Intersectional Course Redesign: A Team-Based, Critical Approach

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> Now more than ever, faculty must ensure the coursework they deliver to preservice teachers continues to emphasize equity, diversity, inclusion, and access explicitly and through thoughtful course design.

ABSTRACT

In this article, we offer a practical guide to support higher education faculty in conducting team-based, intersectionally conscious course redesign in special education teacher preparation programs. Rooted in intersectionality and Disability Studies in Education (DSE) theory, this article offers strategies for evaluating and transforming course content to better prepare preservice teachers to serve diverse learners. Seven phases structure the process: (1) identifying collaborators, (2) organizing roles and workflow, (3) reviewing current content, (4) engaging in individual reflection, (5) engaging in discourse, (6) developing new content, and (7) evaluating revisions. Drawing on intersectionality scholarship, our approach addresses how faculty positionalities, power dynamics, and systemic inequities shape curriculum. It also responds to political resistance to equity, diversity, inclusion, and access by providing actionable strategies to counter deficit-based models and center marginalized voices. Illustrative examples from two redesign projects demonstrate how intersectionality can be enacted as praxis throughout the process.

KEYWORDS

Course redesign, higher education, inclusive education, intersectionality, teacher preparation

Teaching is a relationship-based field where practitioners must be able to collaborate and work with students and families from various cultures and backgrounds. Further, teachers are expected to establish professional relationships with colleagues to collaborate on planning, advocating, and addressing barriers that impact student success. Ideally, courses in teacher preparation programs are designed with this reality in mind. Topics such as inclusive curriculum, supporting students with disabilities, collaborating with professionals, and partnering with families are all key to ensuring future teachers are prepared to form integral partnerships and support diverse populations (Pugach et al., 2020). Higher education faculty have the expertise and the autonomy to design courses and select instructional materials, including those that reflect evidence-based and emerging practices in such topics. With this autonomy, however, comes a great responsibility for faculty to consider how their orientation influences the design and delivery of the content they deliver to future teachers.

In addition to shaping what is taught, faculty must also attend to the implicit messages that course content might convey. A critical evaluation of the hidden systems and structures that the curriculum either reinforces or disrupts is essential (Boveda & Annamma, 2023; Boveda & Aronson, 2019). For example, while faculty teaching preservice special educators have likely been trained to provide differentiated instruction (Annamma et al., 2013; Harry & Klingner, 2022), they might not have received training in how to reflect upon their own socialization within the educational system and society at large (Starck et al., 2020). Such reflection is often overlooked, even though preservice teachers are just as exposed to oppressive ideologies

FIGURE 1: Process for Intersectionally Conscious and DSE-Informed Approach to Course Redesign

and contexts as the students they will teach (Beneke & Park, 2019; Lalvani et al., 2015). Oppressive systems remain intact within education, as evidenced by the overrepresentation of students from nondominant racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds in special education (Annamma et al., 2013; Harry & Klingner, 2022). Critical scholars have interrogated this overrepresentation, challenging dominant narratives that fail to acknowledge the impact of societal inequities on education (Annamma et al., 2018; Boveda, 2024; Harry, 2011; Ocasio-Stoutenburg et al., 2023). Such perspectives are essential for reimagining how educators are prepared, especially when the dominant narrative is rooted in oppressive beliefs about race and ability.

Education has long been shaped by a deficit model in which practitioners are trained to pathologize and "fix" student characteristics that fall outside the norm (Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014; Patten, 2022). As noted by Dudley-Marling and Burns (2014), "this deficit gaze situates school failure in the minds and bodies of students who are presumed to be deficient in skills and abilities associated with school success" (p.18). Teacher preparation programs can either reproduce this deficit model or intentionally resist it by embedding frameworks that help teacher candidates critically examine systems of power and privilege in education (Collins & Bilge, 2020). However, such a shift must acknowledge and navigate the broader political climate within which education operates. In today's climate, preparing teachers to serve diverse populations and advancing equity, inclusion, and access to quality education for all students has become a politically charged issue. Bans on equity, diversity, inclusion, and access focused work in higher education (U.S. Department of Education, 2025) have presented a new context for preparing future teachers. Despite these barriers, equity, diversity, inclusion, and access remain at the core of the mission of education. Now more than ever, faculty must ensure the coursework they deliver to preservice teachers continues to emphasize equity, diversity, inclusion, and access explicitly and through thoughtful course design.

