

PREPARING EARLY CAREER CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SPECIAL EDUCATION  
TEACHERS THROUGH ALTERNATE ROUTE

By

TASIA ANNA CHATMAN

A dissertation submitted to the

Graduate School of Education

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Education

Graduate Program in Teacher Leadership

written under the direction of

---

Sandra M. Tomlinson-Clarke, Co-Chair

---

Judith R. Harrison, Co-Chair

---

Nora Hyland

New Brunswick, New Jersey

May 2019

PREPARING EC CR SPED TEACHERS ALTERNATE ROUTE

© [2019]

Tasia Anna Chatman

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

### **Abstract**

Currently, one third of teachers in the United States were trained by alternate route programs (Constantine et al., 2009). Although alternate routes programs fill a need within the education landscape, it is not enough to get more teachers into classrooms faster. Teachers must be prepared to address the needs of their students. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the skills teachers need to be effective. With the urgency to address the shortage of special education teachers and the alternate certification programs created to address this need, research is necessary to inform the traditional and alternate special education teacher preparation programs (Brownell, Ross, Colon & McCallum, 2005).

Participants described being academically prepared to address their students' needs. They described utilizing classroom competencies, such as relationship building skills and specific special education competencies, such as assessing students reading abilities. Participants also described including students' cultures in their lessons to bridge gaps between students' understanding and the content. In contrast to how some culturally responsive teaching practices were evident in participants' instruction, participants were unable to identify specific details they learned to help them address the social emotional needs of their students. One participant explicitly stated she was not prepared to address the needs of her students at her school. This could be attributed to her school setting, because she taught in an alternative school. While this participant explicitly stated she was not prepared to address the needs of her students, responses from all participants suggested a foundational knowledge of how to address the social and emotional needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students may indicate a gap in the curriculum at Relay Graduate School of Education and other teacher preparation programs. Special education teachers may benefit from instruction on how to address the social emotional

## PREPARING EC CR SPED TEACHERS ALTERNATE ROUTE

needs of their students. Social emotional needs may affect a student academically (Durlak et al., 2011). Without knowledge on the impact of a students' social emotional needs, a teacher may not effectively, address the academic needs of his/her students and thus may not meet the needs of the whole learner.

## PREPARING EC CR SPED TEACHERS ALTERNATE ROUTE

### Acknowledgments

I want to first acknowledge and thank God. Without Him, none of this was possible.

When I first began this doctoral program, someone shared that the decision to embark on a doctoral journey was not an independent decision. It was a decision that included family. Four years after beginning this program, I now have a full understanding of what this meant. This process would not have been successful without my patient husband. You believed in me even when I could not see it for myself. Thank you to my family. I have missed so many moments over the last few years but you understood and were encouraging.

I have had the pleasure of working with so many dynamic teachers and leaders since I began teaching. Thank you Marc for encouraging me to be the best special education teacher possible. Thank you for your advice and tough love. Thank you to Dr. Field and Dr. Harper. I am so lucky to have the opportunity to work alongside you both doing the work we love, teaching teachers. Representation is so important. You two consistently remind me of what is possible. You ladies are the best examples of what mentors should embody. Most importantly, you are my friends.

I want to thank my graduate students who continue to remind me what great teaching looks like and why serving students with disabilities is hard but meaningful work. I also want to thank my dissertation committee Dr. Tomlinson-Clarke, Dr. Harrison and Dr. Hyland for your time, patience and feedback.

## PREPARING EC CR SPED TEACHERS ALTERNATE ROUTE

### Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to...

...my husband Courtney, your love, patience and joy brought me through. I am grateful for the support you continue to provide. Thank you for being my biggest fan. Forever will never be enough time.

...Gene and Erin, your constant reminders of what black excellence looks like is inspiring. I admire you both so much.

...my parents who continue to remind me, “all night until it’s alright and all day until it’s okay”. I have so many long nights and long days to get here. Without your prayer, I would not be here.

Courtney, Gene, Erin, Mom and Dad, this dissertation is less about what I have accomplished and more reflective of the sacrifices you have made so that I could have this opportunity.

# PREPARING EC CR SPED TEACHERS ALTERNATE ROUTE

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	vi
DEDICATION.....	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii
LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
CHAPTER I: PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	1
Urban Settings.....	1
Alternate Route Teacher Preparation Programs.....	4
Special Education.....	6
Context for this Study.....	7
Purpose Statement and Research Questions.....	9
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	11
Closing the Cultural Gap Through Urban Multicultural Teacher Preparation.....	12
Traditional General Education Multicultural Teacher Preparation.....	12
Traditional Special Education Multicultural Teacher Preparation.....	16
Traditional Teacher Education Programmatic Strengths, Challenges and Next Steps.....	18
Structure of Alternate Route General Education Programs.....	20
Structure of Alternate Route Special Education Programs.....	21
Alternate Route Programmatic Strengths, Challenges and Next Steps.....	24
Adding Culturally Responsive Instruction.....	25
Needs for Current Study.....	28
Theoretical Framework.....	28
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY.....	29
Relay Context.....	30
Preliminary Survey Participants.....	31
Interview Participants.....	32
Procedures.....	33
Data Collection.....	34
Data Analysis.....	39
Epoche.....	40
CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS.....	43
Meaning Unit 1: Influences of School Context.....	43
Meaning Unit 2: Competencies.....	44
Meaning Unit 3: Connections and Disconnections.....	51
CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, IMPLICATION AND OUTCOMES.....	58
Discussion.....	59
Additional Research.....	64
Limitations.....	65

## PREPARING EC CR SPED TEACHERS ALTERNATE ROUTE

Implications for Multicultural Teacher Preparation.....	66
References.....	66
Appendix A: Preliminary Survey.....	79
Appendix B: Interview Protocol.....	80
Appendix C: Relay Program Guide.....	81



List of Tables

Table 1: Racial Demographics of the Fall 2017 Graduating Class.....8  
Table 2: Gender Demographics of the Fall 2017 Graduating Class.....8  
Table 3: Demographics of Teacher Participants.....34

## **Chapter 1**

### **Problem Statement**

All schools within the United States are presented with a unique set of circumstances that must be addressed effectively to educate the students. Urban schools are no different, yet present a number of unique challenges that must be addressed to educate diverse students. The term ‘urban’ varies widely depending on the research base. However, in the context of this study, I deferred to Milner (2012), who differentiated between three categories of urban education. The most applicable to my research and context is ‘Urban Intensive.’ Urban intensive schools are located in large cities, such as New York City (NYC) and Chicago. The intensity is reflected in the number of people and schools located in the city. Schools situated in urban intensive areas, from here forward referred to as urban, may not have sufficient resources necessary to meet the needs of the students.

### **Urban Settings**

Schools are reflections of the communities they serve, and the characteristics of those communities directly affect the student body (Milner, 2012). Urban areas encounter social and environmental issues such as poverty and lack of adequate housing and transportation. In addition to the burden of lack of resources, urban schools are also tasked with the responsibility of closing the achievement gap that exists between students attending urban and suburban schools. The 2015 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results indicated that 44 percent of suburban students scored at or above proficiency on the fourth grade math test while only 36 percent of urban students scored proficient on the same assessment. The fourth grade reading assessment reflected a similar disparity between suburban and urban schools. Forty-one percent of suburban fourth graders scored at or above proficient while 32 percent of urban students scored at or above proficient. The NAEP results indicated the chasm between

proficient fourth graders in math and reading increases when comparing students with disabilities to the national average. On the fourth grade math assessment, 16 percent of students with disabilities scored at or above proficient. On the fourth grade reading assessment, 12 percent of students with disabilities scored at or above proficient. This national data illustrated the tall task urban special education teachers have with helping their students achieve proficiency.

Further increasing the magnitude of the task, data suggests that teachers do not feel prepared to teach in urban schools that are characterized as urban schools. Siwatu (2011) examined preservice teachers' sense of preparedness and self-efficacy to teach in America's urban and suburban schools. The findings indicated that participants felt more prepared to teach in a suburban school than an urban school. The data also revealed that participants were more prepared to address the needs of White American students and less prepared to address the needs of students who were African American, Hispanic and English language learners (Siwatu, 2011). Therefore, many teachers who may feel unprepared may be hesitant to teach in urban schools. Ladson-Billings (2000) described the circumstance that teachers in urban communities' encounter when entering the classroom. She stated,

... Today teachers walk into urban classrooms with children who represent an incredible range of diversity. Not only are [there] students of different races and ethnicities, but there are students whose parents are incarcerated or drug-addicted, whose parents have never held a steady job, whose parents are themselves children (at least chronologically), and who are bounced from one foster home to the next. And there are children who have no homes or parents. (p. 14)

In making this statement, Ladson-Billings characterized the complexities of the urban multicultural high poverty classrooms. Given that the issues described by Ladson-Billings exist

in the community, it follows the same issues will also exist in the classroom as they are interconnected (Liston & Zeichner, 2013).

As is evident from the national data on student achievement, this description of schools in urban communities offers a glimpse of what urban special education teachers encounter once entering the field. Teaching in urban settings is difficult for even the most veteran of teachers and it is a tougher undertaking for urban special education teachers with limited experience. These unique circumstances call for specialized training of teachers entering urban special education classrooms.

However, currently there is limited training to prepare special education teachers for urban settings. Traditional teacher preparation programs (TPPs) programs situated on university campuses that offer course work leading to state certification provide preservice teachers with general knowledge across a variety of settings with the assumption that all educational contexts are covered during the program (Haberman, 1996). Although these experiences are appropriate and sufficient for some teaching paths, I argue that general knowledge across a variety of settings is insufficient for special education teachers in urban areas as Ladson-Billings' (2000) characterization of urban classrooms suggested.

Therefore, the theoretical knowledge necessary for teachers to develop as practitioners is equally as important as the practical proficiencies needed in the classroom. Dingle, Falvey, Givner, and Haager (2004) compiled lists of competencies specific to general educators, special educators and shared competencies between the two groups. Those competencies specific to general educators included, but are not limited to knowledge of general educators' assessment procedures, implementation of lesson plans that are appropriate for diverse learners and facilitation of the physical classroom environment that allows for flexible scheduling. The

competencies specific to special educators included, but are not limited to development and implementation of Individual Education Programs (IEPs), behavior modification practices and progress monitoring tools. Special educators are expected to have familiarity with the 13 disabilities covered under IDEA and special education law. Shared competencies of general educators and special educators included, but are not limited to interpersonal skills, sound judgment and ability to differentiate curriculum and instruction to meet specific student needs.

Considering what urban teachers encounter in the field and the task of closing the achievement gap with insufficient trainings, it is no surprise that teacher attrition remains a concern. Twelve percent of teachers from high poverty areas left the field compared to six percent of low poverty schools, seven percent of rural schools and seven percent of suburban schools (Ingersoll, 2003). In addition to a higher turnover rate, teachers working in urban multicultural high poverty schools were more likely to leave the field when compared to teachers working in suburban schools (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Ingersoll, 2003). The problem is evident in particular for those in special education who experienced a shortage of teachers for the last two decades (Boe & Cook, 2006; McLeskey, Tyler & Saunders Flippin, 2004; Tourkin et al., 2008).

### **Alternate Route Teacher Education Programs**

In response to this shortage of teachers, states have provided alternate routes to teaching other than traditional TPPs. Haberman (2006) defined Alternative Certification Programs as, program(s) in which it is possible for a college graduate with competence in a cognate field of academic study and without previous courses in education to be employed in a school district as a paid, fully responsible teacher of record. (p. 11)

Although Alternative Route (AR) programs are not new (Zeichner & Schulte, 2001), the demand for AR programs has increased significantly over the last twenty years (Connelly, Rosenberg & Larson, 2014; Constantine et al., 2009). The growth of AR programs can be attributed to a shortage of teachers in the field, especially teachers entering hard-to staff schools (Connelly et al., 2014). Hard-to-staff schools are defined as:

...inner-city schools with high percentages of students living in poverty. There are also a significant number of hard-to-staff rural schools, because they are located in economically depressed or isolated districts that offer very low salaries or lack other amenities that more cosmopolitan or prosperous regions have to attract teachers. (Allen, 2000, p. 2)

Alternative route programs have prepared teachers to teach in urban areas in need of certified teachers (Zeichner & Schulte, 2001). These teachers include first career teachers. Alternative route programs were also created to prepare career changers, those that left a previous career to become a teacher, retired military workers and paraprofessionals for specific instructional areas experiencing a shortage such as math, science and special education (Dill & Stafford, 1996).

Further, an analysis of the 2008 School and Staffing Survey revealed that AR programs are responsible for supplying 27 percent of all African American teachers and 25 percent of Hispanic teachers (Boser, 2011). Currently, AR programs supply one third of teachers in the United States schools. This means that one third of teachers entering the classroom may have limited knowledge of instructional best practices, child development or content pedagogical knowledge because they begin teaching with limited formal instruction (Constantine et al., 2009). This speaks to the importance of identifying the key components of effective AR programs as the number of AR programs continues to grow.

Although AR programs fill a need, within the education landscape by supplying teachers quickly with minimal time spent in coursework, it is not enough to get teachers into classrooms faster. The teachers must be prepared to address the needs of the students once in the classroom. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the skills teachers need to be effective. The knowledge that teachers need to be successful in the classroom is broad. Bransford, Darling-Hammond and LePage (2007) proposed the *Framework for Understanding Teaching and Learning* for any teacher to ground their development, suggesting that teachers must foster three key characteristics, “knowledge of learners and their development in social contexts, knowledge of subject matter and curriculum goal, and knowledge of teaching” (p. 11).

### **Special Education**

Special education teacher preparation has evolved over decades. At one time, special education teachers were prepared in residential settings, which perpetuated the “medical model of disability” (Harry & Lipsky, 2014). Special education teacher preparation then took place in teachers’ colleges. These special education teachers were trained to meet the needs of students in specific disability categories, typically in segregated classrooms.

A large shift in the special education delivery model occurred in the 1990s. Where once special education instruction in separate, isolated settings, was replaced with the idea of inclusive services for students with disabilities. The amendment to the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997* ensured students with disabilities received access to the general education curriculum and general education classroom to the greatest extent appropriate. While education policy evolved so did the demands and expectations for special education teachers. Special education and general education teachers began to work collaboratively to meet the needs of all students in the classroom. The knowledge special education teachers needed to be successful has

shifted from developing teacher expertise in one disability category to acquiring broader knowledge across types of disabilities and cultivating content knowledge to address the shift toward inclusive education (Brownell, Sindelar, Kiely & Danielson, 2010). As the role of special education teachers has changed, special education TPPs have also had to stay abreast of the changes. However, there is limited research on special education teacher preparation. With the urgency to address the shortage of special education teachers, the alternative certification programs created to address this need, and the importance of special education teachers in urban settings, research is necessary to inform the traditional and alternative special education TPPs in urban settings (Brownell, Ross, Colon & McCallum, 2005).

### **Context for the Study**

Currently this researcher works as an Assistant Professor of Practice at Relay Graduate School of Education (RGSE). Relay is an alternative certification (also referred to as AR) PK-12 TPP with 15 campuses across the country. I am a faculty member on NYC campus. The teachers enrolled at Relay come from many lifestyles, including recent graduates from undergraduate institutions as well as career changers. Relay also partners with organizations such as Teach for America and New York City Teaching Fellows. A majority of Relay graduate students enter the program as early career teachers (ECTs) with less than four years of experience. As an alternate route teacher preparation program (ARTPP), our graduate students must solidify a teaching position within a NYC Department of Education school or a charter school located within NYC and remain teaching in a school while enrolled at Relay.

Graduate students complete a two-year hybrid (face-to face and online) program while employed full time in a NYC school. Teachers serving as general education teachers complete two years of MAT (Masters in the Art of Teaching) course work. Teachers serving as special



education teachers complete one year of the MAT curriculum, and one year of the special education curriculum within the Teachers of Exceptional Learners (TEL) program. Teachers complete their coursework in late spring of their second year in the program. They graduate with their MAT during the fall. In the most recent graduation, fall 2017, 717 teachers graduated. The Fall 2017 graduating class was composed of 32 percent White teachers, 28 percent Black/ African American teachers and 16 percent of Hispanic/ Latino teachers. Female teachers represented 75 percent of the graduating class. Additional race and gender demographics for the graduating class of fall 2017 can be found in Table 1 and 2, respectively.

