are not required to take education courses or get an education degree to teach their subjects. AggieTEACH is a secondary certification program that allows those that are majoring in STEM fields to also receive a certification in teaching. Essentially, with aggieTEACH, students that are majoring in STEM fields are able to take education courses along with their major’s courses and by the end of this program, receive certification in teaching alongside their major’s degree.

We also looked at enrollment and demographics data for the teacher education program, policies for program application and acceptance, and existing systems to support retention in the program and after graduation. We gathered a variety of demographic data and web-based data detailing the espoused policies, practices, and beliefs of the university, college, and department in terms of diversity in education. The demographic data we drew from was taken from 2018, the most recently published data detailing the gender and racial/ethnic breakdown of students at TAMU, in CEHD, and most specifically in TLAC. Other sources of demographic data included breakdowns of change in demographics over approximately three years, all of which was consolidated and presented in the Annual Diversity Plan Accountability Report. Other web-based sources include the “website on diversity” at each university, college, and department level, where information such as policies on diversity, definitions of cultural terminology, and goals of multicultural education were found. Collectively these websites served to provide this project with an insight on what is being done and has been done in the past to create an environment which is welcoming to all students regardless of gender or race/ethnicity. This data helps provide a holistic look at the university and, in a way, gives the university a chance to speak for itself using its own written values and beliefs taken from university-created sources. In the support for people of color research, the focus was the support and types of programs to aid people of color, as well as issues that may be encountered while trying to aid. This is being looked at as to consider possible methods of supporting current students of color in the education field at TAMU.

Data Analysis

To get a more holistic view of the data, we looked at it both inductively and deductively. We began our analysis asking questions such as: what does our program look like, what are we

doing, where are we succeeding, and how is that success defined? We also considered such deductive questions as: how is the program meeting guidelines found in the literature that support pre-service teachers gaining cultural competence, recruiting more students of color into the program, and how does our program stack up compared to successful programs elsewhere? Finally, we sought evidence that might confirm and/or contradict the CRT tenets of whiteness as property, counterstorytelling, interest convergence, racial realism, and racism as normal.

Recognizing that our analysis scheme would naturally evolve, we began with simultaneous *provisional* coding based on our theoretical framework and *descriptive* coding meant “to retrieve and categorize similar data units so [we could] quickly find, pull out, and cluster segments relating to” our research question in the first-round of analysis (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2020, p. 63). Next, we sought to cluster these codes into themes/subthemes and then into broader categories, after which we began using *narrative description* and *analytic memoing* to make sense of these themes and categories (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2020). “An analytic memo is a brief or extended narrative that documents the researcher’s reflections and thinking processes about the data. These are not just descriptive summaries of data but attempts to synthesize them into higher level analytic meanings” (p. 88). Since we are working as a team, these memos were a productive way to compare and compile our varied interpretations of the data in order to reach our conclusions, discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Data Introduction

To finish our project we looked at syllabi, policies, and practices within Texas A&M University and specifically within TLAC. Because we came into this with insider knowledge from how courses were structured and set up from having taken some professors previously, we wanted to have a balanced approach to pulling syllabi. We drew multiple syllabi for the same course when possible and analyzed them using the CRT tenets. When analyzing them we first wanted to use a simple coding technique where we could search for the terms on the document. However, we soon realized that this would be a much more tedious process and we would need to actually read through each syllabus to look for themes that we could be missing. For instance, the word “Diversity,” could be searched, but then we would potentially miss other themes that fall under the tenets that cannot be pinned down by one term.

TLAC Diversity Statement

It should be noted that one thing that is being looked at in each syllabus is the inclusion of the TLAC (Department of Teaching, Learning, and Culture) diversity statement. Essentially, the TLAC statement states that the department does not tolerate discrimination, violence, or vandalism and is an open department for all people. It is written so that those who read it understand that the department is dedicated to its non-discrimination of race, color, religion, sexual orientation, national origin and etc.; it reminds those who read it of the non-discriminatory values of the department, university, staff, and students.