In this article, we provide guidance on how higher education faculty can engage in an iterative, team-based course redesign process grounded in intersectionality and Disability Studies in Education (DSE; see Figure 1). This guidance is provided through seven phases and encourages the development of teacher preparation courses that prepare special educators to critically examine and challenge the systems that might be oppressive to the students they will one day teach. The first phase guides faculty to reflect on their own dominant and marginalized identities and to intentionally assemble collaborators committed to inclusive, intersectionally conscious course development. After establishing a team, the second phase offers guidance to clarify roles and establish shared infrastructure to support the work. The third phase provides strategies for reviewing course materials for deficit-based language, outdated terminology, and gaps in representation, especially around race, disability, and other intersecting identities. The fourth phase then guides individual faculty reflection, which transitions into the fifth phase of collaborative dialogue with the team. The sixth phase offers guidance on developing content that amplifies diverse voices, reflects varied

lived experiences, and promotes critical thinking about power and identity. Finally, the seventh phase involves the establishment of structures for ongoing reflection and iterative revision to ensure the course continues to uphold intersectional values.

Theoretical Frameworks

Intersectionality is a well-established global theory. Although it has been described for centuries, the term has been coined and popularized within the U.S. context as applied to identifying and addressing the inequality experienced by Black women in society (Boveda, 2024; Cho et al., 2013). Their experiences of "interlocking oppressions" described by Collins (1986) are rooted in compounded discriminatory perceptions and behaviors based on the intersection of their racial and gender identities. Although the litigious and academic understanding of intersectionality theory has drawn largely from Critical Race Theory (Crenshaw, 1989), it has also been described as both a phenomenon and a tool outside of these contexts (e.g., Combahee River Collective, 1977; Collins & Bilge, 2020). Additionally, scholars have utilized intersectionality theory beyond racial and gender studies, recognizing its acuity for highlighting the nuances of power dynamics resulting from intersecting systemic inequalities at the macro level. These dynamics often result in heightened marginalization of people with overlapping socio-cultural identity markers at the micro level (Boveda & Weinberg, 2020; Perouse-Harvey, 2022).

Intersectionality has been widely accepted by critical scholars who dedicate themselves to establishing a just education system for students across all their unique and multiple identities (Bešić, 2020). In special education, intersectionality theory has been applied to preparing preservice special education teachers to be aware of their own identities and to meaningfully collaborate with their colleagues and families in support of students with multiple intersecting identities (Boveda & Weinberg, 2020). Intersectionality theory has also been applied in special education to examine how power and inequality show up in education systems, namely in structures and the treatment of multiply marginalized students in schools (Tefera & Fischman, 2024). Intersectionality theory is particularly applicable in a field where students are often subjected to ongoing discrimination based on racialized, disability, economic class, and other socialized identities, which are compounded beyond a single axis (Crenshaw, 1989; Hernández-Saca et al., 2018).

In addition to identifying harm, intersectionality draws attention to the experiences of multiply marginalized people whose voices have been historically excluded. Dominant systems have historically prioritized formal knowledge, often silencing the valuable insights offered by individuals who experience oppression firsthand. As a challenge to the dominant epistemological assumptions, intersectionality centers these lived experiences, regarding them as important sources of knowledge (Annamma et al., 2013). Given the complex history of special education, intersectionality offers a tool for recognizing the inequalities that are built into our systems, including those that are more nuanced (Ocasio-Stoutenburg & Boveda, 2024). By incorporating intersectionality as a framework in revision work, we interrogate the ingrained inequalities of the education system that are reflected in teacher preparation courses.

As a second guiding framework, we incorporate a critical approach to special education teacher preparation which draws from Disability Studies in Education (DSE). DSE has a long history since its departure from special education. It challenges the remedial, clinical, and deficit approaches embedded into research, practice, and educational discourse (Ware, 2020). DSE scholarship operates through a modified social model of disability, opposing the medical model's focus on "fixing" the "problem" of disability within the student (Gallagher et al., 2014). DSE examines the social, political, economic, and contextual factors that constrain opportunities for people with disabilities/disabled people, including educational systems and practices (Baglieri & Bacon, 2020). Furthermore, DSE as a theory supports inclusive opportunities for students in regard to placement, representation, and voice and extends to research and theorizing about disability (American Educational Research Association, n.d.). Importantly, taking a critical approach to DSE further troubles the white-centered framing of traditional disability studies and the ableist framing of special education (Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2009; Ocasio-Stoutenburg et al., 2023).