Table 1

*Racial Demographics for Fall 2017 Graduating Class*

<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	0.14%
Asian	23	3.21%
Black or African American	201	28.03%
Hispanic or Latino	117	16.32%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	0.14%
None / Not Reported	126	17.57%
Two or More Races	16	2.23%
White	232	32.36%
<b>Total</b>	<b>717</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2

*Gender Demographics for Fall 2017 Graduating Class*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Female	543	75.73%
Male	158	22.04%
None / Not Reported	16	2.23%
<b>Total</b>	<b>717</b>	<b>100%</b>

As an AR program with teachers entering the program with varied levels of teaching knowledge and instructional abilities, we want to be strategic in how we develop our teachers for

NYC schools to meet the needs of urban students with disabilities that are culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD). However, as a relatively new program we do not know if special education teachers are applying what they learned about culturally responsive teaching practices in their classrooms.

### **Purpose Statement and Research Questions**

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of early career special education teachers in an urban school district and their self-perceptions of their preparedness to address the academic and social emotional needs of students with disabilities that are CLD. I was also interested in exploring whether teachers used Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) as an approach to teaching their students. Gay (2010b) defined culturally responsive teaching as, “using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them” (p. 31). When students are able to identify themselves in their teachers’ instruction, they become more aware of themselves, their culture and their inevitable impact in their communities. Accordingly, it is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that their instruction is reflective of their students. My research questions are as follows:

- How do special education early career teachers’ experiences in the Teachers of Exceptional Learners Program at Relay influence their practice with culturally and linguistically diverse students with disabilities in NYC urban school settings?
- Do special education teachers trained through alternate route feel prepared to address the academic and social emotional needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students with disabilities?

- What aspects of special education teachers' education have contributed to their preparedness?

What aspects of the curriculum of the Teachers of Exceptional Learners program at Relay were most useful in your practice with culturally and linguistically diverse students with disabilities in NYC urban school settings?

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

A majority of the teaching force is White (Ingersoll, Merrill & Stuckey, 2014); although Black students are nearly one and half more times likely to be referred for special education services (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). These demographics point to the potential for cultural gaps between teachers in the field and the students with disabilities who, are CLD, and reside in urban settings. It is essential that TPPs address the cultural gap, because researchers suggest that students learn best from teachers with whom they have strong relationships (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). A cultural gap between teachers and students is not the cause of the achievement gaps; however, the cultural gap can affect student learning (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). Therefore, exploring how to address the cultural gap is necessary. Researchers have suggested several approaches to closing the cultural gap between the teacher and the student. These approaches include: (1) recruiting more teachers who come from a similar background as their urban, CLD students; (2) cultivating the urban, diverse experiences of White and other teachers who enter without these experiences (Sleeter, 2001); (3) utilizing a culturally relevant pedagogy that encompasses instruction, curriculum and academic achievement mindsets that consider the experiences of the students (Ladson-Billings, 2008); and (4) instruction on race and class bias (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). In this study, I chose to explore how to close the culture gap by cultivating the diverse experiences of culturally different teachers with a focus on coursework and field experiences. In the following sections, I review the literature on the coursework, field experiences, and strengths and challenges of traditional special education programs and the combined experiences within alternate general and special education program

### **Closing the Cultural Gap Through Urban Multicultural Teacher Preparation**

There are two paths, within traditional and alternative teacher education programs, to provide White and teachers of color with urban, multicultural experiences and competencies necessary to close the cultural gap. These include community-based experiences and learning instructional practices from the perspective of CRT, such as multicultural coursework and multicultural coursework paired with field experiences and program restructuring (Sleeter, 2001). Using an analytical lens, I examined the literature on how urban, traditional general education multicultural TPPs and urban, traditional multicultural special education TPPs implement the first two types of practices, multicultural course work (e.g. CRT) and multicultural coursework paired with field experiences and the structure of ARTPPs. Through this examination, a foundation of research-based practices for an urban multicultural special education TPP is presented.

### **Traditional General Education Multicultural Teacher Preparation**

Researchers have found that preservice teacher' dispositions regarding diversity can result in bias toward their students (Villegas, 2007). Therefore, traditional general education teacher programs have implemented specific strategies within course work and field experiences to address this issue. Some general education TPPs serving urban multicultural school districts consider coursework one route to address teachers' predispositions (Gay, 2010a; Renzulli, Parrott, & Beattie, 2011; Sleeter, 2001). Research on White preservice teachers' dispositions identified specific perspectives on diversity that result in bias. These perspectives included colorblindness (Ullucci & Battey, 2011). Colorblindness is the ability to refute that "race, especially skin color has consequences for a person's status and well-being. That blindness is skin color and race remains a "privilege" available exclusively to White people" (Rosenberg,

2004, p. 257), lower expectations for students of color (Schultz, Neyhart & Reck, 1996), and limited understanding on institutionalized racism and social justice (Su, 1996).

Although addressing teachers' opinions regarding students from differing cultures and races can lead to better understanding, researchers have noted that teachers' misconceptions can broaden rather than diminish (Almarza, 2005; Sleeter, 2008). These misconceptions can come from lack of experience or knowledge of racism, lower expectations for urban, multicultural students with disabilities, little experience with urban multicultural communities and lack of familiarity with the idea that they also have a culture (Sleeter, 2008). Therefore, coursework that simply includes lecture may not be enough.

An added activity to lecture could include preservice teachers writing about their experiences and considering the written experiences of others. As a part of the scope and sequence for the TPP at University of Michigan (Mueller & O'Connor, 2007), students were asked to complete a series of narratives on their personal educational experiences. The final assessment in the class required students to compare their series of educational narratives to that of another person of a different race and social class. After reading the narratives of someone from a different race and class, students had the opportunity to go back and edit their series of narratives. Researchers found that students' final narratives discounted societal privileges as an explanation for academic growth and success. When explaining the differences between their narrative and the narrative of someone from a different race and class, students explained that the lack of academic growth of the person of another race and class was due to differences in culture (Mueller & O'Connor, 2007). Similar to the previous study, teacher educators encouraged preservice teachers to write cultural autobiographies (Haddix, 2008), and family histories

(Leonard & Leonard, 2006). This activity, in addition to the other reflection activities was developed to help students understand others.

A goal of classroom activities could be to help White teachers learn about white privilege. Students have learned from playing simulation games that exposed them to the advantages of privilege and the effects of oppression (Souto-Manning, 2011). Research (Larkin & Sleeter, 1995; Martin 1995) indicated that writing reflections as a way to understand and document the evolution of dispositions benefits preservice teachers. Other instructional approaches included having students participate in debates (Frykholm, 1997), experiencing a demonstration of disparities across racial classes (Frykholm, 1997) and instruction on white privilege (Brown, 2014, Lawrence & Bunche, 1996; Scheurich, 1997; Sleeter, 2008). While using their own students as the sample, researchers demonstrated that these types of interventions in coursework positively influenced White students' understanding of bias and inequality. Although students at the end of these courses reflected on changes in their perspectives of people from different races and classes, the studies provide no long-term analysis on the impact of these pedagogies on actual classroom instruction.

There is a large research base, which establishes that educating White teachers about white privilege is an effective approach to preparing them to work successfully with urban multicultural students (Brown, 2014; Lawrence & Bunche, 1996; Scheurich, 1997; Sleeter, 2008). McIntosh (1990) defines white privilege in America as,

any phenomena, whether individual (e.g. curricular and pedagogical practices geared toward White, middle-class students), political (e.g. biased educational policies), economic (school funding formulas that contribute to inequity), or social (social constructions of race and disability), that serve to privilege White supremacy. (p. 31)

However, Laughter (2011) considered conclusions about the success of this approach to be based on an overgeneralization regarding White teachers. In defining the term White, Laughter used narratives from White preservice teachers to illustrate the differences between the participants in an attempt to discredit researchers (Brown, 2014; Lawrence & Bunche, 1996; Sleeter, 2008) on the value of teaching White preservice teachers about white privilege by arguing that not all White preservice teachers are similar. It is true that there will be significant variation within any demographic group and overgeneralizations can lead to false assumptions. Yet, this fact does not necessarily mean that some White preservice teachers are not entering the field with destructive biases and misleading information about their students; therefore, these misconceptions should be addressed. Although the course work discussed does provide preservice teachers and ECTs foundation for learning how best to meet the needs of urban and culturally and linguistically diverse students, it is not sufficient preparation.

Alternative findings suggest that field experience paired with course work that is focused on increasing skills and knowledge for working effectively with urban, multicultural students, has a positive impact on teachers' perceived competency to address the needs of CLD students. In these programs, students are simultaneously enrolled in field experiences, such as supporting in classrooms during a semester, and course work. Self-efficacy and student expectations both increased for preservice teachers enrolled in an elementary methods course that utilized CRT pedagogy combined with field experiences with CLD students (Frye, Button, Kelly, & Button, 2010). In addition to these positive outcomes, preservice teachers were also more confident in their ability to develop and sustain relationships with students. The combination of field experiences and course work focused on diversity can have a positive impact even when course work is conducted in a fully online context. Schrum, Burbank, and Capps (2007) reported that



students taking a diversity course online paired with a field experience recognized the importance of CRT practices more so after completion of the course than prior to taking the course.

In a case study (Almarza, 2005), preservice teachers shadowed CLD elementary and middle school students and journaled about their experiences. The initial journal entries, which reflected preservice teacher's feelings of preparedness, indicated that many preservice teachers did not feel they needed an additional multicultural course as they had taken two other courses on multicultural education prior the class. In addition to journaling, preservice teachers shadowed the students at school, across instructional and non-instructional settings. They met with the students' families to discuss the students' progress and interviewed the students' teachers. Throughout these experiences, preservice teachers were encouraged to identify any educational issues they noticed.

The preservice teachers completed follow up journals a few weeks after beginning the process. The level of readiness that the preservice teachers expressed from the first journal entry were different from the second journal entry as the preservice teachers' sentiments turned to frustration and despair. Preservice teachers quickly recognized that they were not prepared to address the needs of CLD students, despite the two multicultural courses they had already taken. The findings also concluded that at the end of the course preservice teachers developed meaningful relationships with their students, and through learning about different cultures, cultural misconceptions were reduced (Almarza, 2005).

### **Traditional Special Education Multicultural Teacher Preparation**

In contrast to general education, the literature focused on special education programs is limited; however, similar to general education, research has been done on the outcomes of course

work and course work combined with field experiences. One current approach to course work designed to prepare special education teachers to work effectively with diverse students is to pair content related course work with diversity focused course work. This can take a variety of forms, for example, a science-based lab can focus on engaging minority students in lab work. The diversity focused course work typically includes developing knowledge and skills related to one ethnic group (McHatton et al., 2009). In addition to merging diversity related course work with content related course work, special education TPPs are also providing diversity related course work independent of content related course work. This may resemble a class specific to the needs of minority special education students. There is less research on this topic within the special education field than in the general education field; however, some research has been conducted (Correa, Alvarez McHatton, McCray, & Coss Baughn, 2014; Trent, Pernell, Mungai & Chimedza, 1998).

Two mixed methods studies, one older study evaluated the outcomes of an introductory multicultural SPED course on teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students (Trent, 1998) and the other the outcomes of a multicultural course in a preschool unified (students with disabilities and typically developing students) program (Correa et al., 2014). Both studies demonstrated increases in teachers' awareness of the importance of providing diverse students with diverse instructional practices to meet their needs. Both studies relied on the student production of pre and post course conceptual maps and reflective paragraphs.

Positive outcomes of this stand-alone diversity course approach were also exhibited in another study (Zetlin et al., 2011). In an Introduction to Special Education class, a 10-week online course on English Language Learners (ELLs), preservice teachers self-identified their limited amount of experience with ELLs. The preservice teachers also acknowledged they were

unaware that students that received special education services could also be ELLs. Each module took teachers through the process of addressing and supporting the needs of ELLs with disabilities as a case study. Using media resources such as video and assessments, and reflections embedded within the module course work, teachers were prepared to meet the needs of ELLs with disabilities. The positive outcomes included increased awareness of instructional practices for ELLs with disabilities. Within the general education field, numerous studies examine the impact of course and field work on preparing teachers to address the needs of urban, multicultural students. However, once again, there is a smaller research base within the field of special education (Correa et al., 2014). Teacher educators described effective field experiences as those that align pedagogical practices with field experiences (Bay & Lopez-Reyna, 1997; Benner & Judge, 2000). This means that special education teachers should have an opportunity to practice what they have learned in the classroom during field experiences. Some TPPs go beyond basic field experience by extending the amount of time students spend in the field (Bay & Lopez-Reyna, 1997; Keefe, Rossi, de Valenzuela & Howarth, 2000; Lovingfoss, Molloy, Harris, & Graham, 2001). These programs exposed students to the field earlier and require a longer practicum. The aim for exposing preservice teachers to the field earlier gets at additional experience in the field with CLD students with disabilities will give them the opportunity to develop relationships and learn about their students.

### **Traditional Teacher Education Programmatic Strengths, Challenges and Next Steps**

Many of the studies discussed illustrate what teachers learn and how their beliefs and dispositions change as a result of participating in a course on multicultural education or doing this type of coursework combined with field experiences. These studies reflected change during the semester; however, the studies failed to document the impact that lengthened field

experiences have on their teaching practices, efficacy or retention in the field. It is not known whether the methodologies used in studies can be duplicated to produce similar results. Although these studies represented growth in the perspectives of preservice teachers toward teaching urban CLD students, the studies also depict a deficiency within the process of preparing special education teachers for students with diverse backgrounds. The studies highlighted the addition of a specific course to the scope and sequence of TPPs, however, this practice assumes that one or two multicultural courses are sufficient in preparing special education teachers for the challenges of urban and culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Although the research suggested the positive impact of providing special education teachers field experiences with urban, CLD students, there is still a problem of long-term sustainability. Many special education programs in urban areas are staffed with teachers that do not possess the proper certification (Carlson, Lee, Schroll, Klein & Willings, 2002; Conderman, Johnston-Rodriguez, Hartman, & Walker, 2013). This poses a problem when special education TPPs are looking for high quality urban field experiences that would allow special education preservice teachers and ECTs the ability to work with CLD students with disabilities. There are a limited number of special education teachers in urban schools who can serve as cooperating teachers or mentors for preservice teachers (Correa et al., 2014). This makes implementing successful field experiences difficult. Since this is a convenience sample, it makes it difficult to gauge if the study is generalizable across settings. The general and special education studies provided limited information on the actual scope and sequence of the content taught within the programs. This information would be helpful to my problem of practice as the TEL program is relatively new and small. Knowing the scope and sequence of classes offered could inform our program.

Based on the research provided, clear next steps emerge. Special education TPPs should increase CRT practices in content course work. Developing or refining instructional practices will assist teachers to develop their CRT to progress past awareness towards social justice and evaluate the impact of CRT practices with special education ECTs (Correa et al., 2014).

### **Structure of Alternate Route General Education Programs**

As previously stated, AR, programs produce 33 percent of teachers in the United States (Constantine et al., 2009). The growth of AR programs over the last twenty years (Connelly et al., 2014) and the number of educators AR programs contribute to the teaching force indicate a need for research in the quality of AR programs. However, the research on the effectiveness of AR programs is limited (Connelly et al., 2014; Constantine et al., 2009).