Syllabi

Looking at the syllabi for Social Studies Methods for Middle Grades, MEFB 450, there was a statement in the course expectation and competencies that stated students in the course must, “respect learning and cultural diversities”. The Teaching, Learning, and Culture (TLAC) statement was also within the syllabi. This course highlights the effect of respecting multicultural competencies but does not state if that will be discussed or talked about in the course. The terms that were searched were diversity, cultural, culture, diverse, multicultural, and perspective.

The SCEN 201 syllabus describes a focus on the classroom environment, standardized testing, and there is a brief mention of issues such as cultural diversity and racism. The syllabus describes the course as a screening to determine if the students taking the course have the right knowledge and aptitude to receive a secondary mathematics or science certification. The prerequisite to take this course is to major in a STEM field essentially or to receive approval from the instructor. There is no TLAC statement included as the SCEN 201 course is under the College of Science.

INST 363 is designed to help students learn and design instructional activities to help to support diverse learners with cultural backgrounds. The students are working in the field with diverse learners and learn how to meet the needs of diverse learners. This syllabus uses a states the TLAC diversity statement.

The TEFB 322 syllabus describes the course as an introduction to schools in the modern society, roles of the school and teaching as a profession, and the dimensions of teaching among other things. There is a no mention of diversity or addressing of race or diversity issues though it is implied in the learning outcome that students will examine issues in modern society. The course assignments consist of a paper on on different learning theories, trends in education, and a

reflective student diary based on the student's field experiences to name a few things. Because this is a course that is not predominantly about multicultural education, there is no extensive discussion of it in the syllabus. There is a TLAC statement included in the syllabus.

In the search of the syllabi from the course Problem Solving in Mathematics there was little evidence in multicultural competence. The only finding was the Teaching, Learning, and Culture (TLAC) statement. The syllabi was searched for the terms diversity, diverse, culture, multicultural, and perspective. Most of the courses under the department of Teaching Learning and Culture have the TLAC statement and do not have further evidence of multicultural competence being taught within the course.

RDNG 372 is described as providing strategies to pre-service teacher for grades 4-8 to enhance students literacy skills, and adapt instruction for readers with diverse literacy skills. The syllabus does not discuss multicultural education, but does describe adapting instruction for diverse learners. Students that are diverse learners can be learning disabled, gifted and talented, students in bilingual education, or even students in foster care. Because the term diverse learners is an umbrella term to include the intersection of many different types of learners, be it, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, age, and race. So, this course, looks into the more than one aspect of diversity. This course also includes the TLAC diversity statement

The TEFB 324 syllabus describes the course as a part of the professional development to become a teacher. Some of the learning outcomes include students being able to explain instructional strategies and being able to design a lesson plan that aligns with the state curriculum. There is no addressing diversity or multicultural education in the syllabus. This is a course that is about preparing pre-service teachers in making lesson plans and understanding different types of learning strategies, as such there is not a focus on multicultural education or diversity. There is a TLAC statement.

The SOCI 317 syllabus describes the course as an overview of theories, histories, debates and ethnic relations in sociology. Some of its goals include enhancing the understanding the race and ethnic theory and social institutions. The syllabus overall shows a deep understanding of the issues of race and diversity, the syllabus addresses these topics in the course goals and description. The assignments also seem to require the students to read about these different ideas and write about them. This is one of the two courses that can be taken fulfill the requirement on multicultural education as per the aggieTEACH education course overview. There is no TLAC statement included in the syllabus.

The RDNG 465 syllabus describes the course as a way for middle-grade and secondary educators to acquaint themselves with the writing and reading needs of students in their content area. The course objective does address the topic of special student populations, but other than that there is a focus on literacy, vocabulary, and simplifying reading skills. This course focuses on the simplification of vocabulary, text, and reading skills and as such there is not a predominant focus on the issues of multicultural education or race. There is a TLAC statement in the syllabus.

TEFB 410 (Social Studies and Humanities in Elementary Schools) taught by Karee Griffith does not any objectives or course work for diversity. The focus is mainly on curriculum in the social studies and how to integrate the content across subjects. There was no key words about diversity. TEFB 412 (Math methods in Elementary education) taught by Julie Ann Barrett does not any objectives or course work for diversity. The focus is mainly on curriculum in the math subject and how to teach students. TEFB 413 (Science methods in Elementary Grades) taught by Christine Shimek also does not any objectives or course work for diversity.