Both intersectionality and DSE provide opportunities to address the persistent inequities within the education system that ignore or perpetuate the harms often experienced by multiply marginalized students within special education research and practice. We drew from intersectionality's explicit call to recognize the compounded realities of oppression beyond a singular axis, giving attention to the ways in which special education research and practice tend to take color-evasive, disability-neutral approaches that minimize the lived experiences and contributions of people from multiply marginalized communities. Simultaneously, we incorporated DSE's specificity in recognizing the overt and nuanced realities of ableism via exclusion, promotion of assimilation, or remediation that are ever-present in special education and disability-related fields. During our revision process, the combined attentiveness of these frameworks to intersectional discrimination in research and practice allowed us to question the educational space that has

TABLE 1: Intersectionally Conscious and DSE-Informed Approach to Course Redesign

PHASE	OVERVIEW
1. Identifying Collaborators	Reflect on personal identities and their impacts; identify committed collaborators; share positionalities and project vision; prioritize intersectional redesign goals.
2. Organizing Team Roles and Workflow	Define roles; set logistics and timelines; establish shared systems for organizing course content.
3. Reviewing Current Course Content	Identify deficit-based language and outdated materials; assess representation, relevance, and inclusivity; collect feedback from past users.
4. Engaging in Individual Reflection	Pause before making changes; maintain reflective memos; consider emotional labor; use guiding frameworks to deepen insight.
5. Engaging in Team-Based Discourse	Revisit redesign priorities; share critiques and ideas; assign tasks based on expertise.
6. Developing New Content	Select diverse, inclusive resources; incorporate multimedia; gather feedback; embed critical thinking opportunities.
7. Evaluating the Course	Establish evaluation methods; review and revise content after each course offering.

TABLE 2: Applying Frameworks to Special Education Course Revisions

UNDERGRADUATE AUTISM COURSE			
Course Element	*Intersectionally Conscious*	*DSE Contributions*	*Examples*
Language	X	X	Replace “minority” with specific language; include explanations of identity-first vs. person-first language
Visual/Media Representation	X	X	Include images of Families and Disabled Students of Color
Diversity of Perspectives	X	X	Embed social media blogs by people with lived experiences of autism
Epistemology	X	X	Incorporate emerging practices
Content	X	X	Remove deficit-based perspectives to center strengths/ asset-based pedagogies
Considerations of Power and Positioning	X	X	Include student voices in instructional videos
Systemic Changes	X	X	Search for replacement textbook
GRADUATE RESEARCH METHODS COURSE			
Course Element	*Intersectionally Conscious*	*DSE Contributions*	*Examples*
Language	X	X	Recognize how research has historically harmed historically and multiply marginalized groups
Visual/Media Representation	X	X	Include images of diverse communities
Methodology	X	X	Introduce multiple methodologies with equal valuation
Content	X	X	Remove content that is outdated or inattentive to human differences and/or lived experiences
Considerations of Power and Positioning	X	X	Include student voices in instructional videos
Systemic Changes	X	X	Replace textbook

silenced marginalized groups of people for decades.

AN INTERSECTIONALLY CONSCIOUS AND DSE-INFORMED APPROACH TO COURSE REDESIGN

Using an intersectional and DSE lens, this article presents a seven-phase process for critically redesigning course content (see Table 1). We illustrate each phase of the seven-phase process with a section describing "our team's approach," which documents our redesign of two online special education teacher preparation courses. Table 2 provides a detailed description of how intersectionality and DSE were applied in praxis to redesign these courses.

Phase 1: Identifying Collaborators

The first phase in course redesign involves identifying collaborators who bring a shared commitment to equity and inclusion. This process begins with individual reflection on one's own identity markers, both dominant and marginalized, and how positionality can influence the work of higher education faculty (Boveda & Weinberg, 2020). From there, individuals should intentionally seek out collaborators who are dedicated to critical, reflective, and inclusive course development (Yosso, 2005). Such collaborators will typically be faculty members tasked with redesigning courses, as well as graduate students who are learning to do so. However, other collaborators might include individuals with disabilities and their families or interdisciplinary practitioners who can bring invaluable insights to the content. Upon forming a team, members must openly share their positionalities and collective vision for the project to foster trust and alignment (Boveda & Weinberg, 2020). Early discussions should also focus on identifying and prioritizing intersectionally conscious components that will anchor the course redesign, ensuring that the work remains grounded in a guiding vision from the outset.