In one study (Constantine et al., 2009), researchers sought to understand the impact of teachers from AR programs on student achievement and to identify the components of AR programs that are tied to teacher efficacy. Researchers compared Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade general education teachers that were trained through traditional programs to teachers trained in AR programs. Schools that were eligible to participate in the study had at least one teacher from an AR program and another teacher in the same grade from a traditional TPP. The results from the study indicated no correlation between student achievement and the type of preparation program the teacher attended. As the amount of coursework offered varies within AR programs, the conclusions drawn from this study also indicated no correlation between student achievement and the amount of coursework the taken by the teacher. In other words, students of teachers that participated in AR programs with a high number of hours of coursework did not demonstrate differences in achievement between students of teachers that participated in AR programs with a low number of hours of coursework. Alternate route programs with a high number of course

work hours' average about 432 hours while programs that were considered to have a low number of hours of coursework average about 179 hours (Constantine et al., 2009).

### **Structure of Alternate Route Special Education Programs**

Special education AR programs are now more commonplace than ever before. Most states now offer an AR for special education. On average special education AR, programs consist of course work for approximately 18 months and are typically coordinated through Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) that have relationships with local schools. This is in contrast to general education AR programs that last for a shorter amount of time (Connelly et al., 2014).

In one study (deBettencourt & Howard, 2004), on AR special education programs specifically designed to meet the needs of career changers interested in transitioning into the classroom as special education teachers, researchers interviewed participants during the first year of the program to gather data on their teaching and mentoring experiences and professional development. Results indicated that participants attributed their success to the mentoring program and indicated additional mentoring would be beneficial. It is noted that the course work aligned with this program reflected the similar course work from the traditional TPP. However, course work within the AR program was taught at a faster pace. The authors fail to provide follow up data on the participants to gauge the long-term impact of the program.

McCray (2012) analyzed the experiences of three AR special education teachers from non-educational backgrounds using multiple case studies. Researchers sought to understand how participants' experiences influenced their success. Researchers followed up with the three teachers five years after completing an AR program through an IHE. Participants completed interviews and ratings scales to capture their experiences five years later. From the data analysis, it was determined that multiple factors influenced the teachers' decision to remain in the field.

Each participant noted the cohort model and support from a mentor. Two out of three of the participants noted that their school context contributed to their decisions to remain in the field. Participants reported being pleased with the program. Although the authors broadly described the teachers' experiences in between program completion and the beginning of the study, additional detailed information would be helpful to determine what additional aspects of the participants' experiences encouraged them to remain in the field.

In contrast to in-person AR programs discussed above, some AR programs (Rowlinson, 2006) offer graduate students the opportunity to complete the course work online. In a 21-credit AR program developed by New Mexico State University in conjunction with the College of Education, teachers with their bachelors but not their teaching certificate had an opportunity to complete the program to earn their certification. Participants also had the opportunity to earn their Masters in Special Education with additional course work. Full certification of each special education teacher across the state of New Mexico was a goal of the New Mexico Department of Education. As such, the online aspect of the program met the need of uncertified teachers across the entire state, especially those situated in rural areas of the state.

Faculty members at New Mexico State University developed the courses. During the first semester, Fall 2003, there were 86 program participants. The second semester saw the greatest increase in interest and enrollment with 184 program participants. Five semesters later, the program had its lowest enrollment since its inception. In 2005, during Summer Session II, there were only 77 program participants. While the number of program participants decreased over time, so did the total number of uncertified teachers within the state, which was a goal at the outset. During the first semester, Fall 2003, there were 539 uncertified special education teachers in the state of New Mexico; this represented 47 percent of the total teaching body. A year later,

fall 2004, 357 special education teachers began the school year uncertified. At the time, the 357 uncertified special education teachers represented 75 percent of all uncertified teachers in the state of New Mexico. A year later, during the Fall of 2004, 58 special education teachers were entering the school year not certified. At the time, this represented 14 percent of the total number of uncertified teachers in the state of New Mexico. The online program at New Mexico State University cannot attribute the decrease in the number of uncertified teachers entirely to its online program, although it was the only online certification program at the time, the University can attribute some of the decrease to the program it provided (Rowlinson, 2006).

In a similar response to the need for certified special education teachers, the state of California created two types of AR programs for uncertified teachers (Esposito & Lal, 2005). One type of AR program was an emergency certificate and the other was an intern certificate. At the time, nearly twenty percent of special education teachers in California were uncertified. A large number of these teachers were teaching in low-income urban areas (Center for Teaching and Learning, 2003). The Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade teachers with subject matter knowledge were eligible for the intern program at California State University Dominguez Hills (CSUDH). CSUDH collaborated with local Title 1 school districts. Title I school districts are characterized as schools with a large number of low-income families that receive financial assistance from the United States Department of Education (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2014). These schools reflected the multicultural, low income communities in which they served. The pool of participants included 58 uncertified teachers from the local schools. Participants completed course work in a cohort model. The coursework reflected that of the professional development school, including two courses on meeting the needs of diverse learners. Forty-two participants completed the certification program in three years. Researchers attributed the



incompletions to CSUDH's requirement for content proficiency. Program participants rated themselves highly effective and thought they were prepared to address the needs of urban and diverse students (Esposito & Lal, 2005).

### **Alternate Route Programmatic Strengths, Challenges and Next Steps**

The studies discussed above (deBettencourt & Howard, 2004; Esposito & Lal, 2005; McCray, 2012; Rowlinson, 2006) are representative of the characteristics of AR special education programs as each program requires that students already have a position as a special education teacher while enrolled in a certification program. For states such as New Mexico and California with a goal of increasing the number of certified special education teachers in the classroom, internships, as referred to in the literature as programs that require teachers to teach while learning to teach, met the need within the field for more certified special education teachers. The study conducted by deBettencourt and Howard (2004) reflected how career changers can also have an impact on the field of special education. It is worth noting that all programs were aligned with an Institution of Higher Education (deBettencourt & Howard, 2004; Esposito & Lal, 2005; McCray, 2012; Rowlinson, 2006).

There is still a significant amount of unknown information on AR programs. For instance, while the program evaluations were informative on the development of AR special education programs, only one study (Rowlinson, 2006), followed up with program participants later to examine if teachers were still in the classroom. The studies provide limited information regarding the cost of the AR programs. These studies provided little information about the content of the programs or the impact on student achievement. Both of these criticisms are consistent across the literature on TPPs. With a limited research base on special education AR programs, it is difficult to determine the efficacy of special education AR programs. The

variability in AR programs also makes it difficult to determine the efficacy of the programs. All the studies included an aspect of self-reporting which affects the efficacy of the study. To broaden the research base authors may consider different data collection methods. Additional research on the impact on teachers' perceptions of preparedness long term and the effectiveness of special education AR participants to meet the needs of CLD students will add to the current research base.

### **Adding Culturally Responsive Instruction**

While the research on CRT and special education teachers trained through traditional and AR is limited, the current landscape does offer insight. In one large-scale study (Chu & Garcia, 2014); special education teacher participants were solicited from three urban school districts located in the southwestern United States. Results suggested that special education teachers who thought their TPP effectively prepared them to work with CLD students, had higher Culturally Responsive Self-Efficacy scores than those participants who did not think their TPP prepared them to work with students who identify as CLD. Participants who thought their TPP addressed diversity had higher Culturally Responsive Teaching Outcome Expectancy scores (Chu & Garcia, 2014). The aforementioned study illustrated special educator teachers' perceptions of preparedness with CRT practices. Special education teacher participants who perceived their TPP to address the needs of CLD students with disabilities felt more prepared for this population of students, which suggests that TPP should continue to provide students instruction on CRT. The study suggested that learning about CRT had a positive impact on teachers' confidence to utilize the tenets; however, it also highlights a need because it provides little indication of how these teachers implemented CRT in their classrooms or which aspects of CRT were utilized. Additional studies concluded that the use of CRT tenets such as cultural knowledge (Correa et

al., 2004; Trent & Dixon, 2004), instructional strategies (Voltz et al., 2003), and cultural consciousness (Adams et al., 2005) increase teachers' awareness and use of CRT practices, each of which is discussed in the following sections.

One key component of CRT is cultural knowledge. In examining the cultural knowledge of teachers, Correa, Hudson and Hayes (2004) focused on the experiences of preservice teachers in an early childhood TPP using concept maps. The results of the study suggested that preservice teachers understanding of diversity deepened. The concept maps on multicultural education the preservice teachers developed throughout the course evolved to reflect their understanding of diversity and the relationship between disproportionality and disabilities.

Trent and Dixon (2004) also utilized concept maps to examine the development of preservice teachers understanding of CRT. The results of the study were similar to that of the Correa et al.'s (2004) study. The concept maps participants created at the end of the course reflected the new knowledge gained during the course, specific components of multicultural education and strength-based perspectives for students with disabilities.

Another component of CRT is culturally congruent instructional practices. Voltz, Brazil, and Scott (2003) explored the instructional practices of general and special education teachers. The results of the study suggested that teachers made the most changes to their lesson plans directly before and after a CRT professional development session. The modifications to the lesson plans included content that reflected their students' culture and various ways for students to access the content.

The third instructional component of CRT that Gay (2002) identified was critical cultural consciousness. To meet the needs of the students they serve effectively, preservice and in-service teachers must have an understanding of the communities in which their students live. Teachers

understanding of the communities and beliefs about the community, including the students that reside in the community, are reflected in the instruction and interactions between the student and teacher. Adams, Bondy, and Kuhel (2005) examined the first field experience for preservice teachers enrolled in a dual elementary and special education 5-year TPP. Participants' perspectives on students and families who identified as CLD evolved during the study. Participants demonstrated an elevated awareness of the experiences of those different from themselves and how societal issues impacts students' schooling (Adams, Bondy, & Kuhel, 2005).

However, application of CRT practices within special education is limited. Gay (2002) contends this may be a result of teacher dispositions or failing to acknowledge the intersectionality of disability with culture. To promote the application of CRT practices within classrooms that serve exceptional learners, Gay (2002) proposed four improvements: critical cultural consciousness, culturally responsive classroom climates, learning communities, multicultural content, and culturally congruent instructional strategies (Gay, 2002 p. 618-619). Using these areas of CRT, Shealey, McHatton, and Wilson (2011) examined the literature field to understand how CRT practices are utilized with special education teachers.

While these studies add to the literature, there is limited evidence to suggest the impact on teaching practices or learning for students with disabilities. More research is needed to ascertain how CRT practices are used within special education classrooms and the impact on teaching practices. The need for additional research on the impact of learning CRT tenets on special educators teaching practices underscores the importance of this study.

### **Need for Current Study**

A culture gap exists between the teachers and students in urban settings. Consequently, the effect of the culture gap influences the relationships between teachers and students (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). To address the gap, researchers have suggested two solutions, to prepare more teachers of color and or provide culturally responsive teaching practices to the new and current teaching force, which is predominately White (Ingersoll, Merrill & Stuckey, 2014). Adding further complexity, special education teachers are expected to address student challenges. Teacher education programs need to address this gap through the curriculum offered and experiences provided. General education literature offers context on the curriculum and experiences provided to prepare general education teachers for urban settings. However, there is a lack of literature about preparing special education teachers for urban settings (Correa et al., 2014). Thus, the first step in addressing the gap is to examine the experiences of these teachers.

### **Theoretical Framework for the Current Study**

In order to understand the importance of CRT practices in the classroom, one must accept that instruction is influenced by the dominant White culture (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Critical Race Theory highlights the prominence of race and how race infiltrates all aspects of American culture. The theory traces back to the Civil Rights Movement and was used to illustrate the discrimination of the legal system. Within the last two twenty years, educational scholars have applied Critical Race Theory to understanding and framing the inequalities within the education system (Ladson-Billings, 1998). This inequitable education system is the same system in which the study participants received their education and where they learned to teach their students with disabilities who are CLD.

According to the US Census Bureau, non-Hispanic Whites are a majority of the population. At the same time, this demographic group has decreased and is predicted to continue to decline over the next few decades (U.S. Census, 2017) to make way for a more racially diverse America. As the racial demographics shift, it follows that the racial demographics in schools will also deviate. Although America continues to become more racially diverse, Critical Race Theory demonstrates Whiteness is still the dominant culture that influences policies and structures including how teachers are prepared and what is taught in classrooms (Brown, 2014). Education can be examined through a Critical Race Theory lens with three approaches,

...(1) *counter-storytelling*...calls attention to voices of marginalized people of color by listening to how their own experiences, and the knowledge that emerges from them, illuminate and disrupt dominant narratives about race, racism and racial progress in society and schools (Solórzano and Yosso 2001); (2) recognizing *Whiteness as a form of property* that offers White persons and their interests various rights and privileges that include the right to disposition, the right to use and to enjoy, and the right to exclude (Buras 2001; Harris 1993; Ladson-Billings & Tate 1995; Vaught & Castagno 2008) and (3)...interest convergence (Bell 1995; Donner 2005), or the strategy of addressing racial inequalities in the context of remedies that serve and maintain dominant White interests. (Brown, 2014, p. 329)

The quote suggests a means to address the impact of the dominant White culture within the classroom. As the diversity in classrooms increase, it is even more important for teachers to employ the approaches to share the narratives of the non-dominant cultures that reflect the changing student body in America. Therefore, TPPs are responsible for educating teachers on

how to embed the voices of their marginalized students into their instruction. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy provides teachers an approach to deliver non-dominant narratives.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Methodology**

Alternate route TPPs produce one-third of teachers entering the classroom (Constantine et al., 2009). These non-traditional programs are one solution to address the teacher shortage in instructional areas including special education (Dill & Stafford, 1996). Relay Graduate School of Education is an ARTPP that supports early career special education teachers in NYC. Little is known about the experiences of these teachers entering diverse NYC classrooms. The study was designed to explore the experiences of these early career special education teacher graduates as they address the needs of their students with disabilities that are within NYC urban schools. To accomplish this, I conducted a survey with follow up interviews. This chapter will cover the sample selection, procedure, data collection and data analysis of the study.

#### **Relay Context**

This study was conducted within the context of Relay Graduate School of Education. While Relay was founded in 2011, the TEL program marked the commencement of the first TEL graduating class in Fall 2016. For the purposes of this study, I interviewed teachers that graduated from Relay with their dual certification in general and special education in Fall 2017. This group of students began Relay during the summer of 2015. This cohort spent their first summer learning about special education pedagogy including, the role of the special education teacher, special education law and how to work with CLD students and families. During their first fall, term graduate students learned about general education pedagogy such as classroom management, lesson planning and assessments. The remaining year and a half is spent on special education pedagogy such as the characteristics of specific disabilities, curriculum modification, and behavior interventions (See Appendix C).



As this is an alternative certification program, graduates began teaching in a NYC Department of Education either district or charter school while working toward their Masters in the Art of Teaching. I chose to recruit teacher graduates of the TEL Dual Certification (General and Special Education) program as research participants as a convenience sample because I worked at Relay. The teachers that graduated from the program taught in NYC, which is reflective of the social issues that are found in most urban schools (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Milner, 2006a).

### **Preliminary Survey Participants**

The goal of the preliminary survey was to identify teachers who met the following criteria: taught for three years or less, worked in a Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS), 15:1:1 (15 students, 1 special education teacher, 1 paraprofessional), 12:1:1 (12 students, 1 special education teacher 1 paraprofessional) or 8:1:1 (8 students, 1 special education teacher, 1 paraprofessional) classroom. Of the 53 early career special education teachers that received the survey, 18 special education teachers completed a survey between November 2017 and February 2018. This reflected a 33.9 percent completion rate. Of the survey respondents, four teachers (22%) identified as White and fourteen teachers (77%) identified as a person of color (i.e., Black, Black Dominican, Black Hispanic, non-white Hispanic, and mixed race). The number of years of experience ranged between two and seven years of instruction. Seven teachers (38.8%) worked in a traditional New York Department of Education public school, seven teachers (38.8%) worked solely in an integrated co-teaching setting, and two teachers, (11%), worked in administrative roles during the 2016-2017 school year. One teacher served as a general education teacher in a general education class and one teacher indicated not having worked in the identified special education settings during the 2016-2017 school year. The

remaining seven teachers (38.8%) self-identified as having taught in either a Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) 15:1:1 or 12:1:1 r classroom during the 2016-2017 school year. Of those seven teachers, six (85.7%) taught for 3 years or less. Five out of six (83.3%) of the teachers that met the criteria (3 years or less of teaching experience and taught in a SETSS, 15:1:1 or 12:1:1) agreed to participate in the interview. Four of the early career teachers taught in a secondary setting, ninth through twelfth grade during the 2016-2017 school year. The fifth early career teacher taught in a middle school setting, sixth through eighth grade during that year. Three of the early career teachers taught in a department of education school. Two of the early career teachers taught in a charter school.