The INST 210 syllabus describes the course as the referral, assessment, and categorization of special populations. The learning outcomes include students being able to

identify individuals with different learning needs and those who from culturally and linguistically different backgrounds. The course focuses on the special population's needs and practices appropriate for those individuals, the rights of those individuals, and accommodations for those individuals. The course addresses the issue of culturally different backgrounds affecting linguistic skills, and from the syllabus, there is somewhat a focus on the issues of multicultural education/races, but overall, there is a focus on the special population. There is no TLAC statement in the syllabus.

TEFB 371 (Dynamics and management in Multicultural/Inclusionary learning environments) taught by Kristen Shumbera has one objective that has the word diverse in it. However, despite the name the students are learning more about dynamics and management in the classroom rather than how to incorporate multicultural and inclusion learning.

For the course by the name of Using Technology in Classrooms, EDCI 365 there was little evidence in multicultural competence. The syllabi was searched for the terms diversity, diverse, culture, multicultural, and perspective. In the search the only finding was the Teaching, Learning, and Culture (TLAC) statement. These are included in most of the syllabi in the department.

In my search of INST 222 syllabi I happened to find a statement that showed multicultural competence being present in the course. "Recognize and examine the influence of social and cultural factors on the teaching and learning process" and the TLAC Statement were both present. The terms that were searched were diversity, diverse, culture, multicultural, and perspective.

INST 222 This course is designed to examine the social constructs of America and develop a diversity consciousness while looking into the laws that pertain to equity in the education system and cultural influences that affect teaching.

For the course Rhetoric and Composition there was no evidence of multicultural competence. The terms that were searched were diverse, culture, multicultural, and perspective. For a class that is a part of the Education Curricula there was no signs of meeting the expectations that we as researchers had for perspective and diversification teaching in the course.

The course Field Component at Local Public Schools had the Teaching, Learning, and Culture (TLAC) statement present. This was the only finding of multicultural competence within the syllabi. This statement is present in the majority of the Teaching, Learning, and Culture department. For this course being in the field having little evidence is of concern. The terms searched were culture, cultural, diverse, diversity, multicultural, and perspective.

TEFB 271 (Introduction to Culture, Community, and Societies in Schools) when taught by James Laub has objectives the gear towards diversity and understand diversity. The course work assigned really didn't have much to do with diversity except the weekly readings and exams. However, this is dependent on the professor teaching the course because another professor has coursework that aligns with the objectives.

INST 362 is designed for pre-service teachers to learn about language acquisition and approaches to assessment for English Language Learners. Throughout the course students learn about differentiating classroom procedures and strategies to help English Language Learners. In the learning outcomes the student is expected to participate in diverse cultural experiences and also learn about the societal impact that these learners are facing. This syllabus also includes a TLAC Diversity statement.

Recruitment

According to the 2016 Assessment of the 2010 Diversity Plan, at a university level, “Texas A&M has increased the numbers of schools targeted for undergraduate recruiting in Houston and Dallas from 40 schools after the Hopwood decision to 100 schools” (Office of Diversity, 2017). A reference to the Hopwood decision which voted against affirmative action and declared students could not be admitted on race suggests that the school districts now targeted must be districts with more diverse populations of students. This change had resulted in an increase in the number of hispanic and black undergraduate students, but since the publishing of this report the numbers of black students have once again declined (Office of Admissions, 2018). These recruitment efforts were undertaken at a university level and thus could have minimal effect on TLAC in particular. To diversity the department and encourage more students of every background to apply the department has been somewhat proactive, providing programs for middle school and high school aged students interested in a career in education. Shockingly within CEHD there is a large project undertaken each summer called the “Youth Adventure Program” which has twenty-two individual programs on such subjects as nursing, engineering, and anime, but absolutely nothing on education or other careers related to teaching (Department of Educational Psychology, 2019). There is one recruitment effort aimed solely at future educators called ExpLORE which invites seniors to campus and “introduces “students to teacher education programs,” however it is narrow in its scope and admittedly preferences students who are in the “top 25 percent of their high school class,” possibly eliminating students of promise who excel outside of the classroom (Ricketts, 2018). The only other concerted effort at recruiting students for TLAC comes from a program called Aggie STEM summer camp which gives

students “real world experiences in STEM education” and is open to students in grades 6-11 (The College of Education and Human Development, 2019).