Our Team's Approach

We came to this work as two dyads, each consisting of a professor and a doctoral student assigned to a course that needed to be revised within a ten-week timespan. Our shared objective brought us together to work as a team to engage in discourse and to reflect, challenge, and assist one another while completing the course revisions. As a team consisting of professors and doctoral students, we acknowledged the significance of using an intersectional lens in all our work, including teaching, research, and service. Before initiating the revisions, we were already familiar with each other's work. In alignment with the scholarship of Boveda and Annamma (2023), we viewed positionality not as a listing of identities, but as a narrative of how intersectional identities influence one's practice and advocacy. With this understanding, we began our work together by each sharing our positionalities (See Appendix A of Supplemental Materials for the team's positionality statements).

Mutual familiarity and alignment of values encouraged us to collaborate in identifying content gaps and developing new course materials. We were rooted in our shared theoretical perspectives throughout every stage of the process, including reviewing the current courses and organizing and creating new materials. Applying an intersectional and DSE lens was an integral part of the course revision process. Our team's approach also emphasized building collaboration and community, values that are often not found in the individualized and "efficiency" models that are embedded into the academy and have been popularized amid the current political climate. Such emphasis reflects critical DSE tenets that perceive the world and all its people as interdependent, not just the individuals who need more comprehensive supports (Ware, 2020).

Phase 2: Organizing Team Roles and Workflow

Once a collaborative team is established, the next phase is to organize team roles and workflow to ensure clarity and fluidity throughout the redesign process. This phase begins with defining the specific roles and responsibilities of each team member in an effort to leverage individual strengths and maintain accountability (Boveda & Weinberg, 2020). The team should also establish clear project logistics and parameters, including decision-making structures and communication protocols. Setting a realistic timeline for task completion will help keep the work on track and aligned with institutional or instructional deadlines. Additionally, developing a shared workflow for organizing and storing course materials, such as using cloud-based platforms or collaborative documents, will help ensure that content is accessible, editable, and centralized for all team members.

Our Team's Approach

At the first meeting, we divided our work into two phases: (1) reviewing the current content through an intersectional and DSE lens to identify gaps, and (2) creating new content to fill those gaps while leveraging one another's expertise. These two phases dictated our timeline of tasks so that we could complete the course revisions within the parameters set by our department. Our team scheduled three Zoom meetings to ensure we could connect and engage in discourse throughout the redesign of our respective courses. We recorded each of these Zoom meetings and the transcripts helped us prepare this recount of how we approached the work. In our

FIGURE 2: Checklist for Reviewing Course Content Through an Intersectional and DSE Lens

REVIEW AREA	ACTION STEPS
Language Use	☐ Identify deficit-based language in instructional practices involving individuals with disabilities (Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014; Patten, 2022). ☐ Flag derogatory terms or labels that conflict with current understandings and the disability community's preferences (e.g., people-first or identity-affirming). ☐ Assess whether language affirms positive views of disability and marginalized communities or reinforces stereotypes.
Content Currency and Relevance	☐ Determine if materials are current (e.g., published within the last 10 years) and relevant to diverse learners.
Representation and Diversity	☐ Evaluate if course materials reflect diverse perspectives and intentionally center experts and learners from various cultural and racialized backgrounds in text and visuals. ☐ Review for diversity in imagery and representation of individuals with disabilities, their families, and respective communities (Ocasio-Stoutenburg et al., 2023).
Bias and Assumptions	☐ Examine content for embedded assumptions, biases, stereotypes, and descriptions of students through a deficit-gaze (Harry & Klingner, 2022).
Evidence-Based Practices	☐ Determine if recommended practices and interventions framed as "evidence-based" are inclusive and appropriate for students across cultural, disability, contextual, and community considerations.
Feedback Integration	☐ Collect feedback from previous students and instructors regarding their experiences with the course content and recommendations for revisions.

first meeting as a team, we shared our positionalities and located our shared theoretical stance of utilizing intersectionality as praxis (Collins & Bilge, 2020). Furthermore, we discussed our understanding of the parameters set by the department for the course revisions. Our second meeting provided an opportunity to debrief on our reactions to the current state of the courses and plan our approach to creating new content. Our third and final meeting allowed us to explore how we could assist one another with creating content, primarily by filming short videos to explain course topics.