### **Interview Participants**

Five teachers that took the survey, met the study criteria of three years or less of teaching experience, volunteered to participate in the study. All participants were women of color, and taught students with disabilities during the 2016-2017 school year. Teacher 1 self-identified as a Black, Dominican American and taught in a 15:1:1 classroom. Teacher 2 self-identified as Black, Hispanic American and taught is a charter high school in a 12:1:1 classroom. Teacher 3 self-identified as African American and taught at a NYC Department of Education charter high school in a SETSS classroom. Teacher 4 self-identified as Black, Puerto Rican and taught at a NYC Department of Education public high school in a SETSS separate setting classroom. Teacher 5 self-identified as African American and taught in a SETSS separate setting classroom. All five participants completed the Relay program in the Fall of 2017. Descriptive data, which includes participants' race/ethnicity, school setting, classroom setting, grade level and number of years teaching, are listed in Table 3.

Table 3

*Demographics for Teacher Participants*

Participant	Self-Identified Race/Ethnicity	School Setting	Classroom Setting	Grade Band	Years of Teaching
Teacher 1	Black, Dominican American	Traditional Public School	15:1:1	9-12 <sup>th</sup>	2
Teacher 2	Black, Hispanic American	Charter School	12:1:1	9-12 <sup>th</sup>	2
Teacher 3	African American	Charter School	SETSS	9-12 <sup>th</sup>	3
Teacher 4	Black, Puerto Rican	Traditional Public School	SETSS	9-12 <sup>th</sup>	3
Teacher 5	African American	Traditional Public School	SETSS	6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup>	2

**Procedures**

I utilized a qualitative approach to examine narratives about the challenges of early career special education teacher graduates of an AR program in addressing the needs of students with disabilities that were CLD in NYC urban school settings. According to Merriam (2009), researchers that use qualitative research designs seek to understand, “(1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (p. 23). Specifically, a “phenomenological study describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon” (Creswell, 2013, p. 76) and provides a framework for examining the common experiences of the teacher participants. This approach was best suited for my qualitative inquiry as my aim was to better understand the experiences of Relay special education ECTs situated in NYC schools that serve students with disabilities that are CLD. Furthermore, I was interested in exploring how the program prepared them to address the students. I used their experiences to inform my practice as a teacher educator of early career special education teachers in an alternative certification

program. I shared the findings with other Relay GSE faculty members, particularly those in the Teachers of Exceptional Learners Department, to refine further the TEL Dual Certification program and to make recommendations that will improve the efficacy of early career special education teachers in NYC urban school settings teaching students with disabilities that were CLD.

### **Data Collection**

**Preliminary survey procedures.** To identify participants within the subset of Relay GSE NYC TEL 2017 teacher graduates for this study, I used a preliminary survey (see Appendix A). The preliminary six-question survey was conducted electronically using Google Forms. The Google Form was associated with this researchers' email account, which required a login and password to access. Teacher responses to the survey were stored in a spreadsheet that also required authentication for access to protect confidentiality. An electronic survey allowed for ease in administration because participants could respond through various platforms including smart phones or personal computers. The preliminary survey took less than 10 minutes to complete. Teachers received an email at the email address on record with Relay GSE upon graduation, requesting their participation in the preliminary survey and a link to the survey. Fifty-three early career teachers received the email. Survey reminders were sent weekly via email during November and December and twice each week during January and February.

The preliminary survey was sent to 53 TEL teachers that graduated in Fall 2017. Eighteen TEL graduate students completed the preliminary survey. The questions were written to narrow down the pool of participants. Participants were asked to identify the number of years they have taught. The purpose of this question was to identify teachers that entered the program with three or less years of teaching experience, as I wanted an accurate gauge of the impact of

the coursework on special education teacher instruction. The preliminary survey also included a question directing participants to rate their school culture. Peterson and Deal (1998) suggested schools with positive culture reflect, “a shared sense of what is important, a shared ethos of caring and concern, a shared commitment to helping students learn.” (p. 29). I was interested in teachers in schools with positive cultures because the school climate can influence the classroom climate.

I was also interested in the type of classroom setting teachers taught. Question six highlighted this, “Identify the type of special education setting(s) you worked in during the 2016-2017 school year”. Teachers selected between the settings of: 15:1:1, 12:1:1, 8:1:1SETSS or Other. Teachers in the self-contained or resource settings had more autonomy over the culture and instruction in their classroom versus a shared responsibility with the general education teacher in co-taught classrooms. Specially, these teachers have the independence to implement CRT practices with their students with disabilities. The target population for participation in the interview included teachers that taught in a SETSS, 15:1:1 or 12:1:1 settings during the 2016-2017 school year and that had three years or less of teaching experience.

**Interviews.** Once the pool of participants was narrowed, I further explored the experiences of these RGSE special education ECTs with one-on-one interviews. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative interviews are “generally open-ended questions that are few in number and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants [regarding the research topic]” (p. 190). Open-ended interviews allow the researcher to probe participants for their understandings and views of a topic in a way that one cannot during an observation. I developed and used a semi structured interview protocol to guide the interviews.

**Interview questions.** Patton (2002) suggested that all qualitative interviews have a range of questions. Present tense questions should be asked first because these questions are easier to answer than questions about the past or future (Patton, 2002). The interview began with demographic questions. The demographic questions were asked in the present tense to gauge the participants' years in the field. These questions included, "Did you complete and graduate from the TEL program at Relay?" and "How many years have you been teaching?" The experience and opinion questions will be asked in the past tense. "What's your current role?" and "How long have you been teaching?"

As I am interested in ascertaining participants' experiences with the TEL Dual Certification program, the second group of questions focused specifically on my research questions (see Appendix B). These questions targeted the experiences of the graduate students, the aspects of the program that had a positive impact on their capacity to be effective teachers in urban areas, what would have been more helpful in teaching in an urban area, and what they, as early career teachers, feel they need to know more about in order to be successful in an urban classroom. As identified in several studies (Anderson & Stillman, 2013), urban TPPs consist of significant time spent within an urban school during either formal practicum or informal observations and interactions within the urban setting. Several interview questions focused on the impact of this time spent in the field and what knowledge was acquired through immersion.

**Interview procedures.** The researcher conducted five interviews with five early career teachers. Interviews occurred between December 2017 and February 2018. All participants were asked to reflect on their instruction during the 2016-2017 school year at their schools located within NYC. Participants had the choice between an in-person interview and phone interview. All participants chose a phone interview, provided a preferred phone number and selected the

date and time of the interview. I called the participants on my personal cell phone. Each interviewee was provided an interview protocol document via email with all questions listed in advance. This allowed participants to consider their responses in advance. It also made the participants feel more comfortable as they knew what to expect in advance. The interviews occurred after the graduate students completed the program. Which allotted adequate time for reflection by the participants on their experiences in the program. To ensure accurate data collection, with permission from the teachers, I audio recorded the individual interviews using a recording function within Microsoft One Note. The interviews ranged in duration from 25 to 40 minutes. After the interview, the researcher reviewed the responses with participants to determine if any information needed to be removed from the record.

At the conclusion of the interviews, each audio recording was dated and labeled with the word 'Teacher' followed by a number. The numbers assigned to teachers had no meaning and were utilized to protect participant anonymity. The audio recording of the interviews was stored on my computer which was password protected. This protected the confidentiality of participants' responses. I then recorded any reflections regarding the interviews that would be helpful with data analysis. The researcher then listened to the recording once more before uploading the audio recording to Rev, a secure transcription program. The researcher requested time stamps included in the final transcription to aid in analysis.

In addition to conducting interviews, I also collected a Relay Academic Program Guide (see Appendix C) because I wanted a holistic view of the participants' experiences while enrolled at Relay Graduate School of Education. The program guide included a program description, an overview of the coursework taken by participants and the philosophy of the program.

## **Data Analysis**

This study examined the experiences of early career special education teachers in an urban school district meeting the academic and social emotional needs of students with disabilities who were CLD using a qualitative design. The literature represented multiple pathways to analyze phenomenological data. Five teacher narratives were examined from Creswell's (2013) interpretation of Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological approach, which includes an epoche, horizontalization, structural description, textural description and the essence of the phenomenon.

To analyze the interview data, I uploaded the interview transcripts to the Dedoose desktop application. Then I read the interview transcripts multiple times. The first read of an interview was to gain an overall understanding of the individual transcript. I refrained from annotating the text. During the second read of the interview, I highlighted phrases and sentences in Dedoose that provided an idea of the experiences of early career special education teachers in urban settings and how they addressed the academic and social emotional needs of students with disabilities who were CLD in their instruction. After highlighting, I read the statements apart from the interview transcript. Moustakas (1994) identified this as horizontalization of the data. I repeated the process for each interview. In the following paragraph, I describe each step of the phenomenological process.

The first step in analyzing data in a phenomenological study is the epoche. It is the process in which the researcher acknowledges and intentionally disregards her experiences to have a full understanding of the experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2013). The second step in analyzing data in a phenomenological study is horizontalization. It is the process in which the researcher lists the significant statements that correlate with the subject of study (Creswell,



2013). Looking across the experiences for each of the interviews, I merged the common experiences into larger categories. Moustakas (1994) referred to these groups as meaning units while Creswell (2013) identified the larger categories as themes. Within Dedoose, I created memos for each meaning unit. Dedoose allowed me to link the significant statements to each memo. Significant statements were applicable across multiple meaning units.

The third step in analyzing data in a phenomenological study includes two components, a structural description and a textural description. A structural description describes how the participants experience the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). After describing the meaning units, Moustakas (1994) presents textural descriptions. However, for the purposes of this study, it is necessary to understand the settings the participants taught in, or how the phenomenon was experienced, before understanding the experience of the participants in that setting. As such, the researcher has made an intentional decision to include the structural description before the textural description. In addition to structural description, step three of analyzing data in a phenomenological study includes textural descriptions. Textural descriptions describe what was experienced (Creswell, 2013). This offers meaning to what participants experienced.

### **Epoche**

Within the data analysis process, I considered the details of my own experience with the phenomenon utilizing CRT practices as an educator with students with disabilities who were CLD. Creswell (2013) asserted that bracketing, does not remove the researcher entirely from the process; however, it allows the researcher to identify prior experience that can warp his or her perspective. The goal is to ‘set aside’ the researchers perspective to concentrate on the participants’ experience of the phenomenon.

I graduated from the University of Illinois in Champaign Urbana with my Bachelor's in Special Education and began teaching in 2008. I thought I would teach in a south suburban school district similar to one I attended as a child. However, when Chicago Public Schools offered significantly, more pay than any of my prospects; I made a financial decision and signed a teaching contract with Chicago Public Schools. Growing up, I had little experience with any of Chicago neighborhoods, schools or community members. Chicago was always somewhere we drove through to get to our final destination. I had a stereotypical understanding of Chicago; the neighborhoods were rough, the schools were rough and the students were even worse. My parents could not fathom why I wanted to work 'in the city'. They both had spent decades working in and for the south suburban school districts. I dismissed their concerns. After all, I was not moving into 'the city'.

I planned on driving in and driving out of the city to gain a few years then find a teaching position in the suburbs. All of my student teaching was situated in the schools of Champaign-Urbana County. Champaign-Urbana County School District was considered a rural school district. My student teacher coordinator ensured that I had at least one semester working in a school on the 'Black side' of town. I assumed my one semester with Black students set me up for success with students in Chicago. I thought I would be able to connect with Black students in Chicago, because I was Black.

I began teaching in Fall 2007 armed with all the best book knowledge my TPP had to offer. I knew teaching would be challenging, but not impossible. In fact, I thought it would be easier since the students and I were Black. This was not the case. Two years into my teaching career and I was ready to retire. My principal had observed a lesson that she identified as boring. I explained to her the problem was the students not me. She told me that it appeared as though I

had not ‘connected’ with the students. She asked me what I knew about tailoring my lessons to the cultural needs of my students. I did not know what I did not know. I remember being angry. How could a concept that now seemed integral to my success in the classroom be absent from my preparation? I slowly educated myself on what it meant to teach from a culturally responsive lens. This did not mean that teaching began to get easier, but my investment in my lesson planning changed.

I have acknowledged my experiences as an early career special education teacher in an urban school district while trying to learn and teach from a culturally responsive lens. Now I will move forward in the phenomenological analysis process to understand, “...what they [participants] experienced and how they [participants] experienced it” (Creswell, 2013 p. 76).

## **Chapter 4**

### **Findings**

Utilizing a preliminary survey and interview process, this qualitative study explored the experiences of early career special education teachers in an urban school district as they address the academic and social emotional needs of students with disabilities who were CLD. Chapter 4 outlines the findings of this study using a phenomenological analysis process (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994) that included an epoche, significant statements, meaning units, structural and textural descriptions. In the following sections, I provide an overview of my process of analyzing my data to surface meaning units (themes).

Using five transcripts, 179 significant statements were extracted that were clustered into three meaning units. The meaning units are: (1) influences of school context, (2) competencies and (3) connections and disconnections. Within the latter two meaning units were sub-meaning units or additional themes. The meaning units will be described through the lens of curricular components of the participants' TPP. The goal is to have a better understanding of early career special education teachers' use of Relay's curriculum to support their instruction of students with disabilities who were CLD.

#### **Meaning Unit 1: Influences of School Context**

The first meaning unit, Influences of School Context, was defined by the contributing factors of the school setting that affected each participants' experience. A school setting description offers context to the experience in which teachers engage. Participants' discussions about contextual factors impacted by school setting were as varied as the school settings in which they worked. Teacher 2 disclosed:

well if I had to scale it on a scale of one to 10, I would say about, it would be like in the range of three to five. Just because, there were a lot of social/emotional components that I was not prepared to deal with. This wasn't a traditional high school in any sense.

Teacher 2 described her school as untraditional in the sense that she worked in a District 79 school. NYC Department of Education defines an alternative school (District 79) as one that serves “students under 21 years’ old who have experienced an interruption to their studies” (schools.nyc.gov). The student body included over-age and under-credit students ranging in age from 14-20. In response to this question, Teacher 5, stated, “I would say I was. I mean obviously not 100 percent prepared because you never know what you're gonna get.” In contrast, to the responses of Teacher 2 and Teacher 5, the response of Teacher 3 reflected an understanding that is indicative of the literature. Teacher 3 suggested, “I don’t think anything can prepare you for what it really means to be a classroom teacher...I think Relay gave me a solid foundation but it didn’t prepare me to teach the kind of scholars I was teaching. I think that experiences prepare you for that. Ingersoll (2012) conceded that TPPs are likely unable to provide novice teachers with all abilities required to be a strong educator. However, many of the skills required to be a strong educator are learned while teaching.

### **Meaning Unit 2: Competencies**

The second meaning unit, Competencies, is defined by participants’ self-perceptions of knowledge, preparedness to address students’ needs and use of practices to aid in instruction. Three competencies areas were identified: (1) academic competencies, (2) classroom competencies and (3) social-emotional competencies.

**Academic competencies.** Participants discussed curricular aspects that contributed to their level of preparedness to address the academic needs of their students with disabilities that

were CLD. Participant statements reflected three aspects (1) special education instructional practices (2) culturally response teaching practices and (3) perceived student impact.

*Special education instructional practices.* A majority of special education content occurred during participants second year in the program (Appendix C). All five participants reflected on the positive impact of the special education content on their ability to address the academic needs of their students with disabilities who were CLD. Participants identified learning about the Whole Learner Domains, resources such as strategy packets that provide multiple methods to target instruction and address behavior. Teacher 2 cited specific content, "...universal principles of design [Universal Design for Learning], if I'm not mistaken. That was very helpful as well, in terms of figuring out how to assess students and how to provide instruction to the students." She also shared, "the modules related to learning disabilities and the way that students learn." Teacher 1 shared,

there was...a concept map that we had and it was about, higher order thinking and social skills, learning skills... and being able to use this one resource and the one pager to think about what are the things that I see in the classroom, and identify those things and then find potential strategies to implement in the classroom to support that.