These programs were put in place to recruit students to TLAC, but not to specifically recruit any one ethnicity or gender. In addition to this, it is clear that there are not many avenues of recruitment for pre-service teachers, and in my own personal experience and that of my colleagues, none of us were ever recruited to be teachers but instead had a great teacher we were inspired by and thus related to and emulated. This piece of knowledge somewhat explains how the field of education has been and remains predominantly white; we do not recruit at all, let alone students of color.

Acceptance

In Fall of 2018, 56,235 students applied for admission at Texas A&M University in College Station and 33,527 students were admitted, amounting to a 59.65% acceptance rate (Accountability, 2018). When looking at acceptance and rejection on a self-reported ethnicity level, the data shows that university wide on average about 39.9% of students of any ethnic background are denied entrance to the university. Compared to this overall average, A&M rejects only 32.2% of white applicants while rejecting 44.1% of American Indian students, 26.9% of Asian students, 48.7% of Black students, and 39.7% of Hispanic students. Looking at each of the eight descriptive ethnic categories, the university rejects more students of color than students on average in three cases, Black, American Indian, and International.

Looking specifically at the department of Teaching, Learning, and Culture, 57.3% of students were admitted out of the 841 applicants. On average, about 48.1% of all applicants were denied entry to the university and department. Compared to this overall average, TLAC rejects only 39.2% of white applicants. Looking again at the breakdown of denied students by ethnicity

we found that 49.8% of American Indian students, 58.7% of Asian students, 46.2% of black students, and 48.5% of Hispanic students were not accepted. Looking at each of the seven descriptive ethnic categories, the university rejects more students of color than students on average in four cases, American Indian students, Asian students, Hispanic students, and Multiracial students (Accountability, 2018).

In both cases, the percent of white students denied admittance to A&M was lower than the overall average of students denied, being a 7.7% difference university wide and 8.9% difference within TLAC. This means that the university on average accepts more white students than statistics suggest would be the case. TLAC also seemed to have a bias towards the acceptance of white students, which was reflected in the negative bias they had towards accepting students of color, most notably Asian students who were denied entry to TLAC 10.6% more than statistics suggest they should be.

All of these statistics and percentages are just that, numbers taken by the university in order to be open and accountable to the public on their admissions practices. That stated, the data does bring up further questions on who is allowed or denied entrance to A&M and on what grounds. The one thing that can be said with certainty is that white students are statistically more likely to be admitted to Texas A&M University and TLAC. What cannot be determined is why this is this case, still this truth has important ramifications when looking to diversity as an asset and the incorporation of multicultural courses as the only way students are learning about human differences if they are not reflected in the students participating in these courses.

Support Systems and Retention

According to the Office for Diversity website there are at least forty-one different student organizations aimed at retention of diverse students in Texas A&M as a whole. In there abridged list of organizations they have ones representing the LGBTQ community, international students,

Latinx students, Indian students, African students, and women (2019). Missing from this list is anything for students with special needs, Native American students, students who have intersectional identities, and students who are also parents. Upon further search organizations do exist for most of these groups, but to find them one has to specifically know what to look for and where to look, and they are not obviously listed. One organization that does not seem to exist is one for mothers or fathers at the university, a population with almost no public statistics or visibility at Texas A&M. The existence of organizations whose goal is to support diverse students is encouraging, but whether or not these organizations actually help keep students at Texas A&M is unknown.