At the beginning of each meeting, our team returned to our shared theoretical stance (i.e., utilizing intersectionality as praxis) and checked in on tasks from the previous meeting. Agendas were created in advance to make certain that meetings would move course revisions forward within the timeline set by the team. Further, all agendas and documents were organized within a shared folder that all team members could access. We used features within the shared documents to comment and tag one another with ongoing questions and tasks between meetings. These shared documents were formatted within the parameters provided by the department to ensure they could be seamlessly shared upon completion.

Phase 3: Reviewing Current Course Content

Figure 2 presents a research-based checklist for critically reviewing existing course content through an intersectional and DSE lens. This approach emphasizes identifying exclusionary language, assessing representation, and ensuring alignment with equity, diversity, inclusion, and access. Organized into six key areas (i.e., language use, content currency and relevance, representation and diversity, bias and assumptions, evidence-based practices, and feedback integration), the checklist provides instructors with actionable steps and integrated references to guide equitable course redesign.

Our Team's Approach

Each team member engaged in the course review process from a distinct positionality, bringing unique insights shaped by lived experiences, professional roles, and identities. Nayma revisited one of the courses through the lens of a former student, reflecting critically on its content, structure, and framing. Kelsey, new to the material, approached the review from the perspective of an incoming learner, identifying how course content might be received by students encountering it for the first time. In contrast, Lydia and Mildred drew from their experiences as instructors of the courses. Although our perspectives varied, we were united by a shared commitment to intersectional values and anti-ableist pedagogy. Guided by this lens, we approached the review process with close attention to language, representation, and the implicit messages embedded in course materials. We looked for signs of deficit-based framing, omissions of key perspectives, outdated or exclusionary

texts, and gaps in cultural and disability representation.

Individually, we documented our observations and critiques in preparation for self-reflection and an in-depth team-based discussion. The initial review helped us identify points of misalignment in the courses and surfaced early questions and tensions that would shape our team-based redesign conversations. These reflections revealed key tensions, including conflicts between pedagogical beliefs and interventionist course framing, questions about epistemology and the role of lived experience, and challenges in balancing commitments to equity with the limitations of asynchronous online learning.

Phase 4: Engaging in Individual Reflection

Before taking action, it is essential to engage in intentional and critical reflection. Reflection at this stage enables team members to consider what they have observed, confront the emotional and cognitive weight of the work, and begin to reconcile what changes are possible. Keeping detailed memos of thinking during course review and revisiting these regularly can serve as a powerful tool for fostering such reflection. We encourage faculty to critically examine the paradigms and values embedded within their course materials. They might ask themselves if these materials reflect frameworks of remediation, assimilation, or approaches that are color- and disability-evasive (Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2009). It is equally important to interrogate one's own impressions and consider how they align or conflict with one's pedagogical values, commitments, and broader worldview (Ocasio-Stoutenburg et al., 2023). Such reflection often invites deeper questions. For example, revising a course that one does not own or has not created begs the question, "is this even my course to revise?" Often, the answer is no, yet the labor of anti-ableist, intersectional, and critical redesign disproportionately falls on those most committed to equity. Such labor is not only substantial but also deeply emotional (Yosso, 2005).

As a note, this transitional phase—the space between reviewing course data (e.g., student feedback, content gaps, problematic material) and implementing changes—can feel uncertain and even daunting. Yet it is precisely in this pause that meaning making occurs. Frameworks like DSE and intersectionality offer valuable lenses through which to guide this process. This reflective practice is not supplementary, but rather foundational to the development of equity-centered course design. Our team's approach to individual reflection will be highlighted after discussion of Phase Five, as we shared these reflections during team-based discourse.

