Journal *of* SPECIAL EDUCATION *preparation*

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Welcome to the Journal of Special Education Preparation (JOSEP)! The editorial team is pleased to bring you this special issue on the important topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in special education teacher preparation. We are happy to meet our anticipated publication date of December 2021, just in time for the holidays. I can't think of better way to spend winter break then curled up with this latest issue of JOSEP!

Although cultural and linguistic diversity (CLD) in teacher preparation has been a topic among educational scholar for quite some time (Cummins, 1997; Sleeter, 2017), widely covered public events, such as the murder of George Floyd and subsequent Black Lives Matter protests, have galvanized national attention and forced conversations around equity and social justice. While the LGBTQ+ community and allies continue to push society towards equality and inclusion, we must affirm the intersectionality of identities among ourselves, our preservice teachers, and K-12 students. The editorial team at JOSEP welcomes such discussions and wanted to dedicate a special issue to further conversations and educational opportunities for special education faculty. We sought scholars in the field of special education teacher preparation with experience and expertise in topics of DEI. We asked them to submit an article with practical implications for special education faculty. As a result, we present five valuable contributions to the field that we hope elevate best practices in special education teacher preparation. At the end of this issue, we bring our highly regarded International Spotlight article, furthering our mission in the awareness and education of worldwide special education preparation.

In this Issue

The first article by Kelly and Barrio (2021) examines intersectionality between CLD and disability. The authors detail what a critical perspective in special education teacher preparation is and why it is needed to offer a foundation of knowledge for teacher educators looking to include CLD and intersectional content in their coursework. The authors continue to expand upon this foundation to provide teacher educators with a concrete framework of instruction that supports the inclusion of CLD and intersectional content.

The second article by Scott and Proffitt (2021) addresses persistent issues of underrepresentation of special education teachers of color. The authors contend that since institutions of higher education (IHEs) play a major role in recruiting, supporting, and retaining future teacher educators, IHEs must engage in efforts to adopt strategies that lead to diversifying the teacher workforce. To do so, the authors provide multiple, practical strategies for IHEs to consider when recruiting, supporting, and retaining racially diverse teacher candidates. The authors utilize a scenario of a Black male's decision-making process to become a special education teacher to exemplify the importance and intentionality IHEs must consider to diversify the special education teacher workforce.

The third article by Cichy-Parker (2021) examines the preparation of special education teachers to affirm their LGBTQ+ teachers. The author identifies three areas in which special education teacher educators can interact with their teacher candidates to support learning about the LGBTQ+ community and equip preservice teachers to work with their future K-12 students who identify as a sexual or gender minority. In this article, Cichy-Parker provides a historical perspective of the LGBTQ+ community, as well as professional experience of practical strategies such as qualitative assessments through discussion and

journaling, perspective taking, and building cultural empathy through affective learning.

In the fourth article, Williams et al. (2021) describe a replicable process to review and revise a core course in a teacher licensure program to include culturally sustaining pedagogy. Along with step-by-step procedures, the authors include assignments and syllabi for JOSEP readers to utilize in the review and revision of their own courses. The authors conclude that systematically reviewing and revising course syllabi and assignments at a micro and macro level provides their teacher candidates a paradigm shift away from awareness of intersectionality to a more application-oriented approach of culturally sustaining pedagogy.

The fifth article by Hunter et al. (2021) discusses how trauma-informed care (TIC) represents a holistic approach to structuring culture, practice, and policies to be sensitive to the experiences and needs of individuals who have experienced trauma (McInerny & McKlindon, 2014). The authors contend that conversations and issues around DEI must also include practices of TIC. To do so, the authors explore the integration of TIC practices within classrooms that utilize a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) framework. Guidance is provided in how to assist pre-service and in-service teachers with implementing TIC practices within inclusive and restrictive K-12 learning environments.

The International Spotlight is provided by Karal (2021) from Sinop University in Turkey. The author provides a comprehensive and compelling description of the historical context of special education and teacher preparation in Turkey. Through national laws and international declarations, the country has moved towards inclusive educational practices that has brought substantial benefit to students with

> "…we present five valuable contributions to the field that we hope elevate best practices in special education teacher preparation. At the end of this issue, we bring our highly regarded International Spotlight article, furthering our mission in the awareness and education of worldwide special education preparation."

disabilities, as well as challenges to Turkey's educational system. Karal identifies five contemporary issues impacting the progression of special education in Turkey and offers insight into potential solutions.

Many Thanks

We first must thank all contributing authors for providing quality articles, meeting explicit deadlines, and benefiting the field of special education teacher preparation with their experience and expertise. Secondly, no peer-reviewed journal is successful without a solid review board. We, therefore, extend our great appreciation for those who conducted timely and thoughtful reviews to increase the quality and reader readiness of the included articles.

Open-access production of JOSEP would not be possible without the support of Ball State University's Of-

fice of Digital Research and Publishing. And we are happy to announce a recent partnership with the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children. It takes many stakeholders to create a professional journal that will have longevity and great contribution to the field of special education teacher preparation. We also must thank the publication services of The McKinley Avenue Agency for creating a professional, high-quality publication design that matches the high-quality of our content.

What's Next?

Now that the editorial team has volume one under our belts and experience operating a peer-reviewed journal, we are ready to open JOSEP to public manuscript submissions in January 2022. If you are interested in submitting a manuscript, please visit the JOSEP website for author guidelines. If you are interested in serving on the review board, please send an email to ammarkelz@bsu.edu. In the meantime, we are working diligently on our next special issue, scheduled for publication in May 2022. The next special issue will focus on technology in special education teacher preparation. We have invited several experts in this area to submit compelling and practical articles ranging from using technology for universal design for learning in teacher preparation to integrating mixed-reality simulation in initial and advanced preparation programs. We look forward to continuing our efforts to feature research-to-practice information for special education faculty and bring our readers the latest on evidence-based instructional strategies, technologies, procedures, and techniques to prepare special education teachers and leaders.

We hope you enjoy this issue of JOSEP and get some rest and relaxation during the winter break!

Disability at the Intersections: Expanding Reflective Practices Within Special Education Teacher Preparation

AUTHORS

Jerae Kelly and Brenda Barrio

ABSTRACT

The development of more culturally competent special education teachers is integral to striving for a more equitable education system for all students. However, the development of cultural competency around disability as diversity, especially from an intersectional lens, is often underrepresented in teacher preparation programs. As a result, if it is included at all, it is often at the discretion of individual teachers willing to incorporate such content into their teacher preparation classes. For teacher educators who are searching for ways to infuse disability as diversity content into their coursework, critical disability studies provides a framework for implementation by supporting teacher candidate's critical reflective practice. In adopting such a framework, teacher educators can better target the development of cultural competency in their special education teacher candidates. As such, the aim of the present article is to provide a method of instruction to support the development of critical reflective practices in special education teacher preparation programs.

There is increased acknowledgement that special education pre-service teachers benefit from the inclusion of cultural and linguistic diversity (CLD) within their teacher preparation coursework (Civitillo et al., 2018; Sleeter, 2016). Yet, relatively few programs incorporate changes that include disability as an aspect of CLD. Even fewer incorporate changes that include intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991), which describes the ways in which disability intersects with other linguistic and cultural identity markers (Pugach et al., 2020; but see Robertson et al., 2017 and Ortiz & Robinson, 2018 for exceptions). Such intersections result in the presence of unique lived experiences for those with intersecting identities that require space and thoughtful consideration in special education teacher preparation (Pugach et al., 2020).

In general, current efforts to include CLD topics across special and general education teacher preparation are aimed in piecemeal fashion or subordinated to elective classes due to varied commitment to critical practices across teacher preparation programs (Barrio, 2021; King & Butler, 2015). Teacher preparation programs thus do not purposefully and systematically incorporate CLD content into program syllabi (Barrio, 2021; Gorski, 2009; Sleeter, 2017). This omission leaves the inclusion of CLD content incumbent upon individual teachers within such programs (Robertson et al., 2012). However, there are several challenges teacher educators may face when incorporating CLD content into their courses.

First, not all teacher educators may feel equipped to include CLD content in their courses (Barrio, 2021). Further research suggests that even after substantial professional development, special education faculty still face barriers to implementation; while the content may be worthwhile, meeting such a demand

while maintaining the expectations for methods and core content courses is challenging (Devereaux et al., 2010). Second, teacher educators may have difficulty in changing the limiting beliefs of the pre-service teachers that enter their programs. In fact, a recent review of research on teachers' adoption of culturally responsive practices suggests that one challenge teacher educators may face with pre-service teachers is a limited understanding and belief in culturally responsive practices (Neri et al., 2019). As a result, teacher educators are confronted with the task of not only teaching the pedagogical skills of culturally relevant teaching alongside method pedagogical content, but also cultivating the dispositions of culturally relevant educators in their pre-service teachers.

Further compounding this problem is the turbulent political climate we find ourselves in, especially given the current egregious assault on Critical Race Theory (CRT; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Kim, 2021). These current issues may lead to hesitancy and resistance among teacher educators, which may further hinder the incorporation of CLD content into program content. Teacher educators may experience a lack of collaboration with and support from colleagues regarding the incorporation of CLD content into program content due to hesitancy and resistance. Finally, students may also be hesitant and resistant to engage in discussions of CLD and intersectionality, and when engaged in such discussions, disputes between students may arise (Evans-Winters & Hines, 2020).

Nevertheless, these challenges should not dissuade special education teacher educators from the responsibility we bear of preparing our pre-service teachers to serve the increasingly diverse public-school population. We believe the best

antidote to any potential trepidation in the face of such challenges is preparation and support. The purpose of the present article is thus twofold. The first purpose is to detail what a critical perspective in special education teacher preparation is and why it is needed to offer a foundation of knowledge for teacher educators looking to include CLD and intersectional content in their coursework. The second purpose is to expand upon this foundation to provide teacher educators with a concrete framework of instruction that supports the inclusion of CLD and intersectional content. The specific teaching practice introduced centers on building a disposition of critical reflection in special education pre-service teachers.

Critical Disability Studies: A Theoretical Framework

At the most basic level, one's association with CLD in education is predominantly defined by one's relative position to power in society (Artiles, 2009). Power in society is defined by racial and ethnic whiteness, maleness, heteronormativity, wealth, and normalcy. Consequently, the social constructions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class status, and disability are what most often constitutes a CLD association for groups of students within education systems and research. However, other definitions may include religion (Ault, 2010); transiency, such as students in foster care (Scherr, 2007) or from families in the military (Esqueda et al., 2012); and citizenship status (Ford, 2012).

To critically examine these positions of power, especially in the field of special education and teacher preparation, participants within these spaces must critically examine the way disability is viewed, as part of diversity, and as but one part of

person's intersectional identity (Conner et al., 2019). In order to do so, special education teacher preparation programs may consider the use of a critical disability studies framework to teach the practice of critical reflection. Disability studies is a field of inquiry that examines the effects of the social construction of disability in our society (Goodley, 2016). Specifically, disability studies refers to works of scholarship that examine how barriers within systems subvert inclusive spaces and thus work as entities of exclusion for students with disabilities (Baglieri et al., 2011; Connor et al., 2008). Critical disability studies (DisCrit; Annamma et al., 2013) is an extension of the general field of disability studies based on the inclusion of CRT. In line with CRT, DisCrit focuses on centering the lived experiences of persons with disabilities with intersectional identities that continue to be oppressed (e.g., disability + race, ethnicity, immigration status, native language, sexuality, etc.).

Connor et al. (2019), for example, situates DisCrit as the lens in which the disproportionality of students of color receiving special education services can be used to not only critically analyze this issue but use it as means to alleviate it as well. Therefore, this article uses DisCrit as the overarching theoretical framework for teaching critical reflection. Specifically, this article focuses on centering the experiences of Black and Indigenous students of color (BIPOC) with learning disabilities. In adopting this view, special education teacher educators can meet the charge in calling attention to the ways in which ableism impacts the lived experiences of those with disabilities, and at the same time, acknowledge that ableism is culturally and historically symbiotic with other systems of oppression based on

perceived identify markers, such as race and ethnicity (Artiles, 2016).

Disability Sub-Cultures and Intersectionality

When discussing the culture of disability, it is necessary to recognize the subcultures that exist within the culture of disability. For instance, language is a strong indicator of one's culture (Gay, 2018); American Sign Language used by the those who are deaf undergirds the robust history of a strong cultural identity (Sutton-Spence, 2010). This example showcases that unidimensional identity markers not only fail to capture the intersections of such markers, but also fail to capture the myriad ways in which identities are shaped by the variation within, defined by place and history (Hulko, 2009). Artiles et al. (2016) cultural-historical analysis of disability argues that the concept of disability historically, and at present, plays a dual role of protection through the obtainment of legal rights and resources, but also marginalization through the erasure of students' intersectional identities. As a more concrete example, Sleeter (1986) details how the term learning disability historically served as a product of social construction to justify the exclusion of students of color and students experiencing poverty. These examples illustrate that conceptualizing the culture of disability in schools cannot exist without an intersectional lens (Pugach et al., 2020).

Using Critical Reflective Practice in Teacher Preparation

Reflective practice is a common exercise in teacher preparation programs (Brookfield, 2017). Reflective practice describes a cyclical process of learning through action by reflecting on one's knowledge acquisition, performance, and experiences (Shön, 2007). For instance, a pre-service teacher may reflect on how well the lesson went that day and identify areas of their instruction in need of improvement. The development of a critical reflective practice, within a DisCrit framework, extends the general practice of teacher reflection by aiming to support the growth of cultural responsiveness in teacher candidates by making visible the inherent biases they carry (Hoffman-Kipp et al., 2003; Liston & Zeichner, 2013). For instance, in addition to reflecting on their teaching practice, critical reflection may incorporate questions such as, "Whose story was told today?" and "Whose story was missing?" or "How much time did I spend disciplining students today?" and "Did I facilitate knowledge today or did I dictate knowledge?" Gay (2018) contends that by developing the practice of critical reflection, educators are better equipped to combat the negative effects of the social constructions in their classrooms (i.e., deficit-minded when it comes to working with students who are CLD).

Critical reflection in education encourages teachers to interrogate their educational experiences and socialized beliefs to better understand how such factors influence their own instruction and the general workings of school systems (Gay & Kirkland, 2003), especially as it relates to oppressive practices (Barrio, 2021). The adoption of disparate viewpoints (i.e., counter-narratives; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) to common issues in today's schools (e.g., disproportionality) allows pre-service teachers to examine how social constructions of power within society, such as those based on theories of class, gender, or race, impact educational outcomes (Connor et al., 2019). For example, exposure to counternarratives provided from BIPOC students with disabilities demonstrates how the intersection of the cultural identity markers of disability and race results in unique lived experiences for such students in education (Annamma et al., 2013). See Harper (2015) as an example counter narrative.

Case Study: Professor Hutchison

We developed a case study to explore how ability is a product of social construction in today's schools (Omansky & Rosenblum, 2001) through a focus on race and student behavior. That is to say, how disability is 'seen' relative to how ability is defined and relative to racial stereotypes (Cooc, 2017; Fish, 2017). This choice is purposeful in order to highlight the need for intersectional perspectives that center race more generally in the field of special education (Gillborn, 2015). The use of critical reflective practice as a teaching tool provides pre-service teachers with a means to think about how their views on student behavior may be influenced by implicit bias. Further, the practice supports teachers in thinking about what actions they can use to limit the influence of implicit bias.

A second purpose of the example case study is to provide teachers who are curious but unsure—or even hesitant—with a template for implementation. It is our intention that the case study, along with the step-by-step guide assists teacher educators in addressing any potential challenges that arise as they engage in this work. Still, our article is apt for seasoned teacher educators as well who may be looking for a more deliberate and systematic way to include disability as an aspect of diversity in their classrooms. The case study is a fictional account of the first author's experiences learning about critical

reflection and translating her learning into practice. The series of topics and practices provided in the case study and Table 1 are intended to extend guidance and provide a sample of resources to teach critical reflective practice and inculcate cultural awareness around disability from an intersectional lens in special education teacher preparation courses. It is not the intention of the first author to provide a prescriptive method to teach critical reflection but to relay their best efforts to explore such vital topics in teacher preparation courses.