Again at a university level, there seems to have been a program utilized to help retain women of color in all disciplines by matching them with a faculty member who is of color. This program existed as late as 2016, but since that time there has been no record of the program and no further articles or information has been written about the program (Advance Center). No further details are available as the website that used to exist has been shut down. Another source of retention offered by A&M is the Multicultural Service Center which houses many of the diverse organizations present at the university. This place has been open since 1987, indicating that A&M has evolved throughout its tenure in an attempt to be more welcoming to students of diverse backgrounds (Office for Diversity, 2013). That stated, in a study done in 2016 assessing the diversity plan established by the university on 2010, one finding was that “campus climate continues to be challenging for many of our students, faculty, and staff” (Office for Diversity, 2017). This is furthered by the assertion that “the numbers of historically underrepresented students, faculty, and staff are small... [and] people from historically underrepresented groups may experience isolation, alienation, invisibility, tokenization, and marginalization” as a result

(2017). Representation is arguably one of the biggest contributing factors to creating and continuing a culture of acceptance in which all students feel valued and thus as long as A&M, and specifically TLAC, continue to be predominantly white and female students from diverse backgrounds will continue to feel underappreciated and thus retention rates will most likely be poor.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Collective Syllabi

Overall, for the education courses that are required by aggieTEACH and STEM majors on an education track, unless it is an education course that is part of the multicultural education requirement, the courses do not generally discuss the issue of multicultural education or racial issues. The courses do have brief mentions of these issues, but as it is a syllabus, it is not conclusive of what happens in the classroom. Predominantly, the required education courses focus on teaching skills and professional development. Some TEFB courses do have the word diversity on their syllabi however the coursework does not align with this objective. However, it can depend on the professor who is assigning the course work and how much he/she cares for teaching diversity and modeling it.

Recruitment, Acceptance, and Retention

In the sphere of recruitment, program acceptance, and retention, Texas A&M stands not as a shining example of equity and inclusion nor an abysmal program with little involvement in matters pertaining to diversity and equity in education. The data as a whole shows that Texas A&M is predominantly white, and TLAC is predominantly white and female. This is not entirely the fault of the university nor department, as applicants to both entities also tend to be white and female, however this does suggest that recruitment is not a stronghold in TLAC. While a few programs exist to recruit students of diverse backgrounds, many of these aim more towards STEM fields or are new enough that the effects of them may not yet be seen. Of the students who

do eventually join the department, their success becomes dependent upon their own drive and ability as support programs, though available, are not widely publicized. Student organizations do the bulk of the work when it comes to retention and there are organizations available for almost every student if he or she knows where to look.

As a Whole and Implications

This data search has led us to believe that A&M truly does live into its promise and espoused policy of wanting diversity and equity on campus, however it does not always succeed in these areas and could still use improvement if it is to truly become a campus and department representative of the students pre-service teachers will soon see in the field. We would venture as far to say that, until our population reflects theirs, we are missing an essential component of education, a compassion and humanity carried by people of varying backgrounds. We are teaching content and pedagogy arguably quite well in our courses, but we need to also teach compassion and understanding. The change starts with us and it is our job to make our department the best it can be, not for ourselves, but for our students. As a team we recommend that everyone take a step back and examine their practice, their beliefs, their courses, their classmates, and their students. Are we serving them in the best way possible and teaching them what they need to succeed? That answer is not an easy one to find, but we must first begin by asking the question.

In a practical sense, we are aware that change needs to be created on a national level and requires an ultimate shift in attitude and acceptance to be truly successful. However, we are also aware that we must begin small and have ideas which we think could help us become better educators in a multicultural sense. There's a disconnect between teachers and students because students do not see themselves in their school work. We know that, when students begin to see

themselves in their schoolwork then they feel a connection in their learning, and this is why multicultural education is beneficial. If we can begin multicultural education at an early age then students can start to relate to their school work from the start. As soon as students relate to their school work, then they can feel a connection with their teachers and when they relate to their teachers then there's a higher chance that they will become a teacher. This is why we feel that multicultural education at a young age is beneficial for students of all races ethnicities and genders. In further cycles we would like to continue our work by creating practical lessons and multicultural integrated curriculum that we could give to school districts in an effort to increase their multicultural competence. This is the next step we plan to take and is the action phase in our action research cycle.