Phase 5: Engaging in Team-Based Discourse

Once the reflective groundwork has been laid, the next phase is to engage in open, collaborative dialogue with colleagues. At this stage, individual insights begin to take shape collectively, and the path forward becomes clearer. Discourse provides a space for individuals to bring forward their critiques, questions, and tensions, particularly those surfaced during reflection, and to trouble dominant norms and assumptions embedded in course content and pedagogy. It is in these moments of discourse and shared vulnerability that a deeper understanding of systemic inequities can emerge. At the same time, team members should remain mindful of power dynamics within the group. While ownership might not be equally distributed, responsibility and insight can be. To avoid replicating academic hierarchies, we encourage teams to assign revision tasks based on each member's strengths, lived experience, and expertise (Boveda & Weinberg, 2020). Sharing resources, honoring multiple perspectives, and maintaining mutual accountability can all transform discourse into collective action. As with reflection, this dialogue is not a detour; it is the work at the heart of equity-centered redesign.

Our Team's Approach

Following our initial content review, we intentionally paused to engage in collective reflection and discourse. We met as a team to share our personal and professional experiences with the courses under review, recognizing that each perspective offered a distinct lens on the content. Before diving into revisions, these conversations helped us interpret the data. We considered not only what needed to change, but also what those changes would demand of us emotionally, intellectually, and pedagogically. During these dialogues, Lydia reflected that the interventionist framing of her course conflicted with her pedagogical beliefs, signaling that significant redesign would be required to align the content with her values. This reflection raised important questions about how much change was feasible within departmental constraints. Mildred emphasized that her course de-emphasized lived experience as a legitimate form of evidence, prompting a team-wide conversation about epistemology. Together, we determined that course content must re-center lived experience as a vital source of empirical insight in education.

The reflective space also surfaced tensions between our commitments to equity, diversity, inclusion, and access and the inherent limitations of asynchronous online learning. While online formats allow for accessibility and flexibility, they can also restrict reciprocal, in-the-moment discourse. The

FIGURE 3: Checklist for Inclusive Course Resource Development Through an Intersectional and DSE Lens

ACTION STEPS

- ☐ Create and select resources that represent diverse experts and perspectives.
- ☐ Include materials that reflect the experiences of students and teachers from various racialized, social, and disability backgrounds.
- ☐ Design, generate, and incorporate multimedia resources across team members, recognizing the importance of uplifting their expertise, especially for multiply marginalized and emerging scholars.
- ☐ Gather feedback from reviewers with differing perspectives.
- ☐ Identify opportunities to encourage students to think critically and incorporate them into the course design.

team noted that even with well-crafted discussion prompts, the unpredictability of preservice teachers' engagement and the inability to adapt in real time posed challenges for fostering deep, responsive dialogue in the asynchronous format. These constraints were acknowledged as necessary to consider when developing revised course content and learning activities.

Phase 6: Developing New Content

Based on our team's experience, we present Figure 3 as a checklist of key considerations for developing new course content that centers on diverse perspectives, affirms marginalized experiences, and fosters critical thinking among learners, all key tenets of intersectionality as praxis.

Our Team's Approach

After reviewing, reflecting, and engaging in discourse about the content of the courses, we began redesigning. Both courses were designed more than ten years prior, so we conducted literature reviews to ensure the literature was up to date. We explored changing the course textbooks as an option to potentially allow a feasible amount of content to be altered. Balancing the parameters set by our department and our positioning as researchers and teachers was challenging. For one course, we maintained the current course textbook and supplemented it with several readings to ensure the course content was relevant, refrained from deficit-based language, and represented a diverse set of students. For the other course, we kept one textbook and replaced another to provide students with a more practical application of the course material. For both courses, we incorporated the most up-to-date literature on topics to ensure current readings on course concepts. Furthermore, we evaluated the identities of authors and creators of the content, working to ensure that the readings represented various researchers and teachers from different racial and ethnic backgrounds.

To help preservice teachers understand the varied course concepts within an online course format, our team decided to film short videos of team members providing overviews of the topics. For this task, we analyzed the concept being taught and engaged in discourse to decide who should deliver the message. As a team, we discussed our areas of expertise, unique identities, and prospective students' unique identities as part of the decision for who would film content overviews for different concepts. For example, to introduce the concept that one's positionality impacts how they consume information and teach others, we had our team member who identifies as a White woman provide the video overview. This choice was intended to make the content more relatable to prospective students who will take the course, most of whom are likely to be White given the demographics of our university's student body. Our team was fortunate to comprise individuals from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, which we leveraged to ensure that students were exposed to a range of experts.