Teacher 1 is describing a resource utilized during her second year of teaching entitled, "Whole Learner Map". Students used this to tool to identify student strengths and areas of growth within the cognitive social and academic domains. Teacher 5 shared,

learning how to do learning [running] records. [T]hat really helped because from that I was able to see where my students were reading, or which level. Even understanding the data from using my records also to target, maybe this particular person needs, vocabulary or fluency or comprehension or even breaking up words, phonics.

*Culturally responsive teaching practices.* All five participants identified the CRT module as having a significant impact on their ability to address the needs of their students with disabilities who were CLD. While participants only took one course specifically named CRT during their time at Relay, other curricular aspects that demonstrate cultural pedagogy also surfaced during the interviews. Teacher 1 reflected:

I'm thinking about how can we put experiences, the realities, the truth of our students and incorporate it into our lessons so that it's relatable, especially as an English teacher, finding something that the students can relate to. We're reading Shakespeare and the students have a low reading comprehension, low reading levels. How are they going to access this and then finding access points that connect to the same thing and so they're able to access these rich, um, pieces of literature and then conceptualizing in something that's more familiar to them.

This statement from teacher 1 reflected Gay's culturally responsive teaching components of validating students' culture (2010b) because it demonstrated her understanding of the importance of building a bridge between the content, Shakespeare, and her students lived experiences and reading levels. Teacher 3 noted:

It was an activity that had us think about our own bias. I think that all educators should be thinking about what bias they bring to the table, whether they have the same cultural background as the scholars or not. Because when you think about it like that, you're able to understand that even though you may have the same cultural backgrounds or come from the same community, that time, education and experience, separate you from the scholars. And so, acknowledging and respecting that helps you have a different perspective of how you deal with the kids.

Addressing bias is reflective of Culturally Relevant Education (Dover, 2013). Teacher 4 also reflected:

We had a class on making, your lessons of culturally relevant, where we had to actually do a sample lesson that allowed us be culturally minded. We also had a ton of examples and actually a lot of the lessons were hands on in terms of answering questions and clarifying, what we should or shouldn't do, what line should or shouldn't be crossed or what's, you know, acceptable in the classroom. I also feel like there was a lot of discussion, based on some experiences from my peers that allowed us to understand what works and what doesn't work in the classroom in terms of cultural relevancy.

Participants' responses also cited examples of Gay's (2018) dimensions culturally responsive teaching including using assessments to identify students' strengths and drive instruction, [transformative] and maintaining high expectations for students [empowerment].

***Perceived student impact.*** Participants described that their learning had a positive impact of their students' progress. During their second year in the program, in addition to their normal teaching responsibilities, participants worked closely with one intervention student. Teachers were taught to assess the intervention student, analyze the data and deliver instruction based on the needs of the intervention students. Teacher 5 explained the impact of what she learned on her students' academic growth:

I appreciate everything that I learned because I was using the strategies that I learned in the course work...with my intervention student. And little by little, it was like, okay, alright, you know, you're moving along! Which is really, really good. And to the point where, at the end of the school year... it was amazing, me and the student as well as the



parent, we sat down and we reflected on where the student was at the beginning of the school year...how much they [the student] had grown.

Teacher 2 described a similar experience:

One of the most, beneficial aspects of the program had to be my experience with intervention student. We were getting a lot of younger kids that needed that support and we didn't have anybody in the building to provide that support. And now after I learned those skills at the Relay program, I was able to implement them and see a change. And that sort of motivated me to keep going essentially because I feel like everything was out of my hands. [W]ith that instruction and with those lessons and those modules, I was able to go in and essentially intervene... my students...would be able to progress through their educational journey.

Teacher 4 also mentioned the impact of what she learned on her students.

I'm an ELA teacher...assessing the writing with my intervention student, assessing her reading definitely helped me....It allowed me to identify students struggling way quicker than I would have if I didn't have that background or that information. So, that was definitely useful.

It is difficult to measure the direct correlation between teacher instruction and student academic growth. However, participants' perceived impact of their learning on their students' academic growth suggests that the implementation of what participants learned in the program positively influenced their students.

**Classroom competencies.** In addition to the academic competencies, participants discussed their level of preparedness to address the non-instructional needs of their culturally and linguistically diverse students with disabilities, specifically classroom management.

***Behavior management.*** Participants reflected on how Relay prepared them to address behavior management in their classrooms.

Teacher 3 reflected on learning how to manage behavior however, her experience in her classroom did not align with what the Relay curriculum prepared her to tackle:

[T]here were lessons about how to deal with behavior management. And I don't find that an issue. I don't find there a need to ...I don't see the behavior being that bad....Some lessons prepared you for dealing with really bad behavior....I don't have behavior problems with kids. But I feel like oftentimes people have preconceived notions of kids. I feel like sometimes the lessons were like, "This is how you deal with extreme circumstances." And I didn't have any real extreme circumstances, I guess. Much-the hardest thing was dealing with the adults, not the kids.

Teacher 1 described the positive impact on the behavior management strategies she learned:

Relay really prepared me for the procedural behavior management. In the beginning, it was all about procedures, expectations and repetition, and once you kind of set a foundation of expectations, regardless of if it's a urban setting or not, students are able to meet those expectations and they eliminate barriers that are not specific to comprehension and the learning environment. So being able to do all of that in the beginning has made it easier for students to access material because we're not worrying about behavior.

Teacher 5 had a similar positive experience to managing behavior, “[I]ncorporating...classroom management...that really helped with certain behaviors in ... not only within that class, but like in other settings where I saw them too....I'm still using those strategies today so I would definitely say that they were really, really effective.”

Participants' responses suggest that they perceive themselves as successful classroom managers. This is in direct contradiction to the literature (Hertzog, 2002) because many novice teachers struggled with classroom management. More information is needed to determine how the classroom management experiences of these teachers differ from what the literature suggests.

*Social-emotional competencies.* Participants were asked a similar question regarding which curricular aspects contributed to their ability to address the needs of their students with disabilities who were CLD. Each participant struggled to identify which curricular elements contributed to their ability to address the social and emotional needs of their students with disabilities who were CLD. This is discussed later in this chapter. Teacher 4 however came the closest to identifying elements of the curriculum. She expressed:

Relay did a really good job at making sure that we were able to foster healthy relationships with our students and allowing us to achieve that when you, you begin a strong foundation with your students that allows you to cater to their emotional needs. And understand where they're coming from, meeting them where they're at ... which then allows you to have that relationship and understand how to deal with a student on that emotional-social level.

In answering this question, Teacher 2 did not identify specific curriculum elements that supported her ability to address her students' social emotional needs. Teacher 1 discussed, "a lot of our students, they're in low income communities will try to access the culture, sometimes people are not aware and the only way to really to do that, you have to get involved in the community and get to know the city." This response illustrates the understanding that teachers must understand the community in which their students live. Participants took a module during the summer of their second year in the program the required students to engage with the

community that their school was located. Participants' responses to the interview question regarding CRT reflected their understanding of the literature focused on culturally responsive pedagogy. However, responses to this question were much more limited, suggesting need for a deeper understanding of theory and better connections linking theory to practice.

### **Meaning Unit 3: Connections and Disconnections**

The third meaning unit, Connections and Disconnections, was defined by positive or negative contributing factors that influenced participants' experiences. Participants' responses surfaced connections to the schools and the communities in which they worked. Their responses also highlighted disconnections and difficult situations that participants experienced while teaching.

**Community connections.** Three of the five participants had a connection with their school or community. Participants shared how their community connection influenced their perspectives. Teacher 1 discussed:

[B]eing from the community that I was teaching in, I had a general idea, of what the kids are experiencing, and being able to use my experience in the classroom to kind of relate to them, so then when they're talking about or reading a text about families like the American Dream, a mom and a dad and a household, and the reality is a lot of the students don't have that. Then they say, like, "Oh, this is stupid. Why am I reading this? 'cause it's not something that reflects my reality." [B]eing able to relate to them and using what I have experienced through the classroom, helped.

While Teacher 1, identified that her connection to the community was helpful, Teacher 5 also contributed her success in the class with being from the community:

I was familiar with that particular setting because I did work in the urban community, and I'm African American. That kinda helped me better understand, like, the students that I was working with as well as, um, you know, um things on a more professional end. Like, for example, being prepared in, you know ... the school didn't have enough resources and things like that, you know, so just the kinda ... prepare myself, being the fact that I came up in a similar situation.

In contrast to Teacher 1 and Teacher 5, Teacher 2 did not contribute her success in the classroom to her connection with the community:

I mean I knew what I was getting into, I knew what the population would be like. One of my brothers actually attended the school for a year. But the environment, I just didn't expect, I guess I just didn't expect to not have answers. I thought that I would be able to figure out a solution to a lot of issues that we encountered. I found myself frozen sometimes because it's like you wanna have all the answers for all kids and you realize that you can not do that.

Participants' responses surfaced a common misconception. Teacher 5 attributing a portion of her preparedness to her race, African American, is reflective of an initial assumption held by many teachers of color when they began teaching, including myself. The assumption being that a shared race, between the teacher and student, translates to a mutual understanding. Milner (2006b) explained, "...there is a huge range of diversity even within groups, and we cannot oversimplify the characteristics of any group of teachers" (p. 90) Gay (2010b) further clarified, "similar ethnicity between students and teachers may be potentially beneficial, but it is not a guarantee of pedagogical effectiveness" (p. 205). These community connections and responses from Teachers 1, 2 and 5 suggest they expected a mutual understanding as described by Milner

(2006b). These community connections may have influenced participants' perceptions of preparedness to address the needs of students with disabilities who were CLD.

**Disconnections.** The disconnections that emerged illuminate demands imposed on the participants as a result of the Relay program or gaps in their instructional knowledge.

*School Expectations vs Relay Expectations.* Analyses of participants' experiences suggest a misalignment between the expectations of their school setting and the expectations of the Relay course work. Teacher 3 shared:

[T]here was a difference between what my school policies were and what Relay was trying to get us to do. And sometimes we just kind of competed with each other. I think that that was a hindrance in me being able to get all that I could out of Relay. Because at my job, there's certain requirements and at Relay there are other requirements, but sometimes you can't fulfill the Relay requirements because they don't fit into what your job confines want.

When asked to elaborate Teacher 3 continued:

...oftentimes I felt a tug between what Relay required of me and what my job needed me to do. That was the hardest part, to have to feel like you're getting split into two separate people. Because you need Relay in order to keep your job, but you need your job in order to even be enrolled in Relay. They just didn't work hand in hand. That was a really hard part.

Teacher 2 described a misalignment between the modules she took and the expectations for her students

[T]here were a few modules that were specifically focused on, ELA...[but] reading levels differed....Like in theory, they were helpful. But then when I had to sort of reconcile

between where I was being taught and what the school was asking us to do, it was very difficult to really navigate and figure out, a common ground between the two. I think it was hard to sort of come to a middle ground where I was able to learn a part of what I said I learned, and then actually apply it. [B]ecause I was working with older kids. I was in a classroom with kids that were 17, 18, 19, there were a few that were even 20. And they were, you know, students that needed to pass the Regents [Exam] in order to graduate and that was the schools' priority....I had a lot of techniques, and a lot of the theories that we were reading in class weren't necessarily applicable to that particular setting. At least not a lot of the time.

Teacher 2 was asked to elaborate about her school setting, she shared:

I don't think that Relay has any modules that I can recall about alternative education and providing alternative education. Because that's really what my environment was. I think I would like to see more resources, um, targeted towards environments of that kind just to kids in alternative schools who need those resources.

The disconnections between participants' school expectations and the Relay expectations required participants to navigate between two competing demands. This disconnection may or may not be unique to Relay. Additional research is needed to understand the experiences of teachers enrolled in other ARTPPs.

*Unprepared.* After asking participants what contributed to their ability to meet the academic and social emotional needs of their students with disabilities who were CLD, participants were asked to make recommendations about what the TEL department could do to support TEL teachers. Participants' answers highlighted what they were unprepared to address.

Participants' responses fell into two categories (1) academic support (2) social emotional support.

*Academic support.* Participants described needing more curriculum on culturally responsive teaching practices. Teacher 4 specifically described the importance of having conversations about difficult topics. She asserted:

[M]ore uncomfortable conversations ... race seems to be a really big issue. It's an elephant in the room. I felt like during our conversations [in class] we were able to touch on certain things, but not other. If you [Relay] allow [graduate student teachers] students that freedom to express themselves in the classroom about those issues, then they'd [graduate student teachers] be able to understand how or why they have to handle a student in their actual classroom when, something like race or even discrimination comes up, you'd [graduate student teachers] be able to handle it a little bit better because you'd understand that feeling that you felt when you were in class and you had the conversation. [M]ore open conversations about those uncomfortable things like race and sexuality and other things of that uncomfortable nature.

Participants did share their understanding of CRT. Their responses demonstrate some understanding however, their responses also missed characteristics of Gay's (2018) CRT multidimensional, socially, emotionally and politically comprehensive, liberating from oppressive education, humanistic, normative, and ethical.

*Social emotional support.* Participants shared that they were not prepared to address the social-emotional needs of their students. Teacher 1 reflected:

I think I was not prepared for the individual one-to-one conversations that I would have with students that would open their lives up to me and then not knowing how to support



them the best that I can, and I think that it pushed me to limits of what I can do as a teacher, what can I do as an adult for these kids, 'cause there's so many things happening in their life outside of the academic realm that as individuals you wanna help them.

Teacher 1, 2 and 5 reflected on not being prepared to address their students' social emotional needs. It is important to note these teachers also described having prior ties to the community or school. Teacher 1 and 5 suggested offering instruction to support students with social-emotional needs. Teacher 2 expressed a more urgent tone when describing the need:

What surprised me most was how much information is missing about the variety of ways in which you can teach students that are not only in an urban setting but also in a setting where there is a lot of pain, I guess is the word that I would use.

In this reflection Teacher 2, described her students in pain and the lack of information missing. It is not clear if Teacher 2 was referring to lack of information in the Relay curriculum or in the literature. Teacher 2 further described the difference between her students and other students.

It's different to work with 14 years' old that have experienced trauma and a loss at such an early age. Then to work with a 14-year-old that doesn't have to worry about those types of situations....working with students that are 20 years' old that are on the verge of basically being kicked out of school because they're about to turn 21 and worrying about having a job. And having a child and things that other, a lot of other kids don't necessarily have to deal with.

This description illustrates the need for support. It is also important to note that this description may reflect a misalignment between the curriculum that Relay provides to teachers and the curriculum Teacher 2 thought she needed to be successful in her particular school setting. While what was shared is helpful in understanding participants' experiences, what was not shared also

demonstrated their understanding. Participants' responses lacked evidence of learning about social emotional teaching practices such as positive goal setting and empathy (Durlak et al., 2011).

## Chapter 5

This chapter offers a summary of the study, identifies implications by relating the findings to the research and recommends next steps to practitioners for supporting special education students at Relay Graduate School of Education. This qualitative study examined the experiences of early career special education teachers in an urban school district as they address the academic and social emotional needs of students with disabilities who were CLD. A phenomenological approach, whereby common themes among teachers' experiences, were identified and guided the interpretation of the findings. This study focused on four questions:

- How do special education early career teachers' experiences in the Teachers of Exceptional Learners Program at Relay influence their practice with culturally and linguistically diverse students with disabilities in NYC urban school settings?
- Do special education teachers trained through alternate route feel prepared to address the academic and social emotional needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students with disabilities?
- What aspects of special education teachers' education have contributed to their preparedness?
- What aspects of the curriculum of the Teachers of Exceptional Learners program at Relay were most useful in your practice with culturally and linguistically diverse students with disabilities in NYC urban school settings?