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APPENDIX

STRUCTURED ETHICAL REFLECTION | BASED ON BRYDON-

MILLER, RECTOR-ARANDA, & STEVENS, 2015

Values	1. Constructing Research Question		2. Planning Project/ Identifying Sources of Data	
Fun Zeal Humor	How will we have fun with the process from the start?	<i>Wow really obvious here. We are fun people. We will incorporate enthusiasm!</i>	What are we going to do to have fun as we find sources? As we plan things?	<i>We will get together to find sources, making conversation as we work to find our sources. As we plan, we will also incorporate sarcasm as appropriate to keep it interesting.</i>
Commitment Conviction Resilience	How are we sticking to our priorities as discussed from beginning?	<i>We incorporated a phase 4 question in which we aim to take action.</i>	What are we doing so that we remain working on the project? Are we doing enough?	<i>Meeting frequently, having virtual meetings if necessary</i>
Adaptability Patience Open Mindedness	Are we willing to change our question if it makes more sense to do so?	<i>Yes, our question is multifaceted and can shift with new developments.</i>	What are our backups if our first source or idea doesn't work? Plans B and C? Are there backups?	<i>Wanted to do interviews, etc. but due to IRB timeline, limited to nonhuman, public data, made this work</i>
Reliability Accountability Unbiased	How are we creating a question which can be reasonably answered in our research?	<i>We split it up into specific, easier to digest and answer sections with specific research methodologies in mind.</i>	How are we making sure that each of us is doing our part in choosing a source? Is there an emotional stake in what we are looking at that may affect judgement?	<i>We are each checking each other's work as we go along, collaborating to find sources. Each of us is planning to work with data we are personally familiar with, but by checking each other we are staying accountable.</i>
Inclusiveness Democratic Practice Equity	How are we considering the power structures we live in when creating a question? Giving power?	<i>We are emphasizing the experiences of students who are the minority in our program.</i>	What are we looking at when we choose our sources?	<i>We are planning on using sources of data applicable to all majors inside of TLAC and also data from Aggie Teach.</i>
Respect Tolerance Trust	How do we create a question that does not undermine the community we study?	<i>By focusing on what's working, the positive.</i>	How are we entrusting each other to have accurate data sources and project planning?	<i>We will trust each others decision, and also respect each other when verifying and staying accountable.</i>
Responsibility Integrity Citizenship	How does our question reflect the problems as defined by the community?	<i>We are taking into account that our university may not be open-minded as we may like and asking questions to improve on that.</i>	While project planning, what are we doing to make sure that everyone is on the same page?	<i>To make sure we all are involved and know what is going on in the project we make sure to keep up constant conversation via GroupMe and Google Docs.</i>

Authenticity Transparency Approachability	How do we craft a question that is clearly conveys our intentions to all audiences?	<i>We are clearly articulating the topic and reasoning with word choice.</i>	Are the sources that we are looking at accessible to the people that may read our paper? Is it something that	<i>Yes, the sources we are looking at are all public knowledge. We are working hard to find data that is not confusing to us as researchers nor the general public.</i>
			others, even “nonprofessionals” can understand?	
Skepticism Objectivity Accuracy	Are we allowing personal bias to influence our question? Is that even a problem?	<i>Yes, because this is important to us. No because we are going to examine existing data we have no control over.</i>	Are our sources reliable? Are we factchecking? Are we fact-checking each other?	<i>When finding sources, we are using purely news based or university based publications. Before we begin our research, we are uploading our data to the drive for the team to review.</i>

<i>Values</i>	<i>3. Collecting Data</i>		<i>4. Analyzing Data</i>		<i>5. Going Public / Taking Action (Presentation and Publication)</i>	
Fun Zeal Humor	How can we make data searching sessions intriguing and engaging?	<i>When we collect our data, we will take breaks to enthusiastically share our findings with fellow team members.</i>	How can we analyze data and not sound pedantic?	Each of us integrated our own voices and ways of knowing into the process.	How will we make our presentation engaging and fun?	<i>We will have a well laid out presentation, enthusiastic presenters, and engaging interactions with the audience.</i>
Commitment Conviction Resilience	How will we remain diligent in our pursuit of the best and newest sources?	<i>When researching demographics and syllabi, we each have searched to make sure we are getting the most recently publicized information, going up to Fall 2018.</i>	In what ways have we been committed to the data that we have analyzed?	The data that we have been finding allows for us to have a look at diversification within the TLAC Department and we are committed to using it in order to assess steps to be taken in order to expand the knowledge of diversification for preservice teachers.	How are we all committed to the presentation and publication of our research?	<i>We will work around our scheduling conflicts to make sure we can all take part.</i>