Example Revisions: Foundational Course on Autism. The foundational course on autism spectrum disorder (ASD) was an undergraduate-level course that was required for an autism certification program in education and related settings. The original contents included an overview of issues, characteristics, evidence-based assessment strategies, and approaches for working with individuals with ASD. It was a three-credit course offered in an asynchronous online format. The intent of the course revision was to incorporate current and emerging research in the field. Such integration was critical because the course content had primarily focused on applied behavioral analysis (ABA) principles without including other strategies that can support people with ASD. Moreover, the course did not include the lived experiences of people with autism and their families, despite their ability to offer critical insights on what works, for whom, and under what conditions (Ocasio-Stoutenburg & Farkas, 2023).

Revisions also focused on replacing deficit-based content and exercises with strength-based language and approaches. Often, the language embedded within

the modules was stereotypical and failed to incorporate the spectrum of presentations of autism. Incorporating an intersectional perspective, we prioritized the rejection of singular notions of autism. To that end, we incorporated both imagery and insights that represent familial, autistic, and cross-cultural perspectives. We paid close attention to ensuring that images and videos did not just represent the white middle-class, or even the interventionist population only. We worked to actively avoid the erasure of racialized and ethnically diverse people, people with autism, and People of Color within the autistic community.

Example Revisions: Graduate-level Research-based Course. The graduate-level course was designed for both practitioners (i.e., part-time students) and full-time graduate students. It focused on teaching students how to consume and conduct research. The goal of the course redesign was to help current and future educators theorize about their own practices as educators and the research that informs those practices (Boveda & Aronson, 2019). One key change was the adoption of a new textbook that encouraged teachers to view themselves not only as consumers of research but also as researchers themselves. This shift aimed to move the course away from a positivist framework and toward a more interpretivist approach to research. As part of this shift, we introduced key concepts that helped preservice and in-service teachers reflect on the positionality of both the authors of research and of themselves as teachers and researchers. Through these shifts, we hoped to encourage them to think critically about objectivity and how positionality shapes epistemology and power structures (Harry, 2008).

Overall, we made changes to the course content to encourage preservice and in-service teachers to consider how their own identities, the identities of their students, and the positionality of those who have shaped existing research influence the educational systems in which they work. By providing them with the language and tools to evaluate and challenge the education system, we hoped to equip them with the ability to foster more inclusive practices in their teaching and research.

Phase 7: Evaluating the Course

Course redesign is not a one-time event, but rather an ongoing, iterative process. Evaluation must be built into the life cycle of a course, not as an afterthought, but as a continuous mechanism for accountability, improvement, and most importantly, responsibility. As knowledge-creators, we are responsible to people who are multiply marginalized, with the power to use our positions to either reinforce or disrupt stereotypes and erasures. Because community preferences and sociopolitical contexts evolve over time, course content must be regularly reexamined to ensure it remains current, inclusive, and aligned with the values of intersectionality. Teams can use intentional structures to gather feedback, reflect on teaching practices, and revise materials accordingly as part of the iterative process. By embedding evaluation into each course iteration, instructors and teams can ensure that the course remains dynamic, reflective, and responsive to the communities it is intended to impact.

Our Team's Approach

We will utilize the redesigned courses in the upcoming academic year. After this implementation, we plan to reconvene as a team to review student feedback and assess the students' experience with the revised content. Because faculty from our team will teach the courses directly, we will also reflect on their instructional experiences as part of the evaluation of the revisions' effectiveness in practice. Based on these reflections, we will determine if we need to invite new collaborators to support the next cycle of course refinement. Drawing on feedback from students and instructors, we will identify areas for further development and decide which components need additional revision. We will then re-engage in the earlier phases of the redesign process as outlined in this tutorial, ensuring that each iteration of the course remains responsive, inclusive, and grounded in intersectional values.

CONCLUSIONS

In an era in which equity-focused education is increasingly politicized, the responsibility of higher education faculty to design inclusive, critically conscious coursework has never been more urgent. Preparing future educators who will challenge oppressive and unjust systems is not merely an academic responsibility; it is an ethical one. In this article, we offer a team-based approach to course redesign that utilizes intersectionality and DSE as guiding frameworks. Our approach emphasizes how faculty can disrupt deficit-based ideologies and better prepare future educators to support students from multiply marginalized communities. They can work toward these goals by reflecting on their own positionalities and examining how their course materials can unintentionally reinforce dominant narratives. Although structural barriers to equity in education persist, this guide centers the power of intentional, reflective, and collaborative course redesign to challenge these systems from within. By enacting this work, faculty can move beyond symbolic gestures toward equity and engage in sustained, meaningful efforts to transform teacher preparation programs.