A preliminary survey was distributed to special education teachers that graduated in Fall 2017 from the Teachers of Exceptional Learners Program at Relay Graduate School of Education in NYC. The responses to the preliminary survey indicated which teachers taught in a SETSS, 15:1:1 or 12:1:1 setting during the 2016-2017 school year and that had three years or less of

teaching experience. Six teachers met the criteria for teaching in one of the identified classroom settings. Five teachers agreed to participate in open-ended interviews. The questions asked required participants to consider the curricular aspects from their time at Relay that influenced their teaching of students with disabilities that were CLD. Through analyzing the data, three themes emerged: (1) influences of school context, (2) competencies and (3) connections and disconnections.

### **Discussion**

The participants' responses to the interview questions provided data that demonstrated their understanding of CRT. The questions surfaced how participants' experiences in the TEL program influenced their practice with students with disabilities who were identified as CLD. Overall, the responses suggested that their classroom practices reflected a surface understanding of Gay's tenants of culturally responsive teaching however, their basic knowledge of the culturally responsive teaching limited their ability to make explicit connections between classroom practice and CRT theory. I will examine how participants responses reflected a surface understanding and a few reasons why participants' descriptions of CRT practices in their classrooms did not make explicit connections to the CRT theory.

The first and third research questions asked: (a) how special education early career teachers' experiences in the Teachers of Exceptional Learners Program at Relay influenced their practice with students with disabilities who were CLD in NYC urban school settings and (b) what aspects of special education teachers' education have contributed to their preparedness. The answer s to each of these questions are reflected in the meaning unit, academic competencies. Teacher participants articulated being fairly prepared to meet the needs of their students. Participants reflected on instructional practices they utilized with their students, such as

assessing and teaching writing and assessing and teaching reading. These instructional practices were learned during participants' second year of the program, which focused on special education curriculum. Participants identified these instructional practices as most useful because participants saw their students reading and writing skills improve. This is consistent with what Brownell, Sindelar, Kiely and Danielson (2010) suggested as skills needed by special education teachers to be effective, particularly content knowledge.

The finding that participants learned and used effective instructional practices was not surprising. The content participants learned during their time in the program reflected skills necessary to be an effective special education teacher. The curriculum reflects a shift from specific knowledge about a particular disability category to content that will support a wide range of learners. In particular, the Relay Curriculum includes explicit instruction on how to teach reading and writing to preschool through twelfth grade students because these skills affect every content area.

The second research question asked, if special education teachers trained through AR felt prepared to address the academic and social emotional needs of students with disabilities who were CLD. As reflected in the meaning unit, classroom competency, my findings, overall suggested that teachers who completed the AR special education TPP at Relay perceived themselves as prepared to address the academic needs of diverse students with disabilities, specifically classroom management. These findings were not consistent with prior research about classroom management. Hertzog (2002) found that early career teachers struggle manage behavior. More research is needed to determine what about the Relay curriculum prepared teachers to address classroom management needs; what was the difference between Relay's approach to preparing teachers for classroom management and other TPPs. However, there is

prior research to suggest that teachers in AR may feel prepared. In a study of two ARTPPs participants indicated being prepared to address the needs of urban and diverse students after completing the programs (Esposito & Lal, 2005).

In the meaning unit, connections and disconnections, the data implied that there were aspects of early career special education teachers' work that they were not prepared to address, specifically social emotional needs. Participants were not clear about how their experience at Relay influenced their practice to work with students with social emotional needs however, three out of five of the participants suggested that including support on how to address the social-emotional needs of students would be beneficial. One participant, Teacher 2, did express that not knowing how to meet the social emotional needs of her students impeded her ability to address their academic needs. It is important to consider the setting Teacher 2 taught in during her second year of teaching. She described her school as "untraditional" and she rated her school culture the lowest in comparison to the other participants. While it is known that early career teachers struggle as they acclimate to their students and the demands of the profession, Teacher 2s experience was starkly different from that of the other four teacher participants. Her experience may be an isolated situation or her experience may indicate that special education early career teachers prepared through AR programs such as Relay need additional support to address the needs of students at District 79 schools such as her school. Gay asserted, "Culturally responsive teaching simultaneously develops, along with academic achievement, social consciousness and critique; cultural affirmation, competence and exchange; ...individual self-worth and abilities; and an ethic of caring" (Gay, 2010b p. 45). This quote suggests that CRT is a composite of academic instructional best practices and social development best practices.

Therefore, in addition to including CRT practices, TPPs may also want to provide teachers with the skills necessary to address their students' social development.

The fourth research question asked what aspects of the curriculum of the Teachers of Exceptional Learners program at Relay were most useful in their practice with culturally and linguistically diverse students with disabilities in NYC urban school settings. As reflected in my findings, two meaning units surfaced academic competency, specifically culturally responsive teaching and connections and disconnections, specifically unprepared. This is consistent with the literature. In a study to determine the impact of understanding a students' community, preservice teachers' perspectives of their students evolved. Participants indicated being more cognizant of their students lived experiences. (Adams, Bondy, & Kuhel, 2005). This also correlates with the findings that special education teachers, who received instruction during their TPP on CRT, felt prepared to deliver CRT practices to their students with disabilities who CLD (Chu & Garcia, 2014).

Participants reflected on a CRT module they took during their second summer in the program. Their responses such as building relationships with students, families and communities, intentionally making connections between the content and their students' culture and the impact of reflecting on their own bias, reflected the tenant that culturally responsive teaching is validating and affirming. Validating curriculum leverages student culture as a resource, creates deliberate connections between the classroom, home, community and greater society (Gay, 2018). While participants described details of validation and affirmation, the decisions that led to a validating and affirming classroom may or may not have been intentionally done on behalf of implementing CRT practices.

In discussion of CRT, evidence of the meaning unit unprepared, emerged because participants only described behaviors aligned with one (validating and affirming) out of the eight tenants. This suggested they were unprepared because they lacked knowledge of additional CRT tenants. For example, culturally responsive teaching is emancipatory and humanistic (Gay, 2018) which are two tenants that reflect the importance of developing students social understanding of the society in which they live. Instruction that is emancipatory and humanistic presents students with multiple worldviews and challenges them to be conscious of multiple lived experiences. Once students learn about multiple worldviews, they are expected to care for and aid in the success of others. The participants' descriptions of their instruction lacked this level of nuanced understanding, which may have indicated a gap in the participants understanding of culturally responsive teaching. This gap of knowledge may be attributed to a myriad of factors. It is uncertain if the gap of understanding was a result of knowledge not yet acquired due to limited instructional experience or because they had not learned about CRT in depth, which may be attributed to what they learned while enrolled at Relay.

Participants understanding of how to implement culturally responsive teaching in their classrooms could also be reflective of Critical Race Theory. Critical Race Theory highlights Whiteness as the prevalent culture in America. The education system is reflective of the dominant culture (Brown, 2014). Therefore, the curriculum at Relay may be reflective of Whiteness as the dominant culture. One purpose of culturally responsive teaching practices is to recognize, celebrate and leverage cultural identities with the intent to educate and empower students (Gay 2018). The idea that other cultures besides the dominant culture, Whiteness, should be uplifted is contrary to the status quo. This may suggest that the curriculum that participants engaged with during their TPP was more reflective of the dominant culture,



Whiteness, rather than multicultural. Brown (2014) described three ways to counteract the impact of the culture of Whiteness in education through the use of "...counter-storytelling, acknowledging the privileges offered to White people and identifying inequalities that maintain dominant White interests" p. 329. Culturally responsive teaching is an avenue in which teachers can dispense the non-dominant narratives. If CRT theory was not presented as a way to address non-dominant narratives within Relay's curriculum, participants' instruction may not have reflected the importance of culturally responsive teaching practices.

### **Additional Research**

There is more to learn about how to prepare early career special education teachers to address the needs of students with disabilities who identify as CLD through CRT practices. Findings suggested participants were addressing the academic needs of their students with disabilities who were CLD with the use of some CRT practices. Additional research is required to determine how early career special education teachers can move beyond novice understanding of culturally responsive curriculum to address additional facets of CRT envisioned by Gay (2010b). Participants' self-reported use of CRT practices, as such, there is an opportunity to study if ECTs intentionally plan and implement culturally responsive lessons. Relay graduate students submit lessons during their second year in the program therefore the structure is in place to further study culturally responsive lesson planning.

The findings also suggested additional study was needed to teach teachers to understand the social emotional needs of students with disabilities who were CLD within NYC schools. Social emotional needs may influence a student's academic success. In particular, an understanding of the social emotional needs of CLD students with disabilities can help special education teachers make informed instructional decisions that may have positive impacts on

student learning. In addition, the experiences of Teacher 2 in her alternative school setting demonstrated a need to examine if the type of school setting affects a teachers' efficacy in addressing the social emotional needs her students. Teacher 2's reflections also beg the question, which type of school setting is ideal for early career special education teachers.

### **Limitations**

This research is potentially limited by sample size, participant responses and researcher bias. As a result of the small sample size, the inferences that can be drawn from the findings are narrow. However the specific lens utilized in this study narrowed participant pool. The objective of the study was to examine the experiences of early career special education teachers in an urban school district as they address the academic and social emotional needs of students with disabilities who were CLD. The focus of the study required special education teachers to have autonomy over their classrooms. While over 50 teachers graduated from the TEL Department in Fall 2017, a majority of those teachers taught in co-taught settings, which limited their autonomy. In co-taught classrooms teachers typically share the decision making process with one another. Therefore, a teacher in a co-taught classroom may not have the ability to address the academic and social emotional needs of students with disabilities who were CLD in the manner in which the teacher deemed necessary. Thus to eliminate the potential barrier that shared decision-making imposes teachers that worked solely in co-taught were not considered for the study. Of the 18 students that completed the survey, seven teacher's self-identified as having taught in either a SETSS, 15:1:1 or 12:1:1 role during the 2016-2017 school year. Of those seven teachers, six of those teachers taught for less than 3 years or less. Five out of six of the teachers that met the two criteria agreed to participate in an interview. I reached out to the sixth teacher twice a week in the month of January however I never received a response.

Relying on participants self-perceptions might introduce inherent bias to the study however the purpose of the study was to examine teacher perceptions. Participants described curricular aspects that affected their instruction however; the study did not necessitate capturing the effect of the curriculum on the instruction. In addition, participants struggled to remember components of the graduate program. Participants had to think as far back as two years about the curriculum. This resulted in participants' relying on their memory, which may have limited their responses. The researcher identified her role and relationship with the participants of the study. My experiences with participants as their advisor and proximity to faculty members may have influenced their ability to be candid about their instruction and experience at Relay.

### **Implications for Multicultural Teacher Preparation**

There are many implications that can be drawn from this research. Teacher preparation programs must recognize the impact of the dominant culture on teacher education and work to offset the implicit messages conveyed through structures and policies. Participant responses may illustrate that curriculum taught at Relay to early career special education teachers was designed to perpetuate the dominant White culture and White interests rather than surface and educate teachers about non-dominant cultures. This may negatively affect their ability to address the academic and social emotional needs of their culturally and linguistically diverse students with disabilities. Relay and other TPPs have more work to do to address the needs students with disabilities of who are CLD. The results also suggest that even after TPPs educate teachers about the assumption that a shared ethnicity between the student and the teacher does not equate to more instructional success (Gay, 2010b), Teacher 1, 2 and 5 still believed that their connections to their schools and communities would make their roles less difficult. This suggests that all TPPs, those that prepare general and special education teachers, could provide more guidance on

the impact of these types of assumptions. Participant responses also reflected a limited understanding of Gay's (2018) eight dimensions of culturally responsive teaching. Teacher preparation programs, particularly those located in diverse urban areas could provide additional instruction on CRT practices to support teachers in developing a more nuanced understanding. To bridge the theory, specifically Gay's (2018) eight dimensions of CRT, with practice, infusing the eight dimensions of CRT into instructional practices, TPPs should create a hierarchal framework that can help teachers prioritize which dimensions are within their locus of control as early career teachers and which dimensions will develop with experience. For example, participants' responses reflected that they utilize varying instructional strategies and they build relationships between home and school. This was indicative that their instruction was validating. This may be a dimension that is accessible for early career teachers. However, their descriptions of their instruction is less reflective the dimensions of humanistic, emancipatory or normative/ethical (Gay, 2018) which require a nuanced understanding of the role students play in the community and greater society.

The results suggest that the school context of early career special education teachers influenced their perception of success with their particular school setting and student body. Similar to the findings of McCray (2012) this would suggest that the school setting influences a teacher feelings of success and desire to remain teaching. This may imply that special education teachers may benefit from special education TPPs differentiated instruction based on the setting. This was evident with the experiences of Teacher 2. Some special education teacher programs already provide specific preparation for specific settings such as rural and urban settings however currently Relay does not offer differentiated instruction to teachers in alternative settings (District 79). While the special education instructional practices supported Teacher 2 to

address the academic needs of her students with disabilities who were CLD. she did not have the competencies to address the social emotional needs of her students. NYC does not define what an ‘interruption to their studies’ means within their definition of an alternative school setting however one could infer that any type of interruption to academic coursework could have an impact on a students’ social emotional needs. Thus, special education TPPs should prepare teachers to work in alternative settings to address the social emotional needs of the students in an alternative setting.

Alternate route TPPs should provide teachers with course work on the social emotional needs of students at the start of the program. The coursework should cover a wide range of potential needs because varying social emotional needs may surface during the school year. To help teachers translate this theory to practice ARTPP can use case study models to facilitate the support of a subset of students with social emotional needs within their classrooms. This requires ARTPPs to be receptive and flexible in the support that it provides. While most teachers, regardless of whether they attend a traditional or ARTPPs, may not be aware of their students’ social emotional needs at the beginning of the year, teachers enrolled in ARTPPs begin teaching with limited knowledge. Therefore, the support and instruction provided should look different. This social emotional case study support could be a component of the observation process and include real time coaching. This would allow teachers to receive feedback on the support they are providing to their students. Feedback and coaching may positively affect these teachers’ perceptions of preparedness to address the social emotional needs of students with disabilities who identify as CLD.

The number of special education teachers accepted into the NYC TEL program has increased significantly over the last three years. As such, the number of NYC students with

disabilities taught by NYC TEL teachers will also increase. Relay Graduate School of Education is an AR program; therefore, these teachers are entering classrooms with limited or no teaching experience. Regardless of their instructional knowledge, school leaders are hiring and expecting these teachers to meet the needs of the students in their schools. I acknowledge that the idea that novice special education teachers can or should be responsible for students with disabilities is inherently flawed; however, that does not change nor delay the need for special education teachers. It is the responsibility of AR programs to equip these teachers as best as possible. The more equipped teachers are to address the academic needs of their students with disabilities who were CLD the better the outcomes are for the students.

As I end this study, I reflect back on my experience entering my special education classroom over 11 years ago in Chicago. I entered the classroom brimming with ‘book knowledge’ and ‘special education best practices’ but limited knowledge of what was CRT, why it was important or the impact it could have on my students. Now, more knowledgeable about special education and culturally responsive pedagogy. I am saddened by what my students missed because of my lack of experience. While I am no longer teaching in a K-12 classroom, I am committed to ensuring that my ‘grand-students’ will have teachers more equipped than I was to address their academic and social-emotional needs with CRT practices.