<p>Adaptability Patience Open Mindedness</p>	<p>How will we remain open to new ideas when collecting data?</p>	<p><i>We have completed our ethics training and are coming in with our biases out in the open, letting data come to us in an inductive fashion.</i></p>	<p>How does the data adapt to the project that we are working on?</p>	<p>The data that we are finding is based upon the work that undergraduates do to enhance their knowledge of diversity and we are adapting it so that we can compare it alongside to how diversity in the department relates back.</p>	<p>Are we open to critique? How will we handle uncontrollable factors?</p>	<p><i>Yes, we are open to audience feedback. We will let go of frustration over factors out of our control</i></p>
<p>Reliability Accountability Unbiased</p>	<p>Are the sources we are collecting data from reliable sources or are they fake news?</p>	<p><i>Our sources are coming from TAMU websites or newspapers which are seemingly reliable,</i></p>	<p>How reliable is the analysis of the data we collected?</p>	<p>The analysis of the data that we collected is reliable due to the fact that multiple group members</p>	<p>Are we all being reliable and showing up to to the presentation? How do we make sure our</p>	<p>Yes, we each went to a different presentation and used our voices to</p>
		<p><i>Bryan/College Station area sources.</i></p>		<p>have reviewed the source and agreed upon the analysis that was made.</p>	<p>presentation is not biased?</p>	<p>balance out any bias.</p>
<p>Inclusiveness Democratic Practice Equity</p>	<p>How will we make sure to get a broad range of data representing different perspectives on the issues?</p>	<p><i>We are looking at different places for our data, specifically syllabi for those that are education majors, those that are in an education track, and those who are in programs that can lead to teaching.</i></p>	<p>How will we make sure to include everyone's perspective and opinion when negotiating the meaning of our data?</p>	<p>For our data analysis section we will each be the main contributor to our own unique section, giving us each a voice to share what we have uncovered.</p>	<p>How will our presentation be inclusive?</p>	<p>Our presentation will be inclusive with all group members in the fact that they will all have a part in the presentation. The audience will be included in assessing our analysis and providing feedback to us.</p>
<p>Respect Tolerance Trust</p>	<p>Are we validating each other's ideas and trusting each other to gather representative data?</p>	<p>Yes, we are checking each other for validity and trusting each others point of views.</p>	<p>Is our data coming from a reliable source and can thus be analyzed as factual information?</p>	<p>Yes, by this point in the process all of our data has been verified internally and decided upon as a team.</p>	<p>Are we willing to respect differing opinions on our research? How will we trust our data is accurate?</p>	<p>We are willing to accept different viewpoints on our research. Our data will be cross analyzed in order to ensure accuracy and derived from multiple sources.</p>

<p>Responsibility Integrity Citizenship</p>	<p>Are we being responsible with reliable sources that our data is coming from?</p>	<p>Yes, we are making sure that our data is reliable by either going through the TAMU library database and checking to see if our sources are peer-review, how long ago it was published, and there have been updates. Otherwise, we are also making sure to fact-check statistics and the like.</p>	<p>Are we drawing logical conclusions from the data and not mishandling it to support our own opinions?</p>	<p>Yes, we each wrote our own conclusion and collaborated to ensure bias was removed but our own knowledge was not.</p>	<p>Are we making sure we stay responsible and punctual with our time at the presentation?</p>	<p>Yes, we started and finished within time limits on both presentations completed thus far.</p>
<p>Authenticity Transparency Approachable</p>	<p>Can we remain transparent with our data and our sources, keeping it honest?</p>	<p><i>Yes, when we find sources we will not discriminate or neglect them based on our own personal biases.</i></p>	<p>Does our analysis of the data accurately reflect the data we have looked at?</p>	<p>Yes, we incorporated every syllabi each member looked at and all websites.</p>	<p>How will we show authenticity through our research and be approachable?</p>	<p>We answered questions and were open to feedback at SRW.</p>