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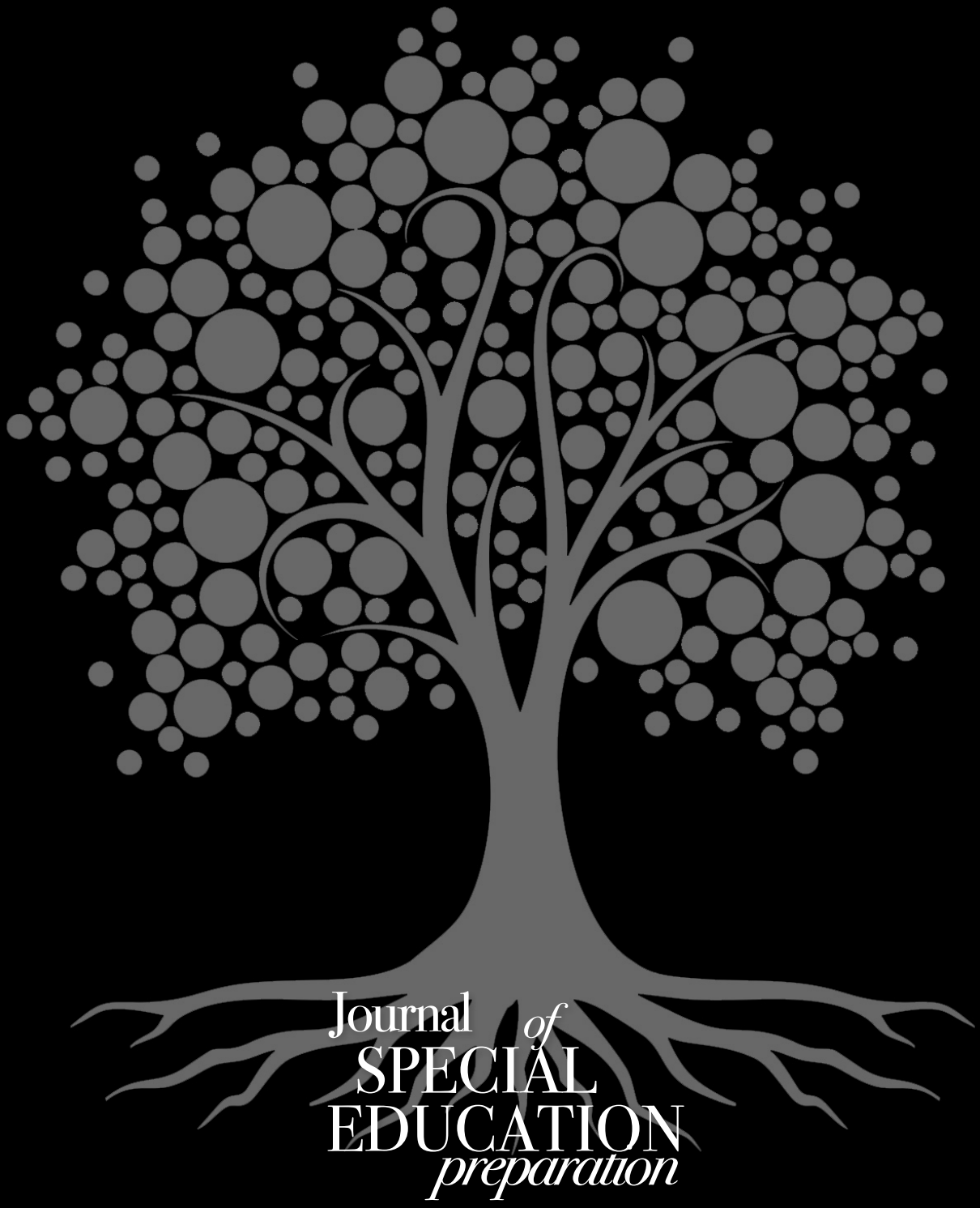

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