## References

- Adams, A., Bondy, E., & Kuhel, K. (2005). Preservice teacher learning in an unfamiliar setting. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 32(2), 41-62. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23478721>
- Allen, M. (2000). Focusing policy on hard-to-staff schools. *State Education Leader*, 18(2), 2.
- Almarza, D. J. (2005). Connecting multicultural education theories with practice: A case study of an intervention course using the realistic approach in teacher education. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 29(3), 527-539. doi:10.1080/15235882.2005.10162850
- Anderson, L. M., & Stillman, J. A. (2013). Student teaching's contribution to preservice teacher development: A review of research focused on the preparation of teachers for urban and high-needs contexts. *Review of Educational Research*, 83(1), 3-69. doi: 10.3102/0034654312468619
- Bay, M., & Lopez-Reyna, N. (1997). Preparing future bilingual special educators: The lessons we've learned. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 20, 1-10. doi: 10.1177/088840649702000102
- Bell, D. A. (1995). Brown v. board of education and the interest convergence dilemma In K. Crenshaw, N. Gotanda, G. Peller & K. Thomas (Eds.), *Critical race theory: The key writings that formed the movement* (pp. 20-29). New York, NY: New Press.
- Benner, S. M., & Judge, S. L. (2000). Teacher preparation for inclusive settings: A talent development model. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 27(3), 23-38. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23478233>
- Boe, E. E., & Cook, L. H. (2006). The chronic and increasing shortage of fully certified teachers in special and general education. *Exceptional Children*, 72(4), 443-460. doi: 10.1177/001440290607200404

- Boser, U. (2011). *Teacher diversity matters: A state-by-state analysis of teachers of color*. Center for American Progress. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED535665.pdf>
- Boykin, A. W., & Noguera, P. (2011). *Creating the opportunity to learn: Moving from research to practice to close the achievement gap* ASCD. doi:10.1177/0042085913476936
- Bransford, J., Darling-Hammond, L., & LePage, P. (2007). Introduction. In L. Darling-Hammond & J. Bransford (Eds.), *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do* (pp. 1-39). San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.
- Brown, K. D. (2014). Teaching in color: A critical race theory in education analysis of the literature on preservice teachers of color and teacher education in the US. *Race, Ethnicity and Education, 17*(3), 326-345. doi:10.1080/13613324.2013.832921
- Brownell, M. T., Ross, D. D., Colón, E. P., & McCallum, C. L. (2005). Critical features of special education teacher preparation. *Journal of Special Education, 38*(4), 242-252. doi:10.1177/00224669050380040601
- Brownell, M. T., Sindelar, P. T., Kiely, M. T., & Danielson, L. C. (2010). Special education teacher quality and preparation: Exposing foundations, constructing a new model. *Exceptional Children, 76*(3), 357-377. doi:10.1177/001440291007600307
- Bryk, A. S., & Schneider, B. (2003). Trust in schools: A core resource for school reform. *Educational Leadership, 60*(6), 40. Retrieved from [http://www.ohiohstw.org/sitefiles/Trust\\_in\\_Schools.pdf](http://www.ohiohstw.org/sitefiles/Trust_in_Schools.pdf)
- Buras, K. L. (2011). Race, charter schools, and conscious capitalism: On the spatial politics of whiteness as property (and the unconscionable assault on black New Orleans). *Harvard Educational Review, 81*(2), 296-330. doi: 10.17763/haer.81.2.6l42343qqw360j03



- Carlson, E., Lee, H., Schroll, K., Klein, S., & Willing, S. (2002). *Final report of the study of personnel needs in special education*. Washington, DC: Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education.
- Chu, S., & García, S. B. (2014). Culturally responsive teaching efficacy beliefs of in-service special education teachers. *Remedial and Special Education, 35*(4), 218-232. doi: 10.1177/0741932513520511
- Conderman, G., Johnston-Rodriguez, S., Hartman, P., & Walker, D. (2013). Honoring voices from beginning special educators for making changes in teacher preparation. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 36*(1), 65-76. doi:10.1177/0888406412473311
- Connelly, V. J., Rosenberg, M. S., & Larson, K. E. (2014). Alternative routes to special education teacher preparation. In P. T. Sindelar, E. D. McCray, M. T. Brownell & B. Lignugaris-Kraft (Eds.), *Handbook of research on special education teacher preparation* (pp. 215-230). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Constantine, J., Player, D., Silva, T., Hallgren, K., Grider, M., & Deke, J. (2009). *An evaluation of teachers trained through different routes to certification*. (Evaluation Report No. NCEE 20094043). Washington, DC: Nations Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from <https://ies.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=NCEE20094043>
- Correa, V. I., Alvarez McHatton, P., McCray, E. D., & Coss Baugh, C. (2014). Preparing teachers to work with diverse populations. In P. T. Sindelar, E. D. McCray, M. T. Brownell & B. Lignugaris/Kraft (Eds.), *Handbook of research on special education teacher preparation* (pp. 495). New York, NY: Routledge.

- Correa, V. I., Hudson, R. F., & Hayes, M. T. (2004). Preparing early childhood special educators to serve culturally and linguistically diverse children and families: Can a multicultural education course make a difference? *Teacher Education & Special Education, 27*(4), 323. doi: 10.1177/088840640402700401
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.
- Darling-Hammond, L., & McDonald, M. B. (2000). Where there is learning there is hope: The preparation of preservice teachers at bank street college of education. In L. Darling-Hammond (Ed.), *Studies of excellence in teacher education: Preparation at the graduate level*. (pp. 1-95). Washington, D.C.: AACTE.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2003). Keeping good teachers: Why it matters, what leaders can do. *Educational Leadership, 60*(8), 6-13. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/242663183\\_Keeping\\_Good\\_Teachers\\_Why\\_It\\_Matters\\_What\\_Leaders\\_Can\\_Do](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/242663183_Keeping_Good_Teachers_Why_It_Matters_What_Leaders_Can_Do)
- deBettencourt, L. U., & Howard, L. (2004). Alternatively licensing career changers to be teachers in the field of special education: Their first-year reflections. *Exceptionality, 12*(4), 225-238. doi:10.1207/s15327035ex1204\_4
- Dill, V. S., & Stafford, D. (1996). *Alternative teacher certification: History, handbook and how-to* National Center for Alternative Teacher Certification Information.
- Dingle, M., Falvey, M. A., Givner, C. C., & Haager, D. (2004). Essential special and general education teacher competencies for preparing teachers for inclusive settings. *Issues in*

- Teacher Education*, 13(1), 35-50. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ796426.pdf>
- Donnor, J. K. (2005). Towards an interest-convergence in the education of African-American football student athletes in major college sports. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8(1), 45-67. doi:10.1080/1361332052000340999
- Dover, A. G. (2013). Teaching for social justice: From conceptual frameworks to classroom practices. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 15(1), 3-11. 10.1080/15210960.2013.754285
- Durlak, J. A., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., Weissberg, R. P., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development*, (1), 405. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01564.x
- Esposito, M. C., & Lal, S. (2005). Responding to special education teacher shortages in diverse urban settings: An accelerated alternative credential program. *Teacher Education and Special Education: The Journal of the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children*, 28(2), 100-103. doi:10.1177/088840640502800203
- Frye, B., Button, L., Kelly, C., & Button, G. (2010). Preservice teachers' self-perceptions and attitudes toward culturally responsive teaching. *Journal of Praxis in Multicultural Education*, 5(1), 6. doi:10.9741/2161-2978.1029
- Frykholm, J. A. (1997). A stacked deck: Addressing issues of equity with preservice students. *Equity and Excellence in Education*, 30(2), 50-58.
- Gay, G. (2018). Pedagogical potential of cultural responsiveness. In J. Banks (Ed.), *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research and practice* (3rd ed., pp. 22-46). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

- Gay, G. (2010a). Acting on beliefs in teacher education for cultural diversity. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 61, 143-152. doi:10.1177/0022487109347320
- Gay, G. (2010b). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice* Teachers College Press.
- Gay, G. (2002). Culturally responsive teaching in special education for ethnically diverse students: Setting the stage. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 15(6), 613-629. doi:10.1080/0951839022000014349
- Haberman, M. (1996). Selecting and preparing culturally competent teachers for urban schools. *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education*, 2, 747-760.
- Haberman, M. (2006). What makes a program "alternative certification?" An operational definition. *Journal of the National Association for Alternative Certification*, 1(1), 5-11.  
Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1053291>
- Haddix, M. (2008). Beyond sociolinguistics: Towards a critical approach to cultural and linguistic diversity in teacher education. *Language and Education*, 22(5), 254-270.  
doi:10.2167/le772.0
- Harris, C. I. (1993). Whiteness as property. *Harvard Law Review*, 106(8), 1707-1791.  
doi:10.2307/1341787
- Harry, B., & Lipsky, M. (2014). Qualitative research on special education teacher preparation. In P. T. Sindelar, E. D. McCray, M. T. Brownell & B. Lignugaris-Kraft (Eds.), *Handbook of research on special education teacher preparation* (pp. 445-460). New York, NY: Routledge.

- Hertzog, H. S. (2002). "When, how, and who do I ask for help?": Novices' perceptions of problems and assistance. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 29(3), 25-41. Retrieved from [https://www.jstor.org/stable/23478388?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/23478388?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)
- Ingersoll, R., Merrill, L., & Stuckey, D. (2014). *Seven trends: The transformation of the teaching force*. (No. RR-80). Philadelphia: Consortium for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania.
- Ingersoll, R. M. (2012). Beginning teacher induction: What the data tell us. *The Phi Delta Kappan*, (8), 47. Retrieved from [https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012/05/16/kappan\\_ingersoll.h31.html](https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012/05/16/kappan_ingersoll.h31.html)
- Ingersoll, R. M., & Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy. (2003). *Is there really a teacher shortage? A research report*. Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, 1-28. Retrieved from [https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1133&context=gse\\_pubs](https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1133&context=gse_pubs)
- Keefe, E. B., Rossi, P. J., de Valenzuela, J. S., & Howarth, S. (2000). Reconceptualizing teacher preparation for inclusive classrooms: A description of the dual license program at University of New Mexico. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps*, 25(2), 72-82. doi.org/10.2511/rpsd.25.2.72
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 11(1), 7-24. doi:10.1080/095183998236863
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2000). Fighting for our lives preparing teachers to teach African American students. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 51(3), 206-214. doi.org/10.1177/0022487100051003008

Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). From the achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in US schools. *Educational Researcher*, 35(3), 3-12.

[doi.org/10.3102/0013189x035007003](https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189x035007003)

Ladson-Billings, G. (2008). Yes, but how do we do it? Practicing culturally relevant pedagogy.

In W. Ayers, G. Ladson-Billings, G. Michie & P. Noguera (Eds.), *City kids, city schools: More reports from the front row* (pp. 162-177). New York, NY: The New Press.

Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate IV, W. F. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education.

Teachers College Record, 97(1), 47-68. Retrieved from file:///C:/Users/tfinley-chatman/Downloads/Toward\_a\_Critical\_Race\_Theory\_of\_Education.pdf

Larkin, J. M., & Sleeter, C. E. (Eds.). (1995). *Developing multicultural teacher education curricula*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Laughter, J. C. (2011). Rethinking assumptions of demographic privilege: Diversity among white preservice teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(1), 43-50.

[doi.10.1016/j.tate.2010.07.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.07.001)

Lawrence, S. M., & Bunche, T. (1996). Feeling and dealing: Teaching white students about racial privilege. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 12(5), 531-542. doi:10.1016/0742-051X(95)00054-N

Leonard, P., & Leonard, L. (2006). Teachers and tolerance: Discriminating diversity dispositions. *The Teacher Educator*, 42(1), 30-62. doi:10.1080/08878730609555392

Liston, D. P., & Zeichner, K. M. (2013). Preface: Impacts of social conditions on schooling. *Culture and teaching (reflective teaching and the social conditions of schooling series)* (pp. xvii-xxiii). New York, NY: Routledge.

- Lovingfoss, D., Molloy, D. E., Harris, K. R., & Graham, S. (2001). Preparation, practice and program reform: Crafting the University of Maryland's five-year, multicategorical undergraduate program in special education. *The Journal of Special Education, 35*, 105-114. doi:10.1177/002246690103500206\_
- Martin, R. J. (Ed.). (1995). *Practicing what we teach: Confronting diversity in teacher education*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- McCray, E. D. (2012). Learning while teaching: A case study of beginning special education teachers completing a masters of arts in teaching. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 35*, 166-184. doi:10.1177/0888406411422381
- McHatton, P. A., Keller, H., Shircliffe, B., & Zalaquett, C. (2009). Examining efforts to infuse diversity within one college of education. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 2*(3), 127-135. doi:10.1037/a0016190
- McIntosh, P. (1990). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. *Independent School, 49*(2), 31. Retrieved from <https://nationalseedproject.org/white-privilege-unpacking-the-invisible-knapsack>
- McLeskey, J., Tyler, N. C., & Saunders Flippin, S. (2004). The supply of and demand for special education teachers: A review of research regarding the chronic shortage of special education teachers. *Journal of Special Education, 38*(1), 5-21. doi:10.1177/00224669040380010201
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). Qualitative data analysis. *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. (pp. 169-207) Jossey -Bass.
- Milner, H. R. (2006a). Preservice teachers' learning about cultural and racial diversity: Implications for urban education. *Urban Education, 41*(4), 343-375. doi:10.1177/0042085906289709\_

- Milner, H. R. (2006b). The promise of black teachers' success with black students. *Educational Foundations*, 20(3-4), 89-104. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ794734.pdf>
- Milner, H. R. (2012). But what is urban education? *Urban Education*, 47(3), 556-561.  
doi:10.1177/0042085912447516
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mueller, J., & O'Connor, C. (2007). Telling and retelling about self and "others": How preservice teachers (re)interpret privilege and disadvantage in one college classroom. *Teaching and Teacher Education: An International Journal of Research Studies*, 23, 840-856. doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2006.01.011
- National Center of Educational Statistics. (2015). *The nations report card: 2015 math and reading assessments*. (No. NCES 2015136). National Assessment of Educational Progress.
- New York City Department of Education. (July, 2017). District 79: Alternative schools and programs. Retrieved from <http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/District79/default.htm>
- New York City Department of Education. (July, 2017). Renewal schools. Retrieved from <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/schools/RenewalSchools/default#schools>
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Peterson, K. D., & Deal, T. E. (1998). How leaders influence the culture of schools. *Educational Leadership*, 56, 28-31. doi:0.3726/978-1-4539-1799-2/40
- Renzulli, L. A., Parrott, H. M., & Beattie, I. R. (2011). Racial mismatch and school type: Teacher satisfaction and retention in charter and traditional public schools. *American Sociological Association*, 84(1), 23-48. doi: 10.1177/0038040710392720



- Rosenberg, P. (2004). Color blindness in teacher education: An optical delusion. In M. Fine, L. Weis, L. Pruitt & A. Burns (Eds.), *Off white: Readings on power, privilege and resistance* (pp. 257-272). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Rowlison, T. (2006). Meeting the needs for special education teachers in New Mexico. *Rural Special Education Quarterly*, 25(2), 13-17. doi:10.1177/875687050602500204
- Scheurich, J. J. (1997). Toward a white discourse on white racism. (an early attempt at an archaeological approach). *Research method in the postmodern*. (pp. 119-131). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Solórzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2001). Critical race and LatCrit theory and method: Counter-storytelling? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 14(4), 471-495. doi:10.1080/09518390110063365
- Schrum, L., Burbank, M. D., & Capps, R. (2007). Preparing future teachers for diverse schools in an online learning community: Perceptions and practice. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 10, 204-211. doi:10.1016/j.iheduc.2007.06.002
- Shealey, M. W., McHatton, P. A., & Wilson, V. (2011). Moving beyond disproportionality: The role of culturally responsive teaching in special education. *Teaching Education*, 22(4), 377-396. doi:10.1080/10476210.2011.591376
- Shultz, E. L., Neyhart, K., & Reck, U. M. (1996). Swimming against the tide: A study of prospective teachers' attitudes regarding cultural diversity and urban teaching. *Western Journal of Black Studies*, 20(1), 1-7. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ540376>
- Siwatu, K. O. (2011). Preservice teachers' sense of preparedness and self-efficacy to teach in America's urban and suburban schools: Does context matter? *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(2), 357-365. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2010.09.004