Professor Hutchison is a faculty member in special education who identifies as a white female. At the conclusion of the spring semester, Professor Hutchison learns she is taking over teaching a behavior management course for the special education teacher preparation program at her university. She has never taught this course before and so she is given a syllabus to plan from for the upcoming semester. She notices the syllabus mentions reflective practice as a learning objective of the course but does not mention anything about cultural awareness. Professor Hutchison understands the critical importance of supporting her students in wrestling with the implications of race in special education. While discussing the changes to her syllabus with some of her colleagues, she learns about a three-day workshop on DisCrit offered by the disability studies program at her university. Professor Hutchison decides to attend the workshop, hoping she can use some of the information for planning her behavior management course.

While at the workshop, Professor Hutchison is introduced to the practice of critical reflection. At the start of the workshop, a disability studies professor gave a lecture on the culture of disability and how it is inextricably tied to intersectionality. Over the three-day workshop, the leaders of the workshop engaged Professor Hutchi-

son in critical reflection by modeling how professors can implement the process in their classrooms. First, the facilitators introduced a topic from multiple perspectives. In the workshop, the topic was disproportionality in special education identification. Next, the participants discussed their reactions to the topic with each other in response to guiding questions provided by the facilitator. Questions for the discussion aimed to have the participants unpack and interrogate the concept of disproportionality (i.e., under- or over-representation of students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds in special education) using the 5 Wh's Questions.

Who: Who does disproportionality affect? Who are the actors that drive disproportionality in special education identification?

What: What is disproportionality in special education identification?

When: How has disproportionality sustained or changed over time? What progress, if any, has been made?

Where: How does disproportionality look nationwide? How does it look at the state or district level? How do contributing factors change by localized context? In what ways does it stay the same?

Why: Why is it important for teacher educators to understand disproportionality and its effects? Why is there disproportionality in special education identification?

Finally, each participant engaged in critical reflection after the participants' discussion through a private journaling activity which tasked them in answering the How. "How can teacher educators build awareness and help their pre-service teachers make sense of disproportionality and work to combat its effects in their classrooms?" The participants shared their reflections with the facilitators to continue to the discussion.

After her involvement in the workshop, Professor Hutchison decides to include the practice of critical re-

flection in her syllabus as a means to have her students grapple with topics around CLD in schools. Professor Hutchison planned her inclusion of critical refection for her semester long class by identifying the central theme of disproportionality in addressing student behavior and then a series of critical reflection topics related to the chosen theme with guiding questions and associated resources she assigned to her students. Throughout the planning process, Professor Hutchison worked with other teacher educators, consulted experts in the field, and read the literature to identify academic articles and other resources to provide students with challenging resources that present multiple and counter perspectives. In particular, Professor Hutchison sought out works of scholarship written by BIPOC or that centered the voices of BIPOC students. See Table 1.

As an example of Professor Hutchison's process, during the first class session, she first acknowledges to the class the sensitive nature of the content about to be discussed. She explains to her students that they may leave the room at any time if they feel uncomfortable or overwhelmed, and that they can email her with their concerns or drop an anonymous note in her mailbox. After Professor Hutchison established the protocol for any potential triggering event, she introduced the central theme for the critical reflection aspect of the course: Disproportionality in the treatment of student behavior; which refers to the unequal use of punitive and exclusionary practices to address the behavior of different groups of students (e.g., Black students being X times suspended from school in comparison to white students).

Professor Hutchison then executed a mini-lesson lecture on the central topic keeping the 5 Wh's in mind. Professor Hutchison deliberately choose a mini-lesson format in place of a traditional lecture to introduce

the topic to her students. Mini lessons are designed to provide students with a short (approximately 10-15 min) and concise introduction to a topic. Because Professor Hutchison planned to go deeper into all these topics in subsequent weeks, the mini-lesson format allowed her to provide her students with a foundation of knowledge and pique their interest to generate questions and comments for thoughtful class discussion. To begin her mini-lesson, she first defined what disproportionality is and who it applies to as it pertains to student behavior. Next, she reviewed disproportionality statistics at present and overtime for the local school district she worked for and nationwide statistics to discuss how place and time (where and when) impact disproportionality in student discipline. Finally, she reviewed findings from the literature to begin to explore why disproportionality in addressing student behavior exists and introduce the topic of implicit bias.

Following the mini-lesson, Professor Hutchison facilitated a classroom discussion. To begin, Professor Hutchison set the purpose for the discussion—to engage in discussion around the central topic, to expand and share perspectives, and to prepare for the reflection prompt. Professor Hutchison established norms for the discussion and modeled her expectations for the discussion, such as using sentence stems for agreements/disagreements, paraphrasing others' responses for clarification, and building upon others' ideas. During the discussion, Professor Hutchison listened for student talk and captured some thoughts expressed by the students. She hears one student say, "I wouldn't let a student's skin color dictate the way I discipline them." She notes this as colorblind and highlights the need to address it if it goes unquestioned during the class discussion and more specifically in her feedback to the student's reflection journals. She hears another student say, "It's clear there are not supports at home in some

school districts which likely causes higher rates of behavior." She notes this comment as problematic because it reveals the presence of implicit biases and again highlights the need to discuss such statements. Finally, she hears a student comment on their school placement for student teaching, "I was shocked at how the school looked, the building and lack of resources and facilities. I couldn't believe places like that still exist today. It makes me realize just how blessed I am that I had access to fully resourced and funded schools." She records this statement as an emerging moment of critical reflection in the student's comparison of their experience to those of their students but notes to follow up with the student to explore more deeply their perceptions of their school placement and encourage further thought.

Once Professor Hutchison concludes the classroom discussion, to close out the class session, she introduces the weekly critical reflection assignment of the course. She explains to her students that the weekly reflection assignment will task her students with reflecting on how the information from the mini-lecture and discussion help them begin to answer the 'how' question of each week's topic and introduces the 'how' question for the first week: How might my role as a future educator support disproportionality in student discipline? She designed this assignment to be a weekly reflective journal activity and she offered her students the choice of whether to keep a written journal or an audio journal. She explains to her students that she will grade the reflection assignment based on a participation rubric that reflects varying levels of engagement in critical reflection in relation to the content. See Barrio (2021) for sample rubric.

STEP BY STEP GUIDE FOR TEACHER EDUCATORS

In order to implement critical re-

flection in special education teacher preparation programs, similar to Professor Hutchinson, this step-by-step guide could help lead the way.

Before Instruction: Plan

1. Gather resources. A teacher educator cannot develop critical reflection in their students if they themselves do not practice critical reflection. Integral to this process is the continual building and expansion of knowledge and resources including articles, videos, and other creative works that explore issues of CLD. Importantly, such resources should be written by BIPOC authors or center the voices of BIPOC students with disabilities in the work. The resources in italics in Table 1 are written by BIPOC authors or center the voices of BIPOC students with disabilities.

2. Establish a safe a routine space for reflection. The critical reflection topics discussed are sensitive and could be triggering for pre-service teachers. We can never anticipate the experiences and traumas our students are entering our classroom with and so you must have a contingency plan in place and communicate this plan to students in your very first class—before you discuss any material. This contingency plan should directly tell students what to do if they feel triggered; for example, where they should go if they need to remove themselves from the room and how they can contact you if they care to express what was triggering and how they are feeling. Importantly, this method should have the option to be anonymous (dropping a note in your mailbox or an anonymous survey link students know how to access).

Providing a structured group discussion atmosphere is the second step in building a safe classroom.

Topic	Guiding Wh Questions for Class Discussion	Question for Reflection Journal	Readings
Topic 1: **Behavior and Disproportionality**	1. Who does disproportionality affect? 2. What is disproportionality in special education identification? 3. How has disproportionality sustained or changed over time? What progress, if any, has been made? 4. How does disproportionality look nationwide? How does it look at the state or district level? 5. Why is it important for teacher educators to understand disproportionality in student discipline and its effects?	How might my role as a future educator support disproportionality in student discipline?	Rudd (2014) Green et al. (2019)
Topic 2: **The Role of Adults in Student Behavior**	1. Who: Who are the adults that drive disproportionality in student discipline? 2. What: What role do adults play in disproportionality in student discipline? 3. When: When, if ever, in your schooling experience did you receive punitive punishment in response to your behavior? 4. Where: Where is the use of punitive punishment practices most often seen? 5. Why: Why is it important for adults that work in schools to understand their role in contributing to and combating disproportionality in student behavior?	How can I continue to build awareness and make sense of my role in perpetuating or ameliorating disproportionality in student discipline?	Aviv (2018) Allen (2016)
Topic 3: **The school-to-prison pipeline**	1. Who: Who does the school-to-prison pipeline impact? 2. What: What is the school-to-prison pipeline? 3. When: When does the school-to-prison pipeline begin? 4. Where: Have you ever seen any instances of the school-to-prison pipeline operating in your schooling experience? 5. Why: Why does the school-to-prison pipeline exist?	How can I share my knowledge about disproportionality in student discipline and the school to prison pipeline with others?	Mallet (2017) Tallent (2021)
Topic 4: **The school-to-prison pipeline and students with disabilities**	1. Who: Does the school-to-prison pipeline differentially impact certain disability categories? 2. What: What is the percent of students with disabilities are incarcerated? Why do you think this is? 3. When: What role historically and at present does ableism play in supporting the pipeline? 4. Where: How does the role of behavior influence the setting of where students are educated? 5. Why: Why do disciplinary practices within schools work to exclude students with disabilities?	How might my role as a special education teacher, in particular, differ from other education professionals?	Annamma (2013) Connor (2006) Mallet (2014)
Topic 5: **Course Takeaways**	1. Who: Who are the students that I will be teaching? 2. What: What inherent biases do I carry with me? 3. When: How has my past schooling experience influenced my thinking about student behavior and discipline? 4. Where: Where do I plan to teach? What do I need to know about my community and its history? 5. Why: Why is answering these questions important?	How will I continue this work beyond this course and educate others like myself and hold myself and others accountable?	Milner & Tenore (2010) Hollingshead et al. (2016)

The critical reflection topics discussed are sensitive and could be triggering for pre-service teachers. Teacher educators can structure group discussions by first establishing norms for discussion and explicitly modeling how to agree and disagree with classroom comments, for example, by using sentence starters. Further, when student disputes arise, these sentence starters can provide a template for dispute resolution. The importance of modeling for students how to engage in discussion when points of view are not aligned should not be understated. We must remember that as much as we try to facilitate knowledge and learn from and alongside our students, we are still a figure of authority in the classroom that students will model their behavior from, and it is our responsibility to maintain the classroom environment.

Third, students should have a private space for reflection to ensure a safe mental and emotional space for reflection and an increased likelihood of authentic responses. Fourth and finally, any grading conducted during group discussions or on student journals should be low stakes, reflected by low weight in relation to other graded categories such as quizzes and assignments, based on a participation rubric, or a simple pass/fail.

3. Conduct iterative and judicious review of instruction and student work. Teacher educators should acknowledge that planning may need to shift in response to student need. As educators, we should continually reflect on our own practice, as we teach our students to do. Student reflections should serve as a guide for how instruction should adapt in response to student need. Student reflections may reveal a miscommunication that occurred during

your instruction which resulted in a misunderstanding for some students. This should be addressed in follow up instruction to remedy the misunderstanding. Students' reflections may also reveal something to add to your instruction or something that may not be needed, depending on the level of need displayed in their responses. Student comments during class discussions can also serve this purpose. By engaging in this review of student work and instruction, teacher educators can continually work to ensure instruction is catered to and meeting student need.

During Instruction: Teach

1. Introduce the topic. Identify a central theme and related to topics for your course that addresses an aspect of disability as an aspect of cultural diversity from an intersectional lens. For instance, in mathematics preparation coursework a central theme could center around the racial representation in STEM fields, reading methods preparation coursework could examine the diverse representation in literature, assessment courses could examine the difficulties in identifying students who are emerging bilinguals, and a family course topic could focus on partnering with CLD families. Although such topics do not need to be present in every class, it is important that teacher educators weave such topics throughout the course (every week or every other week), rather than relegate them to one specific class.

2. Facilitate class discussion as a knowledgeable participant. Critical reflection requires both internal dialogue as well as dialogues with others (Gay & Kirkland, 2003). Engaging in class discussions provides further perspectives and supports critical reflection. Be sure to reflect

with students, set a purpose for the discussion, and provide a summary at the end of the discussion. Teacher educators need to practice critical reflection too and can learn from hearing the experiences and knowledge of students within their classes. But also respect the position of responsibility you hold as the teacher educator and facilitate the discussion as needed to ensure problematic mindsets are not reinforced by paying close attention and noting problematic statements to address and positive statements to encourage.

3. Assign reflection. The class discussion serves as knowledge and experience to spur reflection. As detailed in the sample case study, reflection questions should task the student to reflect on how their thinking and practices are shifting in response to the learning occurring within the course.

After Instruction: Support

1. Provide feedback. Pre-service teachers enter teacher preparation programs with varying experiences and readiness to engage in critical work (Kelly, 2020). Pre-service teacher reflection journals are a means for teacher educators to gauge their student's engagement with such topics, and the journals should guide the teacher to provide individualized feedback to ensure all students receive the appropriate level of support they need.

2. Repeat the process with a new topic related to the central theme that builds from the former topic. Pre-service teachers enter teacher preparation programs with different experiences and needs regarding topics of race and disability (Kelly, 2020). Scaffolding the content to ensure the needed foundation on which such topics build is important

to student success. The topics provided in Table 1 reflect this process in that each week's content supports the understanding of the subsequent week's content.

3. Commit to life-long cultural competency. The work of culturally competency is never finished but rather a continual journey of praxis (Gay, 2018). In other words, one never reaches mastery with cultural competency, it is a persistent pursuit we choose each day that requires concrete action. The field of culturally responsive teaching/pedagogy is lively, and so it is necessary for those committed to this work to stay abreast of the current topics in the field and share the most up-to-date research from the perspectives of persons with non-dominant identities. Special education teacher educators must therefore commit to embodying a commitment to cultural awareness and competency in order to cultivate a disposition of cultural awareness and commitment in their special education preservice teachers.

Conclusion

One last important note is to recognize that CLD is a dynamic, fluid phenomenon with neither static operations nor fixed boundaries. Indeed, the notion of disability itself continues to evolve and varies across time and cultures (Munyi, 2012). In addition, by recognizing the impact of place on intersectional identities we can adopt a cultural-historical perspective which is important to enacting the suggestion of critical reflective practice within this article (Artiles, 2009). For instance, those near indigenous reservations may implore different needs related to CLD (see Pewewardy & Fitzpatrick, 2009 for strategies), and rural areas may oblige resources respective of specific needs (see Azano & Stewart, 2015). Accordingly, teacher educators should work to include specific resources respective to what intersectional topics are prominent within their communities.

To conclude, we again want to acknowledge this work is not easy. Any initial undertaking of such worthwhile tasks is effortful. In addition, it is difficult to ensure our pre-service teachers will embody the practice of critical reflection and carry the practice of critical reflection with them as they matriculate to their in-service positions. Nonetheless, providing pre-service with the necessary tools and instruction to do so is vital to creating a more just and equitable education system for students with disabilities. Now, perhaps more than ever, is the time to heed this call.

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Three Buckets and Eight Strategies: Recruiting, Supporting, and Retaining a Racially Diverse Special Education Teacher Workforce

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ABSTRACT

Cultivating a racially diverse special education teacher workforce is critical to the success of students with disabilities, particularly students of color with disabilities. We examine the literature and provide suggestions for recruiting, supporting, and retaining special education teacher candidates of color. Specifically, we present a vignette that highlights the decision-making process of a Black male on a journey to become a special education teacher. We propose recruitment strategies (e.g., anti-racist mission and vision statements), support strategies (e.g., racial affinity groups), and retention strategies (e.g., adopting anti-racist curriculum) that Institutions of Higher Education must consider to promote efforts to diversify the special education teacher workforce.

KEYWORDS

Special education, teachers of color, teacher recruitment, teacher retention

Researchers have discussed the importance of recruiting, supporting, and retaining a diverse special education teacher (SET) workforce to improve the representation of SETs of color in K-12 schools (e.g., Billingsley et al., 2019; Cormier, 2020; Scott, 2016). Ultimately the goal is to positively influence the educational experiences of K-12 students, especially the academic, social, and emotional well-being of students of color with disabilities (Cormier et al., 2020; Scott & Alexander, 2019; Scott et al., 2021). However, an underrepresentation of SETs of color occurs compared to the overrepresentation of students of color in special education (Billingsley et al., 2019). Researchers have proposed strategies for recruiting, supporting, and retaining more SETs of color to improve the ratio of student-teacher racial match in special education (Cormier & Scott, 2021; Scott & Alexander, 2019). Yet, the work is not always emphasized in a practical way that leaders of Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) can use to create new practices, procedures, and policies to better recruit, support, and retain individuals in their respective organizations. We argue that IHEs play a major role in recruiting, supporting, and retaining future teacher educators. Therefore, IHEs must engage in efforts to adopt strategies that lead to diversifying the teacher workforce, and this also means the SET workforce.

Based on the currently available research, this article will provide investigators, leaders of IHEs, and policymakers with practical strategies and guidelines for recruiting, supporting, and retaining special education teacher candidates of color (SETCOC). To simplify and get the most out of the effort, strategies and guidelines are organized into three buckets for recruiting, supporting, and retaining SETCOC. Figure 1 shows the three buckets and provides an overview of eight strategies that IHE stakeholders should consider when recruiting, supporting, and retaining SETCOC. A vignette is provided about a Black man who is considering a career in special education, demonstrating how these strategies can be employed. Following this individual, we put forward practical strategies faculty, staff, policymakers,

FIGURE 1: Special Educators Teacher Candidates of Color Recruitment, Support, and Retention Buckets and Essential Strategies

Recruitment

Anti-racist Mission and Vision Statements

Representation from Faculty and Teacher Candidates of Color in Special Education

Assorted Pathway Programs

Support

Affinity Groups

Racially respective support system

Tuition Support

Rention

Adopting Antiracist Curriculum and Pedagogical Knowledge

Erasing the Burden

and other stakeholders can follow to recruit, support, and retain SETCOC.

Meet Kevin!

Kevin is a potential career switcher. He is preparing to leave his 10-year career as a juvenile justice officer to pursue his dream of becoming a SET. Specifically, his experience in working with youth in the justice system has sped up his desire to become a SET. Kevin wants to interrupt the school-to-prison pipeline for students of color, some of whom are from the community in which he lives. He wants to reach this youth population before they are inequitably forced into the justice system and Kevin believes that teaching is the next career path to accomplish this goal. He is especially passionate about working with students of color with disabilities, since members of this group have been more prevalent in his encounters as a juvenile justice officer. Kevin believes it is the right time to make his career move because he just learned that a SET at the middle school in his community is retiring soon, opening up a position in the near future. Although Kevin would prefer to attend

the Historically Black College from where he received his bachelor's degree, the college does not have a special education preparation master's degree program. Consequently, he is considering attending the local IHE, a predominately White institution, but he wants to be sure that the values of the institution are in alignment with his goals before enrolling. Specifically, he is looking for programs where he can be engaged in a diverse learning experience that include academic and social experiences that center dismantling inequities for marginalized students, specifically students of color with disabilities. Kevin also wants to experience a program that engages him, encourages him, and accepts and supports his thoughts and experiences as a Black man. With little money to pursue this dream, Kevin sets out to explore whether he can become a SET.

The Recruitment Bucket

To identify whether the IHE program is the best fit for him, Kevin begins by investigating the ways the leaders at his local IHE are pursuing "people who look like him" into the organization. Kevin's

journey begins by investigating what ways the organizational leaders conduct outreach to target SETCOC. This journey is called the "Recruitment Bucket."

Anti-Racist Mission and Vision Statements

According to the literature, IHE leaders should consider whether their mission, vision, and social justice statements explain their positions on how systemic and structural discrimination issues are addressed in their organizations (Scott, 2018). For example, Scott (2018) interviewed 10 SETCOC enrolled in a special education teacher education program at a predominately White IHE. Scott found that many of the SETCOC were attracted to the program because the mission statement at the IHE aligned with their interest as social justice advocates. Mission, vision, and social justice statements can often be a SETCOC first impression of an organization, and from the statements, organizational leaders offer ripe opportunities to describe their stances on broad societal and structure issues. These stances can include how justice against racism, ableism, and other disparities that challenge minoritized K-12 students with disabilities is achieved. Statements that are used to incorporate a clear mandate against systemic and structural issues may be used to attract a more racially diverse group of SETCOC, including Black special educators (Scott, 2018; Scott & Alexander, 2019). Explicit statements on the issues are a way for racially diverse educators to understand how diversity, equity, and inclusion positions are incorporated into systems. The statements indicate where the leaders of the systems will invest in learning from faculty and staff, engage with peers and colleagues, implement practices, conform to school climate, and understand learning conditions (Scott, 2018). Table 1 shows how this particular strategy, along with guiding questions from special education

IHE faculty members and staff, can be used to interrogate whether an IHE's mission statement centers on anti-racist components. Additionally, Table 1 shows the remaining strategies, questions, and snippets for practical application of each strategy.

Fortunately, when Kevin explored the mission and vision statement for the special education program at the local IHE, they communicated an intersection of anti-racist and anti-ableism positions and described ways that the program leaders sought to eradicate these structural and systemic issues. For Kevin, the strong statements were an attraction, and he was motivated to apply to the program. However, he did have additional questions for the faculty and staff members in the program because he wanted to be sure that the mission and vision of the program aligned with practices that the program leaders followed.

Representation from Faculty and SETCOC in Special Education

After applying, Kevin received a call inviting him for an in-person interview to the program. He was excited that his dream had moved forward to the next step, but nervous about what the faculty members and teacher candidates were like in the College of Education within the IHE. Would teacher candidates and faculty members be racially diverse? Racial diversity was important to Kevin because he learned from reading about attending predominately White institutions that many times students of color enrolled in programs struggled with isolation and belongingness on the campuses (Strayhorn, 2012), including in special education programs (Scott, 2018). Although he applied to the program, he was still uncertain as to whether he was going to attend. He was concerned if there would be SETCOC and faculty members who "looked like him." His trepidation at this point was whether

there was racial diversity in the program that reflected the mission and vision he read. If not, then he would know this was not the program and perhaps not even the career for him. He eventually decided to move forward in the application process with the program.

To eradicate fear for individuals like Kevin, leaders at IHEs must consider the racial diversity of the faculty members and SETCOC within their programs. Having diverse representation of faculty members and SETCOC in special education programs has been linked to recruiting potential SETCOC into the programs (Scott, 2018; Scott & Alexander, 2019). Researchers have indicated that similar qualities like race can positively influence interviews because for some candidates, shared identity may serve as a proxy for shared or similar beliefs and experiences (Krysan & Couper, 2003). Candidates may speak more candidly with faculty and teacher candidates who they believe understand the candidates' lived realities and is sensitive to the candidates' beliefs and feelings about the world (Krysan & Couper, 2003). It is safe for a candidate to assume that faculty and teacher candidates who experience similar realities as them will—at the least—understand that candidate's social position and respect their perspective on identity-related issues.

A program that has racially diverse faculty members and teacher candidates who can become involved in the recruitment and interview process of potential candidates may offer Kevin and others the opportunity for open dialogue regarding the candidates' goals for the program. The suggestion to have racially diverse faculty members and SETCOC involved in the recruitment/interviewing process is not meant to exploit the individuals in programs. Instead, the call is for IHE leaders to ensure that racial diversity is a priority in hiring special education faculty members and in enrolling SETCOC

into the program so that diverse representation is present and valued. Recent literature showed that faculty members and SETCOC can serve as effective recruitment sources (e.g., recruitment, hiring, and even mentoring) that affirm racially diverse candidates like Kevin that racial diversity matters and that a space exists for them in the program and in the profession (Scott, 2019; Scott & Alexander, 2019). Leaders of IHEs must be aware though that any additional responsibilities for faculty members and SETCOC in their programs to engage in recruitment can cause an overburden that can lead to burnout (Scott, 2016; Scott, 2018). Therefore, relieving those individuals of other duties and responsibilities and compensating them for their effort in the recruitment process should be considered.

Assorted Pathway Programs

Kevin was impressed with the interview, which included two faculty members, one of whom was a person of color. Also, his meeting included five SETCOC. He was closer to agreeing to attend the program, though he was still undecided if he would leave his job full-time. He wanted to know if options were available to attend the program while he worked full-time or part-time. Kevin also remembered that his dream position at the local middle school was opening in less than two years, so completing a program at an accelerated pace was a priority. For that reason, he wondered if the special education program offered nontraditional pathways that suited his lifestyle.

Developing creative and multiple pathways to obtain SET certification has garnered recent interest (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Scott, 2019). Examples of creative and nontraditional pathway programs include Grow Your Own programs, traditionally seen as community-driven programs designed to target community members (e.g., parents, paraprofessionals) who will be trained to become teach-

ers (Gist, 2019). Grow Your Own programs are considered effective routes to recruit teacher candidates into the teacher education profession (Gist, 2019; Gist et al., 2019), including special education (Scott, 2019; Scott & Alexander, 2019 2). Similarly, residency programs have been found to attract teacher candidates of color and provide them with spaces that affirm their identity and mission (Watson et al., 2015). Residency programs are generally described as medical model, alternative pathway programs, grounded in clinical training that includes an apprenticeship for one full year under the supervision of a master teacher (Guha et al., 2017). This alternative model prepares teacher candidates, typically for hard-to-staff communities, and is often spotlighted for recruiting higher percentages of teachers of color into teacher training programs (Guha et al., 2017).

Other creative and nontraditional pathways include virtual programs that are used to offer flexibility to teacher candidates of color. Specifically, SETCOC have suggested that the nontraditional pathway programs are an attraction, particularly for working adults (Scott, 2019). Thus, leaders of IHEs should consider how to create alternative pathway programs from within local communities at their respective organizations and identify ways to partner with people of color to design these nontraditional pathway programs that meet their particular needs. Table 1 shows additional guiding questions and examples of program types that IHE leaders can consider for SETCOC seeking to enroll in special education programs.

The Support Bucket

In previous empirical research used to investigate SECOC, participants expressed that having supports while enrolled in IHEs were significant factors that increased their retention (Scott, 2018). Providing planned and deliberate supports for SETCOC can have a direct connection with having a positive experience in special education preparation programs and careers that may lead to greater retention of these educators (Scott, 2018; Scott & Alexander, 2019). Accordingly, the next section is called the "Support Bucket."

As luck would have it, the IHE leaders had an accelerated pathway program that was the right fit for Kevin. He enrolled and started the program. Soon, Kevin learned that although the program was diverse, SETCOC were disparately outnumbered, although not unusual for special education preparation programs (Cormier et al., in press). Kevin was concerned about what his experience would be like while enrolled in this program at the predominately White institution. He wondered if the program leaders had considered developing a holistic experience for SETCOC, and this meant that they were not the only person discussing issues of structural and systemic issues of race in special education, and whether support groups were on campus for IHE students of color at a predominately White institution. He wanted to know what the supports were because having the supports would be critical for ensuring him a positive experience in the program.

Affinity Groups

In simplest terms, affinity groups refer to individuals grouping together and networking based on common action, activism, ideology, or interest (Pour-Khorshid, 2018). Such groups are an increasingly used tool for cultivating a diverse teacher workforce, including providing supports for reducing trauma and supporting teacher candidates' social, emotional, personal and professional needs (Pour-Khorshid, 2018). Instead of the standard business organization model of affinity groups, we are proposing racial affinity groups based on belongingness, hope, engagement, inspiration, advocacy, and connectedness. Research-ers have highlighted the importance of bringing racially diverse SETs together across common interests to support their journeys throughout the SET education pipeline (Scott & Alexander, 2019).

Racial affinity groups may offer ways to invigorate and inspire educators, particularly as many of these educators face racialized barriers in preparation programs (Pour-Khorshid, 2018; Scott, 2019) and in their teaching careers (Scott et al., 2021). The development of racial affinity groups has been linked to increased productivity of teacher candidates of color during their preparation programs (Kohli, 2018), and implicitly with Black male SETs, as mechanisms to support them while enrolled in their preparation programs and across their K-12 careers (Scott & Alexander, 2019). One indication that racial affinity groups may be effective was shown in a study about strategic ways to recruit and retain Black male SETCOC by Scott & Alexander when one teacher candidate commented:

It would be so much easier to make a decision about a program if you could relate to the people in your program and they could assist you with the service and resources that applied to your role and responsibility. (pg. 8)

Similarly, in a study by Kohli (2018), participants noted the influence of racial affinity groups in recruiting, supporting, and retaining during the teacher educator preparation process. For Black teacher educator candidates in special education, particularly, providing safe spaces can help them navigate and manage some of the challenges they face during the teacher education pipeline (Scott, 2018).

Racially Respective Mentoring/Support System

Racial and ethnic representation in IHEs is important for teacher candidates of color to promote their academic success, academic support, and career support (Scott, 2019; Strayhorn, 2012).

Teacher candidates of color can often feel alienated in IHE programs as same-race faculty members and IHE student representation is not always congruent, particularly at predominately White institutions (Strayhorn, 2012). Researchers found that SETCOC in special education preparation programs note that same-race faculty and peers are an important factor linked to their retention (Scott, 2019; Scott & Alexander, 2019). For example, a teacher candidate of color able to receive mentoring and coaching support from a same-race professor who may be able to understand the cultural context of their challenges may be better equipped to relate and offer guidance and support to overcome issues. However, this strategy should not be used as a recommendation that teacher candidates of color should only receive same-race mentoring support, but more so used as a form of support that indicates the importance of representation in mentoring (Scott, 2019; Scott & Alexander, 2019).

Tuition Support

Financial support (e.g., scholarships and stipends) for enrolling in IHE special education preparation programs may boost the number of SETCOC interested in teaching in special education. Offering tuition support as an effective strategy to recruit SETCOC for special education programs can offset the costs of teacher preparation, a problem that teachers of color often cite as a barrier for enrolling and completing teacher education programs (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Scott, 2019). Consider, for instance, that the median wealth of Black families ($24,000) is nearly eight times less than that of White families ($188,200; Moss et al., 2020). Some Black families have little to no money to bail themselves out of emergencies, much less can they afford to increase their debt load. Tuition support has been aligned with research that consistently indicates the rising costs of tuition as a barrier, so providing

financial incentives are valid ways to recruit and retain teachers of color (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Scott, 2019).

When a teacher candidate of color is receiving financial support in their program, they may be able to attend the IHE program on a full-time basis and focus on becoming effectively prepared SETs. In the illustration regarding Kevin as a potential career switcher, the only reason he is considering staying on his job full-time or part-time is based on his inability to maintain his home-life balance (e.g., rent, car payment) if he is not earning some form of income. Kevin would like to enroll full-time in the IHE special education training program but risks depleting his savings or being forced to take out a large federal loan to quit his job and concentrate on his training. If Kevin was offered scholarships or a stipend to enroll in the program, he could use some money from his savings for living expenses while in his training, or he may be able to work part-time while training. If he is not offered a scholarship to attend the program, he is considering staying with his current job and even postponing his dream of becoming a SET. Additional guiding questions and examples to consider when applying the affinity groups, support systems, and tuition constructs are in Table 1.

The Retention Bucket

Literature based on retaining SETCOC indicate that strategies must be prioritized and in place to ensure educators remain in programs for the long term (Scott, 2018). The next set of strategies is focused on keeping SETCOC like Kevin and is titled the "Retention Bucket."

Kevin is becoming more comfortable and stable in the new IHE program. The program leaders offered to fully pay his tuition and added a healthy stipend for him to attend the program based on a new federal grant received from the Office of Special Education Program, which provides financial support for

teacher candidates in special education with a particular focus on recruiting educators of color. Kevin is thrilled that he will receive full-tuition support, including a healthy monthly financial stipend that will allow him to leave his job to focus full-time on his training. Additionally, Kevin will be mentored by a faculty member of color with whom he is excited to engage. Leaders of the College of Education also offered a IHE student-led affinity group focusing on anti-racism that Kevin joined. Although he is feeling more "at home" in the college and program, he wonders whether his optimism will remain, as he has heard that attrition rates for educators of color are high at predominately White institutions (McClain & Perry, 2017).

Adopting Anti-Racist Curriculum and Pedagogical Knowledge

Anti-racist education generally refers to examining and addressing systemic and structural racism, ideologies, and beliefs (Carr & Lund, 2009) that can keep the rights of children and the empowerment of positive identity at the forefront of the development and delivery of curricula, practice, and pedagogical transfer of information (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010; Derman-Sparks et al., 2015). Many SETCOC have voiced that having access to more diverse content in their preparation programs would compel them to remain in their respective teacher education programs (Scott, 2018; Scott & Alexander, 2019). By adopting anti-racist education curriculum, frameworks, and pedagogical approaches in IHEs, SETCOC may feel more autonomous in teaching the material once they exited their programs (Scott & Alexander, 2019). The SETCOC have a "desire to teach curriculum that would be more culturally engaging to students with disabilities" (Scott & Alexander, 2019, p. 243). Opportunities to engage in learning and practice using diverse forms of cur-

TABLE 1: EXAMPLES OF 3 BUCKETS STRATEGIES

BUCKET	STRATEGY	GUIDING QUESTIONS	SPECIFIC EXAMPLE
Recruitment	Anti-racist mission and vision statements	Does your mission and vision statement explicitly emphasize a commitment to racial equity? The intersection of race and ability?	We are committed to eradicating barriers for students of color with disabilities that are grounded in systemic and structural racism, ableism, and other forms of racial disparities.
Recruitment	Representation from faculty and students of color in special education	Have we targeted the hiring of faculty of color in job searches? How have our recruitment efforts improved ways to attract racially diverse candidates in our programs?	Establishing departmental and program metrics for increasing faculty and students of color in special education programs.
Recruitment	Assorted pathway programs	How has our traditional pathway program excluded educators of color? Can an alternative pathway be designed that offers rigor and opportunity for all candidates but especially educators of color?	By designing a residency program in collaboration with local urban school districts, we can establish recruitment metrics for educators of color while improving our relationship with the local community.
Support	Affinity groups	Are there common interest programs that center race across the university that special educators of color can participate in? Can providing an affinity group create a "safe space" for special educators of color in my program?	Polling former and current special educators of color on what topics these educators would like to gather to support a common goal.
Support	Racially respective support system	How is our mentoring program for students in our program intentionally centering the racialized challenges special educators of color may face? What experience do our faculty have with serving as role models and guiding special educators of color?	Establishing a process where mentoring matches are intentional and includes a process for feedback and developing interpersonal relationships with special educators of color.
Support	Tuition support	Have we sought out resources at the state or federal level that will help with providing financial supports to special educators of color? Are there ways that we can advocate for modified tuition for special educators, particularly those of color?	Faculty pursuing funding through the Office of Special Education Programs, and specifically designing the application that targets the recruitment and supports of potential special educators of color. Funds for living costs and tuition, travel, and other expenses will be covered.
Retention	Adopting anti-racist curriculum and pedagogical knowledge	Have we examined our curriculum for cultural diversity? In what ways does our curriculum uphold whiteness?	Replacing textbooks and articles that have all-white authors or do not center race as a positive with text and articles from more racially diverse authors.
Retention	Erase the burden	Are we paying close attention to who speaks up in class when issues of race are addressed? How can faculty create a space where all students are discussing race so that special educators of color do not feel isolated in their advocacy?	Faculty encourages discussion by all students to discuss issues of race.

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riculum in training programs can provide an experience where Whiteness is not solely centered, a point that SETCOC interviewed in literature noted they would appreciate (Scott & Alexander, 2019). In the example, once graduated, Kevin can apply the anti-racist content and pedagogical approaches that he learned in his teacher preparation program at the middle school he desires to work.

SETCOC in special education preparation programs are often driven by programs that offer social justice advocacy stances (Scott, 2018). Programs that center social justice advocacy stances in their curriculum, particularly curriculum that is diverse and has implications for advocacy to support students of color with disabilities (Scott, 2018), provide ways to engage SETCOC and hopefully retain them. As the teacher candidates have indicated, having diverse content is important for them transferring to K-12 students when they become teachers of records (Scott, 2018; Scott & Alexander, 2019). Once Kevin graduates from his program, he will be equipped to engage his students in anti-racist and culturally responsive content by offering them a combination of teaching, pedagogy, practices, and instructional materials that he learned in his teacher preparation program.

Erase the Burden

Erase the burden refers to the "tax" that SETCOC often pay because they are one of only a few in their teacher preparation programs. For the SETCOC, this often means that they are put in a position to serve as cultural brokers or Black ambassadors in dialogue where issues of race are discussed (Borrero et al., 2016; Scott et al., 2021). These practices reinforce the notion that people of color—the prime victims of racism and its intersecting oppressions—bear the responsibility for disrupting systemic racism while White people can stand idly on the sidelines (Matias & Mackey,

2016). These are unfair conditions for educators of color, and specifically for SETs of color who often cited this tax (Scott et al., 2021). The tax can cause stressful conditions that can lead to role ambiguity, thoughts about attrition (Scott et al., 2021), and other questions about how SETCOC fit in their IHE preparation programs or careers (Scott, 2018). Faculty and other program staff members must remain sensitive to these issues. Furthermore, program leaders must ensure that a climate exists in which these issues are eradicated.

As Kevin moves forward in his career, although he anticipated advocating and speaking up for social justice issues, he does not want to be the only educator speaking up and doing this work. He did not anticipate that being the only Black teacher candidate would mean that he was always interjecting a comment about race and did not feel supported by his peers and faculty members when issues of race are raised in course discussions or other programmatic areas. He was surprised that some of the White faculty members did not feel equipped to have open-minded discussion on sociocultural issues, including race, particularly when the status quo of thinking was involved. He wonders if he made the right decision and whether he will stay the full length of the program. Fortunately, he can talk with his faculty mentor and the peers in his affinity group to create an action plan to address the issue. Although it is an extra step he has to take that others teacher candidates (e.g., White teacher candidates) may not, he feels better about the strategies his mentor and peers give him and decided to stay and finish out his program. Kevin thinks he is one of the lucky SETCOC who has such a support system, and he wonders what the outcome for him would have been if these strategies were not in place at the IHE.

Conclusion

It is important to note that many of the

strategies that we propose provide an opportunity for cross-institutional collaboration. The strategies that we propose are in sequential order based on the vignette and prospective path of a SETCOC who would enroll in a teacher education program before becoming employed in a school district. However, both IHEs and school districts must consider these strategies independently, and in many cases collaborate to adopt comprehensive strategies to recruit, support, and retain a racially diverse SET workforce. For example, it is also critically important that school districts develop and promote anti-racist missions, vision, and social justice statements. Furthermore, IHEs and school districts have the potential to work collaboratively to develop assorted pathway programs and together address ways to supplement tuition or relieve financial burdens for SETCOC. For instance, in developing Grow Your Own programs, IHEs and school districts should consider working together to create assorted pathway programs that reduce tuition and improve the retention of these teachers. We posit that collaborating in many cases will generate creative planning and provide comprehensive ideas for recruiting, supporting, and retaining SETs of color.

The focus of this article is on providing strategies for recruiting, supporting, and retaining SETCOC in IHE special education preparation programs. For Kevin, a potential Black male SET, the strategies are important for his journey in becoming a SET. The implication for growing a more racially diverse SET workforce is contingent on how well stakeholders can enact the strategies within the three buckets and even develop additional strategies within the buckets. Although the three buckets of recruiting, supporting, and retaining are described as a focus of recent literature (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Scott, 2018, 2019; Scott & Alexander, 2021), we do not contend that the strategies listed as a part of the buckets in this paper are the only effective strategies. Further, we stress that experts in the educational field should investigate more ways to hear from SETCOC regarding their needs. Otherwise, long-term issues with retaining SETCOC will continue.

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Preparing Special Education Teachers to Affirm LGBTQ+ Students and Themselves

AUTHOR

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ABSTRACT

Within their work, special education teachers are tasked with being knowledgeable on a wide array of human diversity. Although attitudes have been changing rapidly toward sexual and gender minorities in recent years, data from the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network's (GLSEN) most recent National School Climate Survey indicated that 52.4% of students reported hearing homophobic remarks and 66.7% of students reported hearing negative remarks about gender expression from their teachers or other school staff (Kosciw et al., 2020). This article identifies three areas in which special education teacher educators can interact with their teacher candidates to support learning about the LGBTQ+ community and equip them to work with their future students who identify as a sexual or gender minority. Techniques included address the use of qualitative assessment through discussion and journaling; building cultural empathy via affective learning, perspective taking, acceptance of cultural differences, awareness, and appropriate responding via an understanding of intersectionality and intention versus impact.

KEYWORDS

Cultural empathy, LGBTQ+, special education, teacher preparation

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Within their work, special education teachers are tasked with being knowledgeable on an incredible array of human diversity. Not only do they work with people of varying cognitive levels and academic skills, but special education teachers work to meet the needs of people with differing physical attributes, varied modes and methods of communication, and widely ranging social and emotional regulation skills. Despite this commitment to the expansive diversity of human life, some pre-service teachers either draw the line at or allow themselves to be unprepared to deal with a sliver of human diversity that has begun receiving increasing attention in recent decades: sexual orientation and gender identity. These areas of the human experience are a new frontier in the United States among educators of all types and levels, with 60% of LGBTQ+ youth reporting that they have experienced some discriminatory policies or practices at school (Kosciw et al., 2020). As educators of teacher candidates destined to become special education teachers, the field must support familiarizing pre-service teachers with this topic or new teachers will leave their preparation programs unprepared to help students with disabilities who identify as part of the LGBTQ+[1] community.

Context of the Problem

Prior to 1999 there was little known to the field of education about the experiences of LGBTQ+ students and educators. In the fall of that year, however, the Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network (GLSEN) began biennial surveys of school climate. Data

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[1] While there exist many variations of the umbrella term for the community of people who identify as gender and sexual minorities, the Caucus of LGBTQ+ Special Educators of the Council for Exceptional Children currently uses the acronym used here in their name, and that designation will be used throughout this article.

from their most recent National School Climate Survey, completed in 2019, reported that "52.4% of students reported hearing homophobic remarks from their teachers or other school staff [emphasis added], and 66.7% of students reported hearing negative remarks about gender expression from teachers or other school staff" (Kosciw et al., 2020, p. xix). While one would hope that these teachers and school staff would not represent all of the adults that these students would interact with in a day, "less than one-fifth of LGBTQ students (13.7%) reported that school staff intervened most of the time or always when overhearing homophobic remarks at school, and less than one-tenth of LGBTQ students (9.0%) reported that school staff intervened most of the time or always when overhearing negative remarks about gender expression" (Kosciw et al., 2020, p. xix).

Although attitudes have been changing rapidly toward sexual minorities in recent years, Dee and Henkin (2002) found that preservice teachers who were seeking licensure in special education expressed significantly lower levels of comfort with cultural differences, i.e., "deviations from White, middle-class, monolingual backgrounds" (p. 25), than preservice teachers who intended to specialize in elementary education. They hypothesized that these students might downplay the need for cultural competence when working with students with special needs because of a lack of exposure to classrooms that included students from a wide range of backgrounds. Regardless of the reason, Wyatt et al. (2008) found that "teacher preparation is needed on all sexuality issues, particularly issues specific to homosexuality and sexual minority students to better ensure a greater appreciation for the challenges that lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth face" (p. 181).

These data illustrate the need for special education teachers to develop these important cross-cultural skills. An important finding in the 2019 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health, administered by The Trevor Project, underscores the urgency needed for these improvements in special education teacher preparation to occur. With over 34,000 respondents, almost 40% of LGTBQ+ youth and more than 50% of transgender and non-binary youth "seriously considered attempting suicide in the past twelve months" (p. 1). In addition, LGBTQ+ students who had been victims of harassment in their schools reported higher levels of missing school, had lower grade point averages, and were nearly twice as likely to report that they did not plan to seek any postsecondary education or training (Kosciw et al., 2020). All indications would suggest that students with disabilities who identify as LGBTQ+ suffer in these same ways, but these risks may be compounded based on their pre-existing needs related to their disabilities.

Special education has long been trying to reckon with systems that lack the ability to deal adequately with diversity. The disproportionate representation of African American students (e.g., Cruz & Rodl, 2018) and the unpacking of language differences from language disability among students from diverse language backgrounds (e.g., Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021) are both ways in which our institutionalized systems struggle to match our evolving world. LGBTQ+ students represent another group which has been minoritized in our field and to which special education systems need to attend.

Gorski et al. (2013) reviewed syllabi from 41 teacher education multicultural education courses from across the United States. They found that LGBTQ+ concerns were largely not included in the syllabi in their sample, and, when they were, they were done so in a way that was decontextualized from schools and the work of educators. Although their study was completed almost a decade ago, teacher educators of today must not assume that pre-service teachers will get what they need through informal methods or from outside the teacher education coursework. Instead, teacher educators must provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to learn about sexual and gender minorities in the modern contexts of schools and society.

To that end, I have identified three areas in which special education teacher educators can interact with their students to support this learning and empower them to work with their own students who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community: qualitative assessment, empathy building, and appropriate responding.

Qualitative Assessment

Vygotsky (1978) introduced to the fields of psychology and education the concept of the zone of proximal development. This concept guides educators to determine that which is the next thing necessary for a student to learn. If a learner is instructed at a level beyond their capacity, no learning occurs; and if a learner is instructed far below their current knowledge, the learner becomes bored, and no learning occurs. In a similar way, since their introduction, McLeskey et al.'s (2017a), high leverage practices in the field of special education have highlighted the need for high quality assessment to precede instruction. These practices, while ostensibly focused on the job of educating school-aged children with disabilities, serve as useful in our job of preparing high quality educators as well. High Leverage Practice #4 asks us to "use multiple sources of information to develop a comprehensive understanding of a student's strengths and needs" (McLeskey et al., 2017b, p. 2). The strategies that I use in my courses to assess student knowledge and readiness to learn about LGBTQ+ issues include mainly discussion and journaling, with several scaffolds built into my course to support these data-gathering tools. Determining the students' zones of

proximal development helps the instructor tailor the flow of information in the classroom to remain within the bounds of what students already know and what they are prepared to learn.

Discussion

I use a developmental approach to classroom discussions. While some pre-service teachers have experience debating controversial topics in front of large groups, many others do not possess that skill. Others suffer from such anxiety that they are unable to engage with the topics at the same time they are managing their emotional responses. To specifically support those who struggle with classroom participation, I use check-in questions (Wong & Wong, 2018) that move from surface-level to deeper significance over the course of the semester, with the express goal of simply letting the shyer students hear their own voice in the room in front of other students. The first day of class, for instance, I might ask them to state something as inconsequential as their favorite flavor of ice cream. On other occasions, I offer a variety of check-in questions at various levels of challenge, allowing each student to choose the one they feel comfortable speaking to in front of the group. Using this method of assessment, I can determine individual and group needs as they pertain to the topics of the day which may include race, class, sex, gender and/or sexuality, or the intersections of any of those constructs.

Questions that might be appropriate for a check-in on the topic of LGBTQ+ issues, moving from less challenging to more challenging would be: (a) At what age is it appropriate to ask a child if they have any girlfriends or boyfriends at school?; (b) Can you recall the circumstances of when you first learned that homosexuality exists? What can you share with us about that?; and (c) What aspects of your high school experience might have been different for someone who had a minoritized sexual orienta-

tion or gender identity? Or, for someone who identifies as part of the LGBTQ+ community, In what ways did your high school experience differ from someone who had a mainstream sexual orientation or gender identity?

A relatively low stakes warm up task that I use to support student success in discussions is the Who Am I? poem (see Table 1) or the Where I'm From poem (Christensen, 1997). The Who Am I poem asks the students to create a five-line poem using a strict format that is based on their self-image. Because it is very prescribed, I have noticed that students risk less than if they had to write an

original poem on their own and therefore are more comfortable in participating. The Where I'm From poem works in a similar way but has the additional benefit of inviting a student's cultural environment into the classroom (see Christensen, 1997 for a full treatment of how to use this strategy). Students are encouraged to start with the line, "I am from" followed by a description of some items found inside their home, maybe something they could find in their yard or in their neighborhood, and then to describe images or memories they have associated with relatives, celebrations, or foods. Based on the level of self-disclosure in which each person engages, I, along with their classmates, develop an understanding of their comfort with speaking and with the content we will be covering.

As a prerequisite to asking the students to engage in deeper self-disclosure, I do an activity in which we set ground rules for the course (Chan & Treacy, 1996). I randomly divide the students into groups of four or five students and ask them to brainstorm several ideas about what they would need in our classroom environment to be able to talk about difficult issues in front of the whole group. After giving them time to confer, I move

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TABLE 1: "WHO AM I" POEM

Include only things that you like about yourself. No self-disparaging.

I am Bryan.	**Your name**
I am a professor, a husband, an uncle, and a son.	**4 things**
I am gay, chubby, and tall.	**3 things**
I am smart and caring.	**2 things**
I am Bryan.	**Your name again**

TABLE 2: STANDARD GROUND RULES

1 Listen to understand, not to respond

2 Ask clarifying questions

3 Assume positive intention, unless proven otherwise

4 Everyone owns their own stories

5 Stay engaged in the main conversation

from group to group, asking a different student to respond each time with one of the ideas that they generated. As they speak, I type their responses into concept mapping software that is mirrored on an overhead screen, continuing in this way until all items have been shared. At that point I start grouping their comments into similar ideas until I am left with three to five positively stated rules. These rules are then prominently posted in the classroom and restated and positively reinforced in all course sessions from that point forward. I do tell the students that I maintain the right to add or subtract as I need to. There are some rules that I know need to be represented, and I will steer the end result to making sure that those ground rules appear in our final set. See Table 2 for the standard set of ground rules.

Journaling

Journaling is another tool to gather information on students' knowledge and readiness to learn. Fisher and Frey (2004) compiled a list of strategies used by teachers to support adolescent literacy, and among those strategies was exit tickets. In the middle school environment, exit tickets may take many different forms, but generally are a way for teachers to get feedback from students on their learning at the end of each class period. Typical exit tickets for that age group might ask, "What is one thing you learned today?" or "Of the three types of vertebrates we studied today, which was your favorite and why?" They are quick and can provide the teacher with information on what was learned by the students. Instead of an exit ticket, I require my students in the multicultural course that I teach to complete journal entries at the end of each session.

Prior to the pandemic, I printed journal templates onto card stock with the dates of each class session and spaces for the student's journal entry and a short response from me. In order to accom-

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TABLE 3: RUBRIC FOR JOURNAL ENTRIES

Journal entries are not meant to be a long, fully developed treatment of overlapping and complex factors. I want journal entries to be thoughtful processing of the ideas I have put in front of you and a critique of those ideas compared to the ideas you brought into the course. Journal entries can be short and still powerful, just as they can be long and still lack engagement with important issues. A good starting point for any of the journal entries is to ask yourself these two questions: How did what we discussed today apply to my life as it was when I showed up here today and what does it mean for me moving forward?

Level	Description
1 Unengaged	"Today's class was really interesting."
2 Non-Reflective	Superficial descriptive writing approach (fact reporting, vague impressions) without reflection or introspection
3 Thoughtful Introspection	Elaborated descriptive writing approach and impressions without reflection
4 Reflection	Movement beyond reporting or descriptive writing to reflecting (i.e., attempting to understand, question, or analyze the event)
5 Critical reflection	Exploration and critique of assumptions, values, beliefs, and/or biases, and the consequences of action (present and future)

Adapted from Wald et al., 2012.

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modate distance learning during the pandemic, however, I used a Google Doc template that each student copied to their own Google Drive and then shared with me. I added shortcuts to each of those documents into a folder and then had access to each student's journal remotely. As with the card stock, I would review their responses after each class and respond in some fashion. My responses are to positively reinforce their contributions, and often I would ask a probing question to encourage even deeper levels of thinking. Because the purpose of this activity is assessment, I also provided a rubric for students to help move them

to higher levels of critique and self-reflection rather than reinforcing a simple restatement of the day's activities (see Table 3 for a copy of the rubric, based on Wald et al. (2012) as it appears in my syllabus).

Apart from the benefits of being able to use the journals as formative assessment, Acquah and Commins (2015) found that journals have an additional benefit. These authors found that students who engaged in journaling in multicultural education courses, "began to see themselves as cultural beings with lived experiences and multiple identities" (p. 802). The journals and the critical reflection with which they

were created helped transform students' attitudes.

Empathy Building

The explicit development of empathy across cultures is a valuable tool for teacher educators to implement in the support of producing preservice teachers who can meet the needs of students with LGBTQ+ identities. Warren (2018) wrote that empathy serves two functions in cross-cultural and culturally responsive teaching. First, empathy is instructional in that it can help teacher candidates notice patterns in their worldviews that either support or work against culturally competent practice. Second, once empathy becomes a habituated practice, it can support self-discovery of cultural beliefs of students in their own classrooms. Cultural empathy is defined as, "composed of intellectual empathy, empathic emotions, and the communication of those two" (Ridley & Lingle, 1996 as cited in Wang et al., 2003, p. 230). Wang et al. (2003) further operationalized this definition into four factors: (a) feeling and expression, (b) perspective taking, (c) acceptance of cultural differences, and (d) awareness. I will briefly describe each of these factors below and explain the strategies I use in my course to develop them.

Feeling and Expression

Wang et al.'s (2003) first factor in the operationalization of cultural empathy is related to feelings and expression. More specifically, this factor highlights how people can comprehend, internally, the feelings of people who are the targets of discriminatory experiences and then communicate those feelings back externally with others. There are two sociological concepts that I use with students to help develop these abilities: The mythical norm and the looking glass self.

The mythical norm is a concept brought into my understanding of the world by Lorde (1984):

Somewhere, on the edge of consciousness, there is what I call a mythical norm, [emphasis in original] which each one of us within our hearts knows "that is not me." In america [sic], this norm is usually defined as white, thin, male, young, heterosexual, christian [sic], and financially secure. It is with this mythical norm that the trappings of power reside within this society. Those of us who stand outside that power often identify one way in which we are different, and we assume that to be the primary cause of all oppression, forgetting other distortions around difference, some of which we ourselves may be practising [sic]. (p. 116)

After some discussion, students relate to this term because they all have identified in their lives one way or another in which they do not fit the mythical norm, and they can identify how this perception of not living up to an unrealistic standard has affected them. Even students who do fit all the categories listed by Lorde can recognize, for the most part, that their lives have been different than for those who do not meet the mythical norm.

I present this excerpt of Lorde's work to students in an essay by Tatum (2000) that also informs students about a concept referred to as the looking glass self. The looking glass self (Cooley, 1902) is the conceptualization that individuals determine their own sense of self based on how others view them. These two terms become central to the students' development of feelings and expression, both of which support the growth of their cultural empathy, because the terms lead them to comprehend how they have allowed themselves to be defined by society. Through the strategies I previously described, discussion and journaling allow opportunities for students to try on these new feelings of being defined without their permission or knowledge, and

they practice expressing these feelings in small groups, in front of the class, and in their journals. This knowledge appears to increase the amount of empathy they have for others who also are not able to meet the demands of being the mythical norm, specifically those who identify as LGBTQ+, and they have a basis for understanding how the looking glass self can begin to shape how one sees their role in society.

Tatum (2000) reported that in her experience white/straight/cis students, who experience privileges in their daily lives based on these identities, will generally not share these aspects of their identity in their Who Am I poems nor in other casual check-in or ice breaker activities, while people with marginalized identities often do. Sharing this revelation with the class after the poem check-in has been completed helps them understand how their socialization manifests itself unconsciously in their responses, especially when they reflect on their own race and whether they shared that or not.

Perspective Taking

Wang et al.'s (2003) operationalized definition of cultural empathy includes developing an individual's ability to take the perspective of people who experience marginalization or discrimination. I provide opportunities in my teacher preparation program for students to practice this skill using carefully scaffolded storytelling and personal experiences.

The first activity in my course that supports perspective taking is for each student to write a personal profile and then share their profile with a small group within the class. The profile assignment is introduced after I have shared a list of identity markers (see Figure 1) with the class that serves as an advance organizer. On the day that the profile assignment is due, the class period is devoted to sharing parts of their paper that they feel comfortable sharing

FIGURE 1: Beginning List of Identity Markers

Spark Your Thinking About Identity Markers

Physical
- Age
- Skin Tone
- Biological Gender
- Gender Identity
- Physical Characteristics
- Sexual Orientation
- National Heritage
- Ethnic Heritage
- Medical History

Legal
- Immigrant Status
- Nationality
- Disability Status
- Family status
- Veteran Status

Social
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Social Affiliations
- Living Arrangements
- Religion
- Economic Status

Chosen
- Career
- Educational Attainment
- Employment Status
- Gender Expression
- Hobbies
- Political Affiliations

negative and positive experiences. In fact, I tell the students often that if they are not willing to work on the emotional baggage that they bring to the classroom, they are going to end up asking their students to carry it for them. I find that this experience helps them understand that even those who think they are "just normal" have had a journey that is unlike most others in the class. Understanding how another person has dealt with hurdles helps students grow in their ability to empathize with others and eventually to even feel some of the feelings that others have had.

The second strategy that I use to prepare preservice teachers to take the perspective of others is a panel discussion with people from the LGBTQ+ community. Each semester I organize a panel discussion that includes volunteer members of the class who identify as LGBTQ+ and members of the larger university and non-university community. Because I am gay, I likely have access to more individuals from the gay community to recruit as panelists than other educators might, but locating interested speakers should be made easier by partnering with LGBTQ+ community groups on campus or in the community. Many campuses and even K-12 schools now have Gay Straight Alliance groups that would provide contacts for panel participants. PFLAG, which originally stood for Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, has over 400 local group chapters throughout the country and can be accessed at PFLAG.org. Also, the Gay Lesbian Straight Educator Network (GLSEN) maintains a list of local chapters at GLSEN.org. Finally, the LGBTQ+ Caucus of Special Educators can be utilized as a resource for finding people willing to work with your teacher candidates. They can be contacted at ceclgbtqpluscaucus.org.

I am careful to scaffold these experiences, using the assessment information that I gather, so that I can use the

with others. Groups are designed so that each contains individuals from the widest gamut of diversity possible within those who have registered for the course. As homework after the first session of the semester, students complete a Google Forms survey that asks them about their geographic, political, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds, and that information is used to construct the groups. Students are encouraged to share experiences that contributed to who they are as human beings, and I prompt them that it is encouraged to talk about both

panel to meet students in their zones of proximal development and move the students forward in their ability to take the perspectives of members of the LGBTQ+ communities. In order to do that I ask the panelists to consider specific questions that I provide based on my assessment of the needs in the group. Typical questions that I ask of the panelists are similar to those listed here: (a) What name do you wish us to use?; (b) What pronouns do you use?; (c) Tell us a few things about yourself apart from your gender or sexuality.; (d) Please tell us more about your sexual or gender identity and how you came to realize that you were not the "mythical norm."; (e) Do you have a coming out story?; and (f) What bias have you experienced because of your gender or sexual identity? Follow up questions include: (g) Who were the 'helpers' in your life that made a difference for you?; (h) Have you ever had an openly LGBTQ+ teacher?; (i) Was school a safe or dangerous place? What could be done to make it safer?; (j) How does living with multiple aspects of identity (intersectionality) affect LGBTQ+ youth differently from their straight counterparts?; and (k) What can a member of this class do if they want to support LGBTQ+ youth?

Through the personal profile and the LGBTQ+ Panel, preservice teachers are provided with multiple opportunities to take the perspectives of people in the LGBTQ+ community.

Acceptance of Cultural Differences

The third factor in Wang et al.'s (2003) operationalized definition of cultural empathy is acceptance of cultural differences. This factor includes a focus on the understanding, acceptance, and valuing of the differences presented by people from outside the pre-service teacher's normal environment or from groups that are unknown to them. These differences include cultural traditions, life experienc-

FIGURE 2: Intercultural Development Continuum
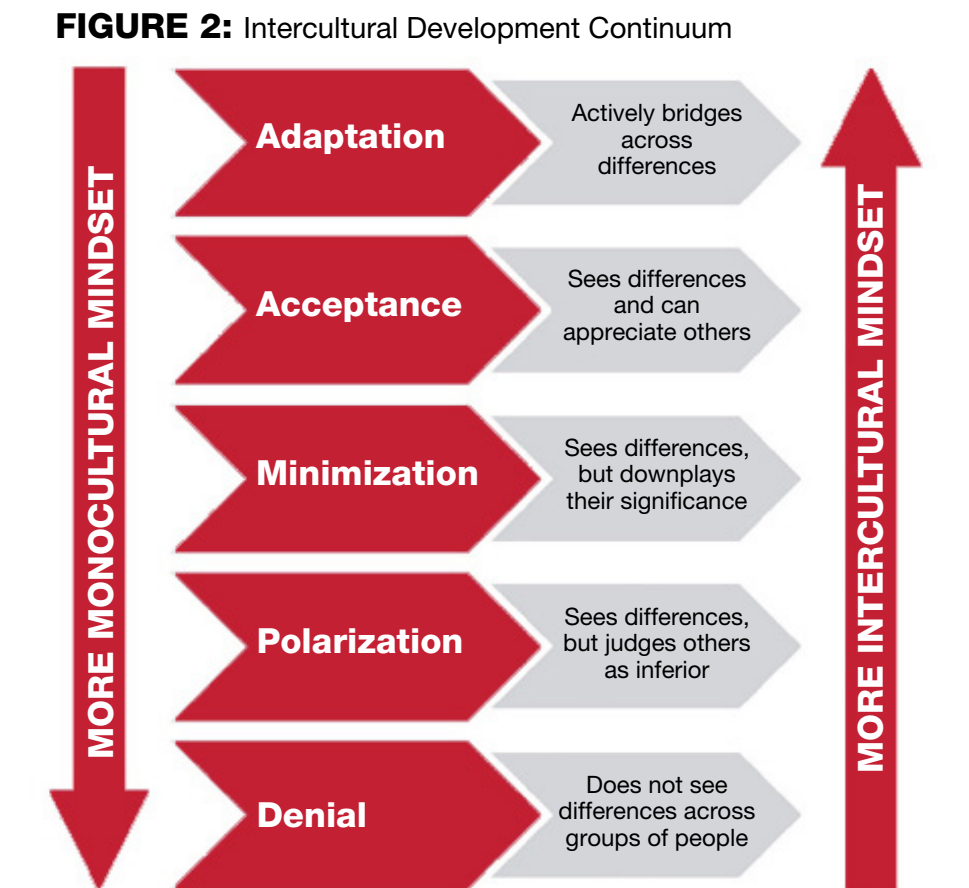
Note. Adapted from Hammer, M. (2012). The Intercultural Development Inventory: A new frontier in assessment and development of intercultural competence. In M. Vande Berg, R. M. Paige, & K. H. Lou (Eds.), Student learning abroad (Ch. 5, pp. 115-136). Stylus Publishing.

es, and values of all those who are considered as separate from each individual.

The Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC; Hammer, 2012) is specifically designed to address students' knowledge and readiness to accept cultural differences. The IDC is a framework that describes a spectrum of attitudes towards intercultural understand that ranges from denial to adaptation (see Figure 2.) Students that avoid seeing the LGBTQ+ identities of people with whom they come into contact, or proclaim that all people are just human and that our differences do not matter, fall into the denial category of the continuum. Colorblindness as it applies to race would also fit into this area. As students grow in their understanding and appreciation of why knowing about difference matters, they move through the stages of polarization

(seeing differences and judging the other as inferior), minimization (ignoring the aspects of LGBTQ+ people that they do not understand in an effort to just get along), and then acceptance (seeing difference as something worth learning about, yet, tending to interact with the other through curious tolerance). Polarization is the stage at which the Cultural Deficit Theory (Silverman, 2011) is most pronounced. The Cultural Deficit Theory is the belief by people who live in relative privilege that other people occupy the position they do in life because their culture is lacking in some fundamental way compared to the culture shared by those in power. The final point on the continuum is adaptation, at which individuals actively work to bridge differences and celebrate what each group brings to the other.

The IDC framework helps me understand what the next developmental stage of my students' growth should look like. If, for instance, I am met with extreme resistance from an individual that learning about the LGBTQ+ experience is even necessary (denial), I will know that growth is happening when the student reports that they have learned something about sexual or gender differences and yet they still judge that characteristic to be inferior (polarization) to their own way of life. Although that might not feel like a win, moving from denial to polarization is growth in the right direction. Sharing this framework with the students helps them understand what I am looking for as they move through the stages as well. Teaching this framework helps students self-monitor their own learning and use their own cognitive strategies to reframe differences they see to shape their observations into progress on the continuum.

Awareness

The final factor in Wang et al.'s (2013) definition of cultural empathy is awareness. They define awareness as the "knowledge that one has about the experiences of people from racial or ethnic groups different from one's own" (p. 224). When developing cultural empathy about racial groups, for instance, much of the knowledge that is brought to the students is focused on providing historical perspective on the legal and social struggles that have occurred. The historical perspective is important for developing awareness of the LGBTQ+ community as well, but an additional area is also necessary: scientific understanding. The following sections summarize the content that preservice teachers need to learn to increase their awareness of these cultural groups. In delivering this content, I utilize typical teaching strategies of informal preassessment of current knowledge, careful planning of lessons with the use of graphic organizers, structured didactic

instruction with many opportunities to respond, and summative assessment with feedback.

• **Developing Scientific Understanding.** Teacher candidates who are resistant to the idea of encouraging or allowing the expression of diverse sexual and gender orientations often feel that way because of negative information that has been passed onto them and has been left unexamined. I have found that providing an opportunity for replacement thoughts and attitudes that are rooted in science and personal experience can remove some of the resistance shown. This resistance often occurs because of sincerely held religious beliefs, but even then, reframing some of these thoughts by providing deeper understanding of the context can support student growth. The specific myths that sometimes need clarification include: (a) being LGBTQ+ is unnatural, (b) it is a choice, and (c) it is a fad.

First, some students believe that being bisexual, lesbian, or gay is unnatural. All people have a sexuality (including asexual), and that it is a part of the human condition. Traditionally, American society has withheld privilege from those people who identify as different from the mythical norm of straight and cisgender, but LGBTQ+ people have always existed despite that. In fact, homosexuality and non-typical gender roles are common in nature and have been observed in many animal species including humans. Kamath et al. (2019) reported that same-sex sexual behavior has been observed in over 1,500 species across all types of animals from "primates to sea stars." They suggested that sexual activity has not evolved exclusively for reproduction, but that it could have other purposes that have yet to be fully explored by science. Additionally, a person's gender identity is not determined by their sex organs, and even sex organs are not always binary. Feldman Witchel (2018) lists 24 conditions that result in ambiguous

genitalia, and García-Acero et al. (2019) found that these occur once out of each approximately 4,500 births. Identifying as transgender occurs more frequently than the biological ambiguities do, with estimates at 390 adults per 100,000 or 1 in 256 people (Meerwijk & Sevelius, 2017).

Second, some teacher candidates believe that identifying as part of the LGBTQ+ community is a choice. While there still exist areas of disagreement on whether people are born LGBTQ+ or become so later (nature v. nurture), there is evidence to support that choice is not involved. A survey of research on the causes for divergent sexual and gender identities by Bailey et al. (2016) demonstrated that many hypotheses have been suggested, such as hormones, genes, birth order, and even recruitment by other homosexuals; however none of these have been shown to be strong enough to garner support of a majority of reasonable scientists as the single factor. Yet, there may be some validity to one extent or another of all these hypotheses. I recommend sharing Bailey et al.'s (2016) work as a reading with preservice teachers as it is a comprehensive review of these theories. In the end, the only choice is to live in harmony with one's nature or to continually exert one's energy to fight against it.

Finally, some believe that having a minoritized sexual or gender identity is a fad that has arisen because of a liberal social environment. Although it is true that more people are identifying as trans than ever before, that is due in large part to there not having been a clear term for people who now identify as trans prior to the 1960s. Williams (2014) reported that the word only gained widespread use in the 1990s. There are records of trans individuals living in every society across history, but stories of their experiences are seldom those stories that are reproduced in traditional history courses in American schools The National Park

Foundation/National Park Service (2016) compiled an excellent history of trans individuals in the United States' history.

• *Providing Historical Perspective.* As social scientists understand more about the ways in which cultural power is produced and reproduced in American society, they more deeply understand the ways in which erasure of a group's history contributes to their continued oppression, and special educators need to be sensitized to certain issues in LGBTQ+ history.

The fight for civil rights in the United States has followed a similar trajectory across diverse groups. Watershed moments in civil rights history provided a backdrop to structural change that provided advancements to people from all oppressed groups in different measures. The Brown v. Board of Education decision in 1954 was ostensibly about the inherent inequality of separate schools for Black and White Americans, but the decision, combined with the growth in population of the Baby Boomer generation, caused a shock to the Jim Crow-era systems of separate but equal and set the stage for integration where segregation had once been the rule. This decision started the change on how American society viewed racially segregated school settings and, over time, had an eventual impact on segregated settings in special education based on disability. The civil rights act of 1964 pushed those changes ahead by tying federal money to desegregation efforts. LGBTQ+ individuals were not specifically protected by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, but by 1969 they were poised to enter the fight as well.

The Stonewall Inn, formerly a gay bar in lower Manhattan, is considered the birthplace of the gay pride movement in the United States. Patrons at the Stonewall Inn, majority men, who might now be known as trans women (although the term was not in use then) and mostly people of color were accustomed to police

raids and harassment. One of these raids took place at 1:20 a.m. on Saturday, June 28th, 1969, and rather than disperse, the patrons refused to be targets of the police and they fought back. This started a protest that escalated into a riot that lasted for three days. Allies and the LGBTQ+ community came from all over the city to make it known that they would no longer accept being targeted by the police. One year later, in June of 1970, the community returned to the Stonewall Inn to commemorate the uprising, and that gathering became the first pride celebration (Varga et al., 2019). Pride has been celebrated in June every year since in many cities in the United States and in many other countries around the world.

The victory was short-lived, however. On June 5th, 1981 the Center for Disease Control published a report describing a rare lung infection among a small group of gay men, all previously healthy, in Los Angeles (HIV.gov, 2018). This report was the official start of the AIDS crisis. AIDS stands for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome and is the name of the group of opportunistic infections that take over one's body when the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) attacks the body and is not met with medical intervention. AIDS was a pandemic, not unlike our recent experiences with COVID-19, except that the early victims were generally gay men, and religious traditionalists wrote off these deaths as a just punishment for an unacceptable lifestyle. At the beginning of the crisis, there was no standard medical protocol for intervention, and funding for finding treatments was delayed because of anti-gay bias. People were scared and felt that a positive test for HIV was a death sentence. In fact, by 1995 when AIDS deaths hit their all-time yearly high, 319,849 people had died in the United States since the beginning of the crisis (amFAR, n.d.). Contrast that with the 300,000 deaths from COVID by the time the vaccine was first distributed

(Hearon, 2020). Today there still is no cure nor a vaccine for HIV/AIDS, but there are medical protocols that do work to fight its effects on one's body and ways to avoid contracting the virus even if one is exposed (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis or PREP). A teacher candidate in my course this past year who was born in 2001 said that she had heard about AIDS before, but she, "had no idea that it was such a big deal."

Much of the attention of the LGBTQ+ community was spent dealing with the effects of HIV and AIDS, but legal systems in the 1980s and 1990s continued to be stacked against gay people. In 1993 Hawaii's supreme court offered a glimmer of hope when it ruled that it may be unconstitutional to ban same sex marriage, but, seeing a political opportunity, a conservative United States Congress quickly passed the Defense of Marriage Act, which determined that marriage was the union of one man and one woman. President Clinton signed that bill into law while also instituting a policy of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" in the military. The policy barred harassment of closeted LGBTQ+ individuals in the military, which was good, but also barred those individuals who openly admitted to being part of the LGBTQ+ community from serving. During the period in which the Defense of Marriage Act was in effect, several states experimented with civil unions instead of marriage, but the legal axiom of Brown v. Board of Education, separate but equal is inherently unequal, held true, and the push for marriage equality continued.

Being gay was itself a crime in many parts of the United States until 2003. It was not until the Lawrence v. Texas case decided by the Supreme Court in June of 2003 that LGBTQ+ people were affirmed in their "right to private sexual intimacy with other adults" that heterosexuals had always had (Lambda Legal, n.d.). In another victory, under Obama's presiden-

cy, the "Don't ask, Don't tell" policy was repealed in 2010 and LGBTQ+ individuals were allowed to serve their country in the military. In 2015, the Supreme Court decided in Obergefell v. Hodges that the 14th Amendment to the Constitution guaranteed the same rights of due process and equal protection to same-sex couples that were enjoyed by opposite-sex couples. This ruling overturned the Defense of Marriage Act and allowed LGBTQ+ people the right to marry and for spouses of any gender to be treated equally in the eyes of the law.

The issue of conversion therapy is still an open legal issue in some states. Conversion therapy is a largely discredited practice in which an individual is acted upon in order to change their sexual orientation or gender identity. The Trevor Project (n.d.) says that this practice may be known by other names such as "gender critical therapy," "reparative therapy," "ex-gay ministries," or SOCE/GICE, which stands for sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts. The American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry published a position statement on the practice that it has no evidence to support its effectiveness and "should not be part of any behavior health treatment of children and adolescents" (2018, para. 4). So far twenty states also ban this practice because it can put children at even greater risk for depression and suicide (Sopelsa, 2020).

Appropriate Responding

While becoming an ally to any marginalized population takes years of listening and reflection to unlearn patterns that have been socialized into us by the dominant culture, there are a few concepts that can make it more likely that attempts at allyship will land as they are intended. Those three concepts are intersectionality, impact over intention, and recovering from mistakes.

Intersectionality. Crenshaw first presented the concept of intersectionality in 1989 as she explained how neither the pro-Black movement nor the feminist movement of the time adequately spoke to the lived experiences of Black women because they experienced oppression within both of those movements. The pro-Black movement did not deal with the issues of women adequately, and the feminist movement spoke more to the experiences of white women. Living in the intersection of these two movements required something more than what was available in either of the movements alone. This concept of intersectionality has been extended by other critical theorists to take on an idea of multiple identities (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017) in that no individual is just one thing, but rather all people experience their lives through the lenses of their intersecting identities, with different identities taking on various levels of salience across environments. Special education teachers recognize that students with disabilities are people with their own preferences, interests, needs, and strengths, and it is important that they also recognize that the same concept applies to people who have an identity that aligns any individual with the LGBTQ+ community. Being trans, while a critically important identity marker for a person who is trans, is not a full identity on its own, but rather one aspect of a person's identity. Same sex attraction is part of an individual's experience in the world, but it does not represent everything that that person is. For example, when I was younger and shortly after I came out, my sister tried to play matchmaker for me and set me up on a date with another gay person she knew. The match was a failure, however, because she arranged a date for me that was based solely on the fact that we were both gay; she did not take into account any of the other aspects of our character or identities. Her attempt, while genuine and loving, failed because she forgot to look at the two of us as more than just our sexuality.

Impact over intention. Preservice special education teachers need to become familiar with the idea of intention versus impact when considering how to respond to difficult situations that involve students who identify as LGBTQ+. Although there are obviously some teachers who participate fully in creating hostile environments in schools, others may accidentally, through errors they commit or errors they leave uncorrected, offend their LGBTQ+ students without intending to. The intent of words or actions can play a role in how a student leaves such an interaction; therefore, teachers must deal with the impact of their statements and actions regardless of their intentions. For example, using the personal pronouns of trans and non-binary students that reflect their gender identities is an important part of creating space for those students to exist comfortably in schools. However, some well-intentioned guides may refer to these pronouns as a student's "preferred" pronouns which could impact these students negatively. Even though the intention of using the word *preferred* in this example is to communicate that they are thinking about the student's identity, using that particular word can have the impact of communicating that these pronouns are somehow imaginary, that they do not reflect reality, and are only being used as a kindness. In fact, the pronouns are not a preference and reflect the real gender identity that the student experiences. Teachers who are competent at interacting with LGBTQ+ students prioritize meeting the reality of the students, not the speaker's sense of being kind.

There exists the possibility of having our intentions overshadowed by the impact of our words, yet, there is also a danger of having our silence misinterpreted. As was mentioned in the context section earlier in this paper, only a small percentage of LGBTQ+ students trust that an ally will speak up consistently

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when overhearing anti-LGBTQ+ language. Silence tells students that no one is willing to stand up in their support, and it reinforces the lack of safety for them in those situations.

Recovering from mistakes. Mistakes will be made. Mistakes will be made both in the teaching of preservice teachers and by the teachers themselves once they have entered their classrooms. Every person's experience of their own identity is different, and there is no way to suggest to preservice teachers that there is a single correct intervention that will work with their students across individuals and across time. The error, however, lies in trying to never expose oneself to vulnerability and thus never portraying oneself as a person who cares.

Being or Coming "Out"

A question that has been repeatedly posed to me because of my vocal advocacy of LGBTQ+ rights in education is whether an individual should come out in their daily life as an educator or whether we as educators should suggest to our students with disabilities (and those who are typically developing as well) to do so while they are still in school. Advocates of LGBTQ+ rights strongly believe in the right for any individual to freely express their sexual orientation and gender identity as they see fit. Models of good mental health by Rogers (1959) suggest that people live their best lives when their real selves and their ideal selves are in alignment, and one way that many in the LGBTQ+ community live in that alignment is by allowing their identity as a member of the LGBTQ+ community to be known to others. Being out is a very personal decision, and each individual will have to live with the consequences of that decision.

Many people now enjoy the option of considering whether to be out because of others who have come before who either could not hide their identities or chose

to no longer do so. The more of us that do live in an out manner, the more we normalize gender and sexual diversity for our fellow humans. If, however, an individual does decide to be out at school, there are two things that are prerequisite to doing so. First, confirm that the school district has an anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, or anti-bullying policy and that it has been read carefully. Second, the person must secure the blessing of their building administrator or direct supervisor. Both the policy and the support may be necessary for that person's continued ability to thrive in an environment that could become hostile. I have seen more and more students (both teacher candidates and K-12 students) over the years be able to live their truth in their schools.

Conclusion

Preservice special education teachers enter the field with many expectations placed upon them, and they bring a lot of expectations of themselves as well. In order to become the most effective teachers they can be, they must be able to provide a safe and welcoming environment to their students. If they are provided with the knowledge outlined in this paper, they will have improved the likelihood that they will be one of the teachers that makes a difference in the lives of students who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community. Teacher training and induction programs that pay attention to improving qualitative assessment, empathy building, developing scientific understanding, providing historical perspective, and giving options for appropriate responding will produce professionals that can meet the needs of LGBTQ+ students with disabilities in a culturally competent manner.

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Using a Culturally Responsive Lens in the Revision of a Core Preparation Course

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ABSTRACT

With increasing cultural diversity in schools and in special education, teachers must be prepared to meet the needs of students from diverse backgrounds. In addition to evidence-based practices, culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) is critical to helping students make meaning of their learning. Therefore, teacher preparation programs must be intentional and explicit in their instruction related to CSP for teacher candidates. We describe a replicable process of course review and revision for the inclusion of CSP with an example from a core course in a special education preservice teacher licensure program. The course, *Intersectionality and Disability,* is a course in a newly-implemented undergraduate licensure program.

KEYWORDS

Culturally responsive teaching, culturally sustaining pedagogy, curriculum revision, teacher preparation

Today's schools and classrooms are increasingly diverse. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), in fall 2020, 50.7 million students were projected to attend public elementary, middle, and high schools in the United States. Of those, 23.4 million (approximately 46%) were White students; 25.1 million (approximately 50%) were Hispanic, Black, Asian, American Indian/Alaska Native, or Pacific Islander students; and 2.3 million (approximately 4%) were students of two or more races (NCES, 2020). In special education, the demographics include a greater percentage of students from diverse backgrounds. For example, for the 2019-2020 school year, the percentage of students age 3-21 served under IDEA was: 15% white; 67% black, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian/Alaska Native, or Pacific Islander; and 15% two or more races (NCES, 2021; does not equal 100%). Given these demographic factors, it is critical that teacher preparation programs are ready to prepare all teachers to work with students of color. As Billingsley et

al. (2019) state, "Finally, it is important to emphasize that all teachers, including those of color, need opportunities to learn about effectively addressing the needs of a diverse student body" (p. 208).

Meeting the needs of a diverse student body requires that teacher preparation programs not just assume candidates will "get it" as they learn about evidence-based practices but that preparation intentionally and explicitly addresses the need for teachers to understand how culture plays a role in the student experience and in the effective delivery of special education services (King & Butler, 2015). The term culture, as defined by sociologists, means "the languages, customs, beliefs, rules, arts, knowledge, and collective identities and memories developed by members of all social groups that make their social environments meaningful" (American Sociological Association, n.d.). Critical to this learning about culture and its impact is the development of intersectional competence and knowledge of culturally sustaining pedagogy. Intersectional competence "describes teachers'

understanding of diversity and how students', families', and colleagues' multiple sociocultural markers [including disability] intersect in nuanced and complex ways" (Boveda & Aronson, 2019, p. 249). Important in this definition is that there are many intersections (e.g., disability, race, culture, gender) within individuals and there are many individuals that a teacher will encounter (e.g., students, families, colleagues). Also important to intersectional competence is identifying and understanding one's own perceptions and biases. This helps a teacher create a welcoming, effective learning environment and may lead to better outcomes for the student (Pang et al., 2021).

Culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) builds upon the research and thinking of culturally relevant and culturally responsive pedagogy (Kelly et al., 2021). According to Paris (2012), who suggested the concept, CSP "requires that they [teachers] support young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence" (p. 95). The ideas of CSP, then, move away from deficit pedagogies or pedagogy that focuses on the dominant culture and language in an effort to "eradicate the linguistic, literate, and cultural practices many students of color brought from their homes and communities" (Paris, 2012, p. 93) and moves closer to including culture as a way to bring meaning to learning. This is not the "food and festivals" approach (King & Butler, 2015, p. 47) to instruction but "the learning and relearning of information from multiple perspectives" (p. 47). According to Lubin et al. (2020), most teachers are not prepared to meet the needs of the culturally diverse student population. In order for teacher candidates to incorporate CSP into their future classrooms, they must learn to understand what

it is, how their own beliefs influence their instruction, and how to approach learning about their students at the same time they learn about evidence-based practices and the teaching profession in their preparation programs.

While race and ethnicity are often the topic of discussion in culture, disability is an additional sociocultural marker that adds to a student's experience and understanding of themselves. Special education teacher preparation programs have the additional responsibility of including disability in the discussion of intersectionality and cultural competence. In fact, a review of the Council for Exceptional Children Initial Preparation Standards (CEC, 2021) reveals that the term "culturally responsive" or "culture" is included in five of the seven standards or key elements of standards. Therefore, it is critical that special education teacher preparation programs intentionally and explicitly address the dispositions and practices of CSP in coursework, along with the evidence-based practices that contribute to improved student outcomes. In order to do this, faculty must review and revise their courses using this lens and with these learning objectives in mind. We describe a replicable process of review and revision for special education, preservice teacher preparation courses using an example of a core course, Intersectionality and Disability, in a newly developed program. The review and revision were completed to address the dispositions and practices of CSP.

Background Information about the Program

Since the early 1990s, legislation in one mid-Atlantic state has required individuals who are interested in obtaining an initial teaching license to have a bachelor's degree in a field other than education. Only after obtaining the bachelor's degree could candidates pur-

sue licensure either through a Masters of Teaching (an additional year of study after undergraduate work), a Masters of Education (additional 30 credits after bachelor's degree), or a certificate including required licensure courses and a petition from a school division as an alternative route now (Citation withheld to maintain anonymity). Unfortunately, with only these pathways, special education is listed as the top critical shortage area in the state and has been listed in the top three critical shortage areas for each of the last 20 years (name withheld to protect anonymity, 2020).

In 2016, the Task Force for Diversifying the State's Educator Pipeline and, in 2017, the Advisory Committee on Teacher Shortages recommended undergraduate licensure in order to encourage more diverse candidates to choose teaching. The then-Governor directed the Board of Education to "initiate emergency regulations creating an option for [the state's] public colleges and universities to offer an undergraduate program with a major in education" (2017). The General Assembly passed legislation to allow undergraduate degrees in education and, in fall of 2018, the next governor created an accelerated pace to launch these programs. Any undergraduate program submitted by April 1, 2019 to the State Council for Higher Education could expect approval (if guidelines were met) by May 2019. The typical timeline for this process is three years.

A large public university within this state submitted and received approval for four programs for undergraduates in special education implemented in the fall 2019 semester. The programs were three initial licensure programs (K-12 students with disabilities who access the general curriculum, K-12 students with disabilities who access the adapted curriculum, PK-12 students who are blind/visually impaired) and one non-li-

TABLE 1: Core Courses for All Licensure Programs

COURSE TITLE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Introduction to special education	Provides a survey of current knowledge on individuals with disabilities within the context of human growth and development across the life span.
Classroom management and positive behavior supports	Focuses on describing how school and classroom methods are used to establish effective learning environments for individuals with varying degrees of disabilities.
Technology integration	Reviews applications of recent educational and assistive technology for instruction.
Assessment	Offers knowledge and learning activities related to assessment of students with varying degrees of disabilities.
Individualized behavior supports	Focuses on identifying, recording, evaluating, and developing comprehensive plans for changing social and academic behaviors of individuals with disabilities.
Consultation and collaboration	Provides professionals in special education, general education, and related fields with knowledge and skills necessary for collaboration with a wide variety of stakeholders.
Exploratory field experience	Introduces students to the role of the special educator in academic and non-academic environments with students across disability areas.
Transition and self-determination	Examines relevant legislation and evidence-based practices related to person-centered transition planning for students with varying disabilities.
Intersectionality	Examines disability within a diversity and intersectionality context in K-12 schools. Analyzes how diversity and intersectionality informs the educational experience of individuals with and without disabilities to include race, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and home/ language and culture.

censure option. Though the licensure options were distinct, each program plan included nine core courses for all special education majors. The core courses are listed in Table 1. Initially, because of the rapid development phase, most of these core courses were the undergraduate equivalent of graduate level courses that were already in place, including similar learning objectives and assignments and no inclusion of CSP practices. However, the undergraduate programs included a field experience course and a course titled, Intersectionality and Disability, that had no graduate level equivalent.

After the first year of implementation of the new program, several faculty, including the second and third authors, undertook a program review process using the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform (CEEDAR) Center Roadmap for Educator Preparation Reform framework (CEEDAR, 2019) because instructors identified a mismatch between undergraduate student needs and course content. It is important to note that the

demographic make-up of the faculty in this teacher preparation program at the time of development and review matched that of the national statistics: 71.6% of faculty were white and 80% female (Office of Institutional Assessment, 2021). While we carried out the review process in a stepwise fashion as described by CEEDAR, we also deviated slightly by identifying current doctoral students on Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Personnel Preparation grants at our university as stakeholders because of their positions as former special education teachers and future faculty in teacher preparation programs. As part of a course on Personnel Preparation in Special Education, doctoral students were given the option to conduct a course review of and suggest possible revisions to the new courses included in our undergraduate program (see Figure 1). After studying the research on CSP and special education teacher preparation in the course, the first author chose to review and revise the core course titled, Intersectionality and Disability. At the time of the review, the course had never been taught in the program.

Positionality of Authors

The first author identifies as an African American female doctoral student with interests in the use of interventions and assistive technology to positively impact the trajectory of academic success of students with disabilities, and students of color, and has interests in the self-efficacy of educators to effectively implement culturally responsive pedagogy. A dual-certified K-12 educator, she has experience as an elementary special education resource teacher and Autism program compliance coordinator in the second largest public school system in a mid-Atlantic state.

The second author identifies as a white female with more than 10 years of experience in teacher preparation at public

FIGURE 1: Course Review Assignment Description

Option 1: Course Development
Choose one course from any of the Mason special education undergraduate programs. You can use any of the posted syllabi as a starting point to guide your thinking; however, you will be given the standard course syllabus template to create your own course syllabus. The syllabus you create must include:

1. Your personal learning objectives (in addition to the programmatic ones)

2. Course schedule with topics and readings (textbook and/or journal articles)

3. Assignments (course performance evaluation) and grading guidelines for each

4. Course policies (including acceptance of late work, attendance/participation guidelines, communicating with you)

You must also create a lesson plan and supporting materials for three of the class meeting sessions (including the first session and any other two you choose).

institutions in the mid-Atlantic region. She has taught courses at the undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral level and conducted research in public schools at the middle and high school level. As a public-school teacher, she taught in rural and suburban schools. As both a special educator in K-12 public schools and as a learning specialist in student athlete academic support at a predominantly white institution, the majority of her students were students of color.

The third author also identifies as a white female with more than 15 years of experience in teacher preparation at predominantly white public institutions in the mid-Atlantic and midwest regions. She has taught all levels of students in higher education and, in K-12, was a special educator who specialized in working with students with emotional/behavioral disorders.

Conceptual Framework

Critical to the development of teacher candidates is the idea that, before a teacher can use their knowledge of intersectionality of culture and disability in instruction, they must understand and recognize their own identity and individual and systemic biases. Once these individual characteristics are recognized and articulated in a supportive professional

environment, a preparation program can then equip teacher candidates to develop practices and design instruction with an awareness and knowledge of racial and cultural issues to better meet the needs of their students (Pang et al., 2021).

To that end, our analysis of the Intersectionality and Disability course was informed by the conceptual framework of Chavez and Longerbeam (2016). Foundational to this work is the idea that both students (i.e., teacher candidates) and faculty bring their own cultural biases in how they learn, why they learn, how they interact with others, and who they believe is responsible for learning to their coursework. As in the discussion of culturally sustaining pedagogy for K-12, instruction and coursework that is grounded in a cultural strengths-based approach and that offers a variety of ways to match beliefs about learning with activities will increase student learning (Chavez & Longerbeam, 2016). In their model, Chavez and Longerbeam describe a continuum from individuated to integrated cultural frameworks for teaching and learning. Given that this replicable process was focused on a review of syllabus content and not classroom instruction, we targeted the continuum for the purpose of learning, ways of taking in and processing knowledge, interconnectedness of what is being

learned, and responsibility for learning (Chavez & Longerbeam, 2016, p. 8). This review process included analysis of the course objectives, learning outcomes, materials, and activities/assignments for evidence of a balance across the continuum of cultural norms and suggested revisions to each (Table 2 for a description of the continuum in these areas). In this review and revision, "balancing across cultural frameworks would mean that we engage the cultural strengths of every student in our teaching practices to enrich student learning overall" (Chavez & Longerbeam, 2016, p. 9).

Syllabus Review Process

The first author conducted the syllabus review in several steps. First, the current syllabus was read through three times in order to become familiar with all components (the original and revised course syllabi can be found online in supplemental materials). Second, the author created a four-column chart with the headings of culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy, cultural sustaining pedagogy, and other course themes (e.g., racism/anti-racism, diversity). Third, the course catalog description, course overview, learner outcomes, course schedule, and course performance evaluation sections were copied from the original syllabus and pasted into the chart for analysis. Fourth, the first author reviewed each section for use of the terms "culturally relevant pedagogy," "culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy," and "cultural sustaining pedagogy." Evidence of the use of these terms was included in the associated column within the chart (See Table 3). Finally, the second author read each of the identified sections to identify themes and evidence related to the cultural framework continuum (See Table 4).

Once evidence was collected from the syllabus components, gaps in the use of terms "culturally relevant pedagogy,"

TABLE 2: Cultural Framework Continuum in Teaching and Learning (selected items)

Item	Individuated	Integrated	Course Items
Purpose of learning	Focus on individual competence; betterment of humanity	Focus on collective competence; betterment of those with whom connected	Course title Course description Learning outcomes
Ways of taking in and processing knowledge	Mind is primary	Mind, body, reflection, emotions, relationships	Course activities Assignments
Interconnectedness of what is being learned	Compartmentalized and separate	Contextualized and connected	Course activities Assignments
Responsibility for learning	Private, individual	Collective, shared	Course activities Assignments

*Adapted from Chavez & Longerbeam (2016)

"culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy," and "cultural sustaining pedagogy" were identified and revisions to the course catalog description, course overview, and learner outcomes were made by the team. Critical themes that were not addressed in course schedule/readings or in course performance evaluations included racism/anti-racism, diversity, identifying and disrupting white supremacy and anti-Blackness in Education and interlocking inequities (re)produced in education. Revisions to these sections were made by the authors to balance the material between individuated and integrated teaching and learning opportunities (Chavez & Longerbeam, 2016) and to address these theme gaps.

REVIEW RESULTS AND SUGGESTED REVISIONS

Though additional revisions were made, we focus the results on the course title, description, overview, learning activities/assignments, and class schedule.

Focusing the Course Title

The course title provides teacher candidates with a first glance at the purpose and content of the course. The original name of the course was Intersectionality and Disability. Intersectionality, a term conceptualized by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (Haynes et al., 2020) more than 30 years ago, refers to the instances when race, class, gender, and other individual characteristics engage with one another and overlap. Disability is just one aspect of an individual. It is imperative that teacher candidates have a foundational understanding of how they conceptualize themselves and others, structure social relationships, and conceptualize knowledge before they can meet the needs of their students. Intersectionality is therefore a lens through which teachers develop their CSP. But the concept of CSP is not to stop with

TABLE 3: Analysis of Syllabus for Elements of Cultural Relevant Pedagogy, Culturally Responsive Teaching and Cultural Sustaining Pedagogy

Culturally relevant pedagogy	Intersectionality framework to IDENTIFY interconnectedness of disability, race, class, gender	Use appropriate research methods and resources to APPLY social and behavioral concepts/ theories to students with disabilities and supports needed.	DEVELOP critical consciousness about issues of race, class, gender, culture, language and educational equity/ factors.	
Culturally responsive teaching	EXPLAIN how K-12 student learning and behavior are impacted by SES, language/ cultural background, race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and trauma.	UTILITIZE culturally responsive practices with families and community members.		
Self-efficacy	DEMONSTRATE culturally sound and diversity informed assessment practices for learning and behavior.	UNDERSTAND instructional practices sensitive to culturally, linguistically, and disability diverse students.	IDENTIFY strengths and challenges in one's own cultural competency.	
Cultural sustaining pedagogy	Restorative, evidence-based practices in elementary and secondary			
Observed themes	Disability as a diversity construct	Academic or behavioral difficulties due to disability or other diversity	Social economic status and impact of poverty on student achievement	Equity and the achievement gap; equity vs. equality

recognition. The next step is to use that lens to impact planning and instruction. To recognize this conceptual shift from a lens of awareness to taking action in impacting pedagogy precipitated a revision in the course name from *Intersectionality and Disability* to *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Intersectionality in Teaching*.

The University Catalog Course Description and Course Overview

The catalog description and course overview are part of the official university record of the focus of the course. The original catalog course description (below) tended toward an individuated

description for the purpose of learning. The focus rests on "examining," "analyzing," and "assessing" components that were described as being external to the teacher candidate, without an examination of the teacher candidate's cultural competence and intersectional awareness.

Examines disability within a diversity and intersectionality context in K-12 schools. Analyzes how diversity and intersectionality informs the educational experience of individuals with and without disabilities to include race, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and home/ language and

culture. Assesses how cultural competency and intersectionality awareness on the part of educators enhance the school success of all students. Develops educator capacity to implement trauma-sensitive interventions in diverse settings for all students.

There was also no mention of CSP or how understanding intersectionality could impact planning and instruction. Revisions to the description included a focus on culturally relevant and/or sustaining pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching. It also included a component related to developing educator capacity of culturally sustaining instruc-

TABLE 4: Analysis of Course Activities

Item	Individuated	Integrated	Recommendation
Intersectionality Project	Individual, mind only, compartmentalized and disconnected from experience	Includes requirement to articulate own background understanding diversity	Include experience of the classroom, small group project, problem solve
Media Analysis Paper		More integrated using emotions/reflection on type of media of interest; reflection, connected with story	Include variety of media in assignments; have candidates experience/read about perceptions of difference
Blackboard Discussions		More integrated depending on topics; social in that responding to others; connected to experience and own ideas	Focus on topics that will further efforts for understanding and self-reflection
Professionalism			Hard to determine
Intersectionality Presentation	Directions are limited; focused on giving information to others	Allows for choice in topic	

tional practices and understanding how they might impact students. See revised description below.

Examines the art and science of culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) within a diverse K-12 school context. Analyzes how a CSP, diversity, and disability lens informs the educational experience of individuals with and without disabilities. Assesses how cultural competency and intersectionality awareness on the part of educators enhance the school success of all students. Develops educator capacity to build culturally sustaining instructional practices into their disciplinary domain and maximize students learning opportunities.

The original course overview du-plicated the catalog description and, therefore, did not include the necessary attention to developing teacher candidate understanding of their own beliefs and biases. It also did not include ideas related to the impact that diversity has on instruction and student need or how the material would be connected or contextualized with student experiences. The revised description includes these factors:

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy: Intersectionality in Teaching examines how diversity impacts educational, relational and cultural responsiveness in K-12 education. This course supports students in reimagining schools with a focus on equity, deeper learning and shared leadership. Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy is designed to provide teacher candidates with an understanding of the sociocultural realities and histories of their students. This course highlights ways to negotiate the culture of the classroom with the identities of the students to foster a community of learning, uncover biases, design a diverse curriculum, and learn how systems in the classroom can support high expectations for all students. Course topics and themes covered in this course include race, culture, socioeconomic status, language, gender, sexual orientation, racism/anti-racism, equity, diversity, identifying and disrupting white supremacy and anti-Blackness in education and interlocking inequities (re)produced in education.

Learning Activities/ Assignments

Critical to the course is how teacher candidates process and make sense of the material through assignments and activities. In the original syllabus, the majority of the assignments fell toward the individuated end of the continuum. For example, the Intersectionality Project required teacher candidates to find, summarize, and interpret research articles and "examine disability through an intersectionality lens" (p. 3). Though the project concluded with a reflection on the impact of the information on a candidate's ability to provide culturally sensitive and inclusive instruction, it did not ask the candidates to examine their own beliefs or to situate the research in their own experience. They were asked to share the project with their peers in a presentation. Collaborative learning was included in the major assignments through Discussion Board posts. Additionally, the course included a participation evaluation that emphasized professionalism and engagement but did not further delineate how these expectations were to be met.

In order to provide a balance along the continuum from individuated to integrated for the diversity of teacher candidates, several assignments were revised to include self-reflection and assessment as well as collaborative learning experiences. For example, the participation grade was broken into specific activities, including discussion board posts similar to those in the original syllabus and:

a) **Journal:** *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy Reflections. Each class will begin with a 5-to-10-minute response to a discussion prompt in the teacher candidate's online journal. The instructor will read each journal, ask questions, and encourage the candidate to think deeply about the topic.*

FIGURE 2: CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING SELF-EFFICACY INVENTORY*

I am able to:

1. Adapt instruction to meet the needs of my students

2. Obtain information about my students' academic strengths

3. Determine whether my students like to work alone or in groups

4. Determine whether my students feel comfortable competing with other students

5. Identify ways that the school culture (e.g., values, norms, practices) is different from my students' home culture

6. Implement strategies to minimize the effects of mismatch between students' home culture and school culture

7. Assess student learning using various types of assessments

8. Obtain information about my students' home live

9. Build a sense of trust in my students

10. Establish positive home-school relationships

11. Use a variety of teaching methods

12. Develop a community of learners when my class consists of students from diverse backgrounds

13. Use my students' cultural background to help make learning meaningful

14. Use my students' prior knowledge to help them make sense of new information

15. Identify ways how students communicate at home may differ from the school norm

16. Obtain information about my students' cultural backgrounds

17. Teach students about their cultures' contributions to science

18. Greet English language learners with a phrase in their native language

19. Design a classroom environment that reflects a variety of cultures

20. Develop a personal relationship with my students

21. Obtain information about my students' academic weaknesses

22. Praise English language learners using a phrase in their native language

23. Identify ways that standardized tests may be biased towards linguistically diverse students

24. Communicate with parents regarding their child's educational progress

25. Structure parent-teacher conferences so that the meeting is not intimidating for parents

*Adapted from Siwatu (2007)

b) Put In Practice (PIP): *This is an opportunity for candidates to use what they have learned in class. Throughout the course, students will focus on specific methods of culturally sustaining pedagogy. Candidates will learn about practices that can be used in the K-12 classroom and then they will try out the new practice in a small group of peers. They will reflect upon the planning, success, and challenges faced during implementation.*

Journal prompts occur on topics including the power of culture, historical oppression, social biases, and prejudice and bullying. The PIP activity follows readings and instruction in culturally responsive teaching principles and practices (e.g., reading Pang, 2018, chapter 8 and class session instruction).

Major course assignments were also redesigned to include (a) guided self-reflection, (b) making links between each candidate's experiences and beliefs and their instructional ideas, and (c) applying that knowledge to simulations of classrooms. For example, one assignment requires candidates to complete the Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Inventory (Siwatu, 2007; see Figure 2), and develop a personal growth plan for the semester. This is an individual assignment that allows candidates to reflect on their areas of strength and weakness related to culturally responsive teaching using a straightforward inventory. It also asks them to look to the course objectives, activities, and readings to consider how to use the content to meet their own goals for improvement. Candidates submit their plan to the instructor at the beginning of the semester, reflect upon it at multiple points throughout the course, and review their progress at the end of the semester.

Another example, the Capstone Project, is a small group project (see Figure 3 for complete assignment). First, students choose a case study from a list. Next, the group watches a case study video and then determines how to learn more about the students in the case study. The group develops an action plan for using the data, creates a complete culturally relevant lesson plan for that classroom, and reflects on the experience. The small group work encourages dialogue and discussion related to real classrooms but in a way that is still "safe" for candidates. At each point in the project, the instructor provides feedback to the candidates before they continue.

Class Schedule

Finally, the original class schedule included only three references to "culturally responsive teaching" in topics throughout the semester. In addition, we found that textbook chapters (Pang, 2018) were included as specific readings through the course. Though article summaries were included as assignments, no article references were provided in the syllabus. Critical readings around the origin of culturally relevant and culturally sustaining pedagogy were added into the revision of the course to help candidates understand the conceptual foundation and ongoing research related to these topics. For example, seminal articles by Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995), Gay (2002), and Annamma et al. (2013) were added to the class schedule. Recent works that are practitioner-based, such as Collier et al. (2017) and Linan-Thompson et al. (2018), were also added.

Several class session topics in the original syllabus (e.g., equity vs. equality; educator implicit bias; and the impact of privilege, diversity and culture on education) remained in the revised course. However, to include additional themes and topics related to cultural-

ly sustaining pedagogy, several class sessions were changed to topics such as (a) race: historical oppression; (b) social biases: discrimination based on religion, immigrant status, and exceptionalities; (c) prejudice and bullying; and (d) creating a culturally responsive community for learning. Class sessions on trauma in the school setting and the impact of trauma on learning and development were also removed from the schedule so as to not link intersectionality with trauma.

Discussion and Implications

Given the mismatch in K-12 student and teacher demographics and experiences, it is critically important to prepare teachers to provide instruction from a cultural strengths-based perspective (Pang et al., 2021). In order to do that, teacher candidates must be asked to examine their own beliefs, experiences, and biases as well as learn ways to know more about their students and plan instruction that meets the needs of their students. Teacher preparation programs must include coursework and field experiences that explicitly and intentionally guide candidates through this process.

According to Taylor and Hamdy (2013), adult learning occurs in an iterative process. Individuals experience dissonance in their understanding, reflect on it, develop new ideas, experiment with those ideas, and then, organize their new learning until they experience dissonance again. Kolb and Kolb (2009) add to this that the process occurs in a social environment. Critical to coursework in teacher preparation is experiencing this dissonance in ideas and beliefs with the opportunity to reflect on this dissonance and negotiate its outcome with others in the course. This process integrates with the learning framework continuum of Chavez and Longerbeam (2016) in that the

FIGURE 3: CAPSTONE ASSIGNMENT

This is a small group project. Please make your own groups of 3-4 students.

The purpose of this project is two-fold: (1) to identify current classroom practices that are "getting in the way" of student learning and (2) to develop an action/improvement plan based on student surveys and classroom observations included in the case study video of your choice.

Your action/improvement plan will use critical pedagogy to implement culturally responsive teaching and increase student performance in your content area(s). Groups will access the referenced Cultural Competence article and synthesize the research from this semester that has a correlation to perceived implications for culturally responsive teaching, school leadership and student performance. Groups will give a live 10-minute presentation on their capstone project. (25 pts)

Objectives

1. To learn more about the cultural background of a particular student or group of students who you are not very familiar.

2. To develop culturally relevant teaching approaches to better meet the needs of that student(s).

3. To implement these new approaches and observe reactions and/or effects on the students.

4. To reflect on this action research experience and plan how to continue using culturally relevant teaching with these and other students in the future.

Requirements

1. Choose a video. Choose 1 of the 5 Case Study videos to design an improvement plan to embed cultural responsiveness and increase student learning. The case studies choices are:
   • "Student Voices: Rosaryville ES, Upper Marlboro, MD"
   • "Student Voices: Wilson Middle School, Washington, D.C."
   • "Student Voices: Lily College Preparatory Academy, Annapolis, MD"
   • "Student Voices: McApple Regional Academy, Roanoke, VA"
   • "Student Voices: Georgetown ES, Georgetown, DE"

   Begin this project by thinking about the students in the video. Consider the group of students in the classroom whose cultural background is significantly different from yours and about whose culture you may have little knowledge. Think about the teaching approach of the educator in the video and your concerns that he or she may not be reaching them adequately.

2. Data Collection. Think about how you can learn more about that student's home culture. Reference class discussions, textbook and articles. Collect as much information as you can about their culture and create a profile of the student/student group.

3. Action Plan. Develop a plan for how you can use the information you gathered to create a plan to improve the educator's approaches with the student(s). Include the following components: prior knowledge, learning styles/strategies, teaching method(s), lessons/activities, parent involvement.

4. Implementation. Incorporate your culturally relevant lesson plan in this Action Plan and at least one culturally relevant activity with the students.

5. Reflection. Reflect on how the new approaches and strategies will increase the educator's self-efficacy and increase the students' performance.

6. Examples: If you have any examples of worksheets or materials you developed to use for this project, be sure to include a copy. Please include only things that you made or adapted yourself for these activities. (optional)

7. References: Provide a list of all resources used throughout the project. Be sure that you have cited (APA 7) each of these in the paper.

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continuum provides guidance in how to incorporate a variety of activities, from individuated to integrated, to get students to experience this dissonance and to work through it. The outcome of these activities is a broadened perspective of and for K-12 students, one that allows for *intersectionality in teaching*.

The review and revision of individual course syllabi within a licensure program requires a systematic approach with both a micro- and macro-level lens. The new program described here included a core course entitled, *Intersectionality and Disability.* It was critical to the program developers, at a macro-level, to have a course that addressed issues of intersectionality in a licensure program. However, a deeper dive into the course revealed opportunities for better addressing culturally sustaining pedagogy within the course, a real need for teacher candidates (Cruz et al., 2020; Lubin et al., 2020). The process of reviewing the course syllabus in a systematic, replicable way allowed for revisions that better address the macro-level goal of producing teacher candidates who can meet the needs of diverse learners in special education. The review occurred in a stepwise fashion: (a) reading of all syllabus sections, (b) evaluating for occurrences of critical terms, (c) categorizing topics into themes and looking for missing themes, and (d) using a conceptual framework

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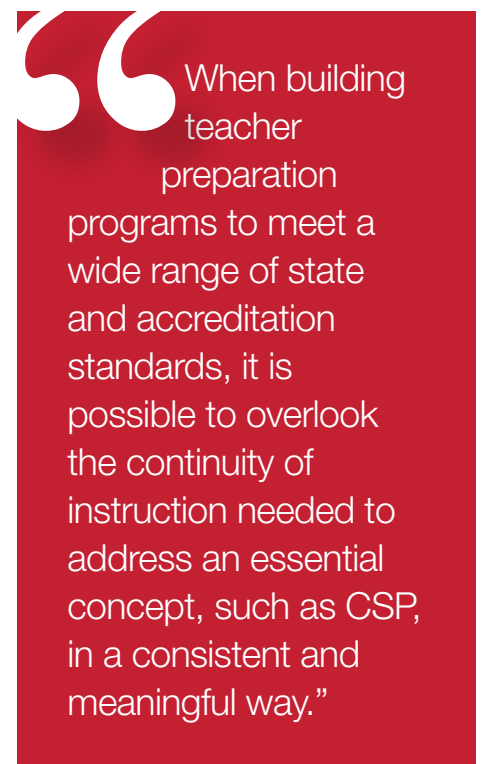
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for revisions (Chavez & Longerbeam, 2016).

The outcome of the review of the *Intersectionality and Disability* course included revised descriptions and outcomes, new assignments and activities, and a focus on self-reflection and efficacy. It also resulted in a paradigm shift from awareness of intersectionality to the more application-oriented approach of culturally sustaining pedagogy. In an independent audit of the undergraduate program, the revised course was ranked closest to being at the transformative level (e.g., challenges traditional views and encourages new ways of thinking; Kea et al, 2021). Its revision and the independent audit begin one program's journey to incorporating a cultural strengths-based mindset throughout the undergraduate experience. Though we continue our efforts to recruit teacher candidates of color, we understand that our current candidates need to be ready to learn about their students and incorporate this mindset into their instruction.

Limitations

There are limitations to the process reported. First, this article describes the review and revision of one course about diversity and intersectionality. The goal is to have this course create an intentional catalyst for a teacher candidate's journey and the ideas started here are to be woven throughout additional coursework. It is important to note that the revisions are predominantly conceptualized with the individual student's characteristics in mind rather than any particular group's characteristics. Second, it bears noting that the changes to the syllabus and assignments have not been field tested for efficacy yet. Third, the process was guided by research evidence and best practice but did not follow a validated, systematic review process. Though review processes exist (e.g., Booker & Campbell-Whatley,

> "When building teacher preparation programs to meet a wide range of state and accreditation standards, it is possible to overlook the continuity of instruction needed to address an essential concept, such as CSP, in a consistent and meaningful way."

2015), they were not at the granular level that was needed so the authors had to adapt. Finally, this review was conducted by a small team led by the first author. Future reviews might include a larger group of faculty and other stakeholders in order to incorporate a wider range of perspectives into all undergraduate special education coursework. Future reviews might also examine the scaffolding of intersectionality in teaching across courses to address the complexity of using an understanding of the individual to build integrated learning experiences respectful of both the commonalities and differences among groups of students. However, given these limitations, the review and recommendations for this course have fueled the conversation within one preparation program about how to best prepare teacher candidates for the students they will serve. Future research will attempt to validate and formalize the process of review and revision in order to expand activities to all courses in the undergraduate program.

Implications for Teacher Education Programs

Billingsley et al. (2019) remind us that all teachers need an opportunity to acquire skills for meeting the complex needs of their students. King and Butler (2015) mirror this perspective by pointing out that preparation programs cannot trust that teacher candidates will inherently pick up best practices, but that they must be taught the importance of the role of culture in a student's learning experience. Therefore, it is clear that preparation of teachers for today's schools must include intentional and explicit instruction related to CSP that extends beyond recognition into application of evidence-based practices that support a welcoming and effective learning environment for all students (Pang et al., 2021).

When building teacher preparation programs to meet a wide range of state and accreditation standards, it is possible to overlook the continuity of instruction needed to address an essential concept, such as CSP, in a consistent and meaningful way. For example, embedding course objectives that reflect expectations such as those of the Council for Exceptional Children's Initial Preparation Standards (CEC, 2021) is the foundational starting point for what should be covered. Circling back for a systematic review of courses (e.g., individual courses as well as the integration and advancement of concepts across courses) can provide programs with an opportunity for continuous improvement focused on preparing front-line special educators who are well equipped to lead learning in context with the diverse and ever-evolving needs of their students.

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Considerations for Incorporating Trauma-Informed Care Content within Special Education Teacher Preparation and Professional Development Programs

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ABSTRACT

Trauma-informed care (TIC) is the practice of consciousness and awareness of trauma that guides educators in developing academic and behavioral support for students with exceptionalities who have experienced trauma. TIC can support students from the lens of Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS) and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) within Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). The purpose of this article is to explore the integration of TIC practices within classrooms that utilize the MTSS framework and to assist pre-service and in-service teachers with implementing TIC practices within inclusive and restrictive K-12 learning environments.

KEYWORDS

Multi-tiered systems of support, school-wide positive behavior supports and interventions, social and emotional learning, trauma-informed care

A vast number of competencies are addressed in special education teacher preparation programs (Council for Exceptional Children, 2015). Infusing teacher preparation programs with culturally responsive practices (Robertson et al., 2017) provides a forum for educators to address developmental, social, and cultural needs of pupils with and without exceptionalities in their future K-12 classrooms (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are interwoven throughout all the knowledge and skills areas. Yet, a topic that does not always appear in focused research and practice within the field of special education and directly connects with DEI is trauma-informed care (TIC). TIC represents a holistic approach to structuring culture, practices, and policies to be sensitive to the experiences and needs of individuals who have experienced trauma (McInerney & McKlindon, 2014). As it relates to education, over two-thirds of children residing in the United States have reported experiencing at least one traumatic

event during their life (Stevens, 2017). Examples of trauma experienced by the K-12 population that may impact behavior and academic performance include the loss of a parent, neglect, abuse, social violence, social isolation and natural disasters (Stevens, 2012). Furthermore, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs; Felitti et al., 1998) such as abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction are all common experiences for students with emotional/behavioral disorders (Cavanaugh, 2016). Data around childhood and school-age trauma make it imperative for teachers to consider the impact of trauma on students' behavioral