- Sleeter, C. E. (2001). Preparing teachers for culturally diverse schools: Research and the overwhelming presence of whiteness. *Journal of Teacher Education, 52*, 94-106.  
doi:10.1177/0022487101052002002
- Sleeter, C. E. (2008). Preparing white teachers for diverse students. In M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman-Nemser & D. J. McIntyre (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teacher education: Enduring questions in changing contexts*. (pp. 559-582). New York: Routledge.
- Souto-Manning, M. (2011). Playing with power and privilege: Theatre games in teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education: An International Journal of Research Studies, 27*, 997-1007. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2011.04.005
- Su, Z. (1996). Why teach: Profiles and entry perspectives of minority students as becoming teachers. *Journal of Research and Development in Education, 29*(3), 117-33. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ528658>
- Terrill, M. M., & Mark, D. L. (2000). Preservice teachers' expectations for schools with children of color and second-language learners. *Journal of Teacher Education, 51*(2), 149-155.  
doi:10.1177/002248710005100209
- The Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning. (2003). *The status of the teaching profession: 2003 summary report*.
- Tourkin, S., Thomas, T., Swaim, N., Cox, S., Parmer, R., Jackson, B., & Cole, C. *Documentation for the 2007-2008 schools and staffing survey*. (No. NCES 2010-332). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.
- Trent, S. C., Pernell Jr., E., Mungai, A., & Chimedza, R. (1998). Using concept maps to measure conceptual change in preservice teachers enrolled in a multicultural education/special

education course. *Remedial and Special Education*, 19(1), 16-31.

doi:10.1177/074193259801900103

Trent, S. C., & Dixon, D. J. (2004). "My eyes were opened": Tracing the conceptual change of preservice teachers in a special education/multicultural education course. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 27(2), 119-133. doi: 10.1177/088840640402700204

Ullucci, K., & Battey, D. (2011). Exposing color blindness/grounding color consciousness: Challenges for teacher education. *Urban Education*, 46(6), 1195-1225.

doi.org/10.1177/0042085911413150

U.S. Department of Education. (2014). Department of education. Retrieved from [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

U.S. Census Bureau. (2017). US census bureau. Retrieved from [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

Vaught, S. E., & Castagno, A. E. (2008). "I don't think I'm a racist": Critical race theory, teacher attitudes, and structural racism. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 11(2), 95-113.

doi:10.1080/13613320802110217

Villegas, A. M. (2007). Dispositions in teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 58(5), 370-380. doi:10.1177/0022487107308419

Voltz, D. L., Brazil, N., & Scott, R. (2003). Professional development for culturally responsive instruction: A promising practice for addressing the disproportionate representation of students of color in special education. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 26(1), 63-73. doi: 10.1177/088840640302600107

Zeichner, K. M., & Schulte, A. K. (2001). *What we know and don't know from peer-reviewed research about alternative teacher certification programs*

doi:10.1177/0022487101052004002

Zeichner, K. M., Grant, C., Gay, G., Gillette, M., Valli, L., & Villegas, A. M. (1998). *A research informed vision of good practice in multicultural teacher education: Design principles*

College of Education, The Ohio State University.

Zetlin, A., Beltran, D., Salcido, P., Gonzalez, T., & Reyes, T. (2011). Building a pathway of optimal support for English language learners in special education. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 34*(1), 59-70. doi:10.1177/0888406410380423

### Appendix A

#### Preparing Early Career Culturally Responsive Special Education Teachers Through Alternate Route Preliminary Survey

Hi Everyone!

I am preparing to conduct my dissertation research that focuses on how to effectively prepare culturally responsive teachers of exceptional learners. I am reaching out to you to gather some preliminary information. Your responses to this brief survey will help me to understand the work settings of teachers of exceptional learners. I also hope you will be willing to participate in my research study if contacted. All responses are confidential.

Thank you

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Preferred Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

3. How many years have you taught?

*Only include the years you've served as a special education teacher of record. Exclude the current 2017-2018 school year*

\_\_\_\_\_ years

4. What type of school setting did you teach in during the 2016-2017 school year?

- a. Traditional DOE Public School
- b. Charter School

5. How would you rate the culture of the school you taught at during the 2016-2017 school year? *Peterson and Deal (1998) suggest schools with positive culture reflect, "a shared sense of what is important, a shared ethos of caring and concern, a shared commitment to helping students learn." (p.29).*

Rating 1-5: 1(Very Negative), 5 (Very Positive)

6. Did you work in any of the following settings during the 2016-2017 year?

*Check all that apply.*

- a. 15:1:1 (15 students, 1 special education teacher, 1 paraprofessional)
- b. 12:1:1 (12 students, 1 special education teacher, 1 paraprofessional)
- c. 8:1:1 (8 students, 1 special education teacher, 1 paraprofessional)
- d. Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) in a separate setting (i.e. not in the general education classroom)
- e. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

### Preparing Early Career Culturally Responsive Special Education Teachers Through Alternate Route Interview Protocol

I am interested in learning more about graduate students' perceptions of preparedness to teach in urban schools with populations of culturally and linguistically different students with disabilities while enrolled in Teachers of Exceptional Learners (TEL) Masters in the Art of Teaching (MAT) Dual Certification program.

1. Did you graduate from the TEL program at Relay Graduate School of Education? If so when? Did you attend a traditional department of education school, charter school or private school?
2. What is your race and ethnicity?
3. How long have you been teaching? How long have you been teaching at your current school?
4. Describe your school setting.
  - 4 a. You described your school as...how prepared were for your school setting and student population?
5. What, if any, curricular aspects contributed to your level of preparedness to address the academic needs of linguistically different students with disabilities?
6. What, if any, curricular aspects contributed to your level of preparedness to address the socio-emotional needs of your linguistically different students with disabilities?
7. During your two years enrolled in the TEL program at (school name) what went well?
8. During your two years enrolled in the TEL program at (school name) what did not go well?
9. What about these experiences surprised you the most during your time enrolled in the TEL program about teaching in an urban setting? How did your experiences match your expectations?
10. What recommendations would you make to the TEL department to more adequately prepare TEL graduate students for settings with culturally or linguistically different students with disabilities?

## Appendix C

# MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING PROGRAM OVERVIEW

## ACADEMIC OVERVIEW

Relay coursework is based on four elements of effective teaching. Taken together, these four elements represent the set of knowledge, skills, and mindsets often found in teachers who lead their PK–12 students to profound growth and achievement. During their two years at Relay, graduate students will complete coursework focused on each of these elements, as well as coursework in which they learn how to measure their PK–12 students' growth and achievement. Each course combines theory and practice related to these areas and culminates in performance assessments, providing graduate students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of content and to reflect on their PK–12 students' growth and achievement. The four elements, as well as student growth and achievement, are each briefly described below:



### Self and Other People (SOP)

Teachers need to be aware of themselves as professionals and reflect on their ability to reach their PK–12 students. Teachers must also be mindful of whom their PK–12 students are as individuals and of the communities that shape their PK–12 students' lives. SOP coursework provides graduate students with tools to make these connections to themselves, their PK–12 students, and their PK–12 students' families. The coursework focuses on personal growth and reflection, understanding and working with families and communities, and modeling and teaching strong character.

### Classroom Culture (CC)

In CC coursework, graduate students learn about the countless tangible and intangible details that combine to create an environment wherein PK–12 students are joyfully engaged and meaningfully on-task and feel ownership of their individual and collective successes. From classroom setup, to giving clear directions, to narrating the good choices PK–12 students make, to engaging PK–12 students in lessons, CC coursework prepares teachers to lay the foundations for PK–12 students' success.

### Teaching Cycle (TC)

TC coursework addresses the skills a teacher needs for instructional planning, instructional delivery, and assessment. Graduate students plan for a year, a unit, and a lesson. They learn

how to reach every student while delivering their lessons, as well as how to use assessment to confirm that every student learned and to shape the learning that will come next.

### **Content**

In content coursework, graduate students learn the best pedagogical practices and strategies for the subjects and/or grade levels that they teach. Additionally, Relay believes that all teachers are reading and writing teachers. To that end, all Relay graduate students are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to diagnose and address the reading and writing abilities of all PK–12 students, regardless of the content being taught. Furthermore, graduate students learn how to work with PK–12 students who struggle with specific content or language acquisition or who have exceptional needs.

### **Student Growth and Achievement (SGA)**

In SGA coursework, graduate students will learn how to measure PK–12 students' outcomes through the Relay Pathway to Student Achievement. To measure PK–12 students' academic and character outcomes, graduate students will learn how to determine the content they want to measure and solidify assessment plans aligned to that content. They will also learn how to set ambitious goals, track student progress, and verify outcomes at the end of the academic year.



<b>Year 1 MAT Scope and Sequence</b>			
<b>Fall 2015</b>		<b>Spring 2016</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Module Name</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Module Name</b>
<b>Weeknight 1</b>	<b>Relay-101:</b> Culmination of Orientation	<b>Weeknight 1</b>	<b>SGA-101:</b> Year 1 Pathway
<b>Weeknight 2</b>	<b>SOP-112:</b> Knowing Students, Families, Schools	<b>Weeknight 2</b>	<b>Spring Elective 1</b>
<b>Weeknight 3</b>	<b>SOP-111:</b> Exploring Teaching Identity	<b>Weeknight 3</b>	<b>CC-120:</b> Engaging Everybody
<b>Weeknight 4</b>	<b>CC-112:</b> Classroom Management	<b>Weeknight 4</b>	<b>TC-121:</b> Checking for Understanding
<b>Weeknight 5</b>	<b>TC-101:</b> Designing and Evaluating Assessments	<b>Weeknight 5</b>	<b>TC-124: Student Practice</b>
<b>Weeknight 6</b>	<b>TC-122:</b> Introducing New Material	<b>Weeknight 6</b>	<b>TC-102:</b> Using Data to Drive Instruction
<b>Weeknight 7</b>	<b>OBS-101:</b> Observation: Fall 1	<b>Weeknight 7</b>	<b>Spring Elective II</b>
<b>Weeknight 8</b>	<b>PROF-101:</b> Professionalism: Fall 1	<b>Weeknight 8</b>	<b>SOP-103:</b> Integrating The Elements of Effective Instruction
<b>Weeknight 9</b>	<b>Fall Elective</b>	<b>Weeknight 9</b>	<b>SGA-102:</b> Year 1 Outcomes
		<b>Weeknight 10</b>	<b>PROF-101:</b> Professionalism: Spring 1
		<b>Weeknight 11</b>	<b>OBS-101:</b> Spring 1
		<b>Weeknight 12</b>	<b>SOP-113:</b> Reflecting on Cultural Responsiveness

<b>Date</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Content</b>
<b>Saturday 1 Fall 2015</b>	<b>Content-110</b>	<b>Saturday 1 Spring 2016</b>	<b>Content-112</b>
<b>Saturday 2 Fall 2015</b>	<b>Content-111</b>	<b>Saturday 2 Spring 2016</b>	<b>Content-113</b>

<b>Date</b>	<b>Summer 2015</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Summer 2016</b>
<b>Week 1 Day 1 -3</b>	<b>SOP-110:</b> What to Expect from an X-Grader	<b>Week 1 Day 1-4</b>	<b>TC-210:</b> Unit Planning

<b>Week 1 Day 3 -5</b>	<b>CC-110:</b> Introduction to Classroom Management	<b>Week 1 Day 5</b>	<b>SOP-210:</b> Building a Culturally Responsive Curriculum
<b>Week 2 Day 1 -2</b>	<b>TC-111:</b> Introduction to Lesson Planning	<b>Online Course</b>	<b>SOP-220:</b> Introduction to Character Strengths
<b>Week 2 Day 3 -4</b>	<b>CC-113:</b> The First Few Minutes	<b>Online Course</b>	<b>SOP-216:</b> Working with Communities
		<b>Online Course</b>	<b>CK-210:</b> Survey of Content
		<b>Online Course</b>	<b>Content-210:</b> (Content dependent)
		<b>Week 1 Day 1</b>	<b>SOP-301:</b> The Role of the Special Educator <b>SOP-310:</b> Understanding Disability
		<b>Week 1 Day 2</b>	<b>CC-320:</b> Building an Inclusive Classroom <b>TC-310:</b> Universal Design for Learning
		<b>Week 1 Day 3</b>	<b>TC-312:</b> Differentiated Instruction
		<b>Week 2 Day 1-5</b>	<b>TC-304:</b> Assessing the Whole Learner
		<b>Online Course</b>	<b>TEL-315:</b> Teaching Students with Low-Incidence Disabilities
		<b>Online Course</b>	<b>TEL-320:</b> Teaching Gifted Learners

## Year 2 TEL Scope and Sequence

Fall 2016		Spring 2017	
Date	Module	Date	Module
<b>Weeknight 1</b>	<b>TC-301:</b> Assessing Exceptional Learners <b>TC-326:</b> Intervention Intensive Fieldwork	<b>Weeknight 1</b>	<b>No class</b>
<b>Weeknight 2</b>	<b>TEL-301:</b> Reading Intervention <b>TC-320:</b> Getting to Know Your Students	<b>Weeknight 2</b>	Complete the online work and assessment for one of the following modules: <b>TEL-311:</b> Leveraging Technology for Exceptional Learners <b>TEL-314:</b> Teaching Students with Autism <b>TEL-312:</b> Teaching Students with Emotional Disturbance
<b>Weeknight 3</b>	<b>TEL-301:</b> Reading Intervention	<b>Weeknight 3</b>	<b>TC-323:</b> Progress Monitoring
<b>Weeknight 4</b>	<b>TC-320:</b> Getting to Know Your Students	<b>Weeknight 4</b>	<b>TEL-313:</b> Teaching Students with Speech or Language Deficits
<b>Weeknight 5</b>	<b>TC-321:</b> Instructional Planning	<b>Weeknight 5</b>	<b>TEL-313:</b> Teaching Students with Speech or Language Deficits
<b>Weeknight 6</b>	<b>TC-311:</b> Principles of Specialized Instruction	<b>Weeknight 6</b>	<b>TEL-311:</b> Teaching Students with Attention Deficits
<b>Weeknight 7</b>	<b>TEL-301:</b> Reading Intervention	<b>Weeknight 7</b>	<b>TEL-302:</b> Writing Intervention
<b>Weeknight 8</b>	<b>TEL-301:</b> Reading Intervention	<b>Weeknight 8</b>	<b>TEL-302:</b> Writing Intervention
<b>Weeknight 9</b>	<b>TC-322:</b> Formative Assessment	<b>Weeknight 9</b>	<b>TEL-302:</b> Writing Intervention
<b>Weeknight 10</b>	<b>TEL-301:</b> Reading Intervention	<b>Weeknight 10</b>	<b>TEL-302:</b> Writing Intervention
<b>Weeknight 11</b>	<b>TEL-301:</b> Reading Intervention	<b>Weeknight 11</b>	<b>TC-324:</b> Leveraging Student Strengths
<b>Weeknight 12</b>	<b>TEL-301:</b> Reading Intervention	<b>Weeknight 12</b>	<b>SOP-320:</b> Advocating for Exceptional Learners <b>SGA-321:</b> Special Education Capstone
<b>Weeknight 13</b>	<b>TEL-301:</b> Reading Intervention	<b>Weeknight 13</b>	<b>TEL-303:</b> Math Intervention
		<b>Weeknight 14</b>	<b>TEL-303:</b> Math Intervention
		<b>Weeknight 15</b>	<b>TEL-303:</b> Math Intervention

		<b>Weeknight 16</b>	<b>TEL-303: Math Intervention</b>
		<b>Weeknight 17</b>	<b>No Class</b>
		<b>Weeknight 18</b>	<b>SGA-321: Special Education Capstone</b> Review the expectations for the capstone project so that you are fully prepared for your presentation.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Saturday Coursework</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Saturday Coursework</b>
<b>Saturday 1 Fall 2016</b>	<b>SOP-311: Special Education Law</b> <b>TC-302: Writing Effective IEPs</b>	<b>Saturday 1 Spring 2017</b>	<b>CC-301: Behavior Intervention</b>
<b>Saturday 2 Fall 2016</b>	<b>SOP-312: Collaboration and Consultation with Colleagues</b> <b>SOP-313: Engaging and Supporting Families</b>	<b>Saturday 2 Spring 2017</b>	<b>SOP-302: Disability and Justice</b>

<b>Date</b>	<b>Fieldwork</b>
<b>Weekly (Oct 24th - Dec 12th)</b>	<b>TC-326: Intervention Intensive Fieldwork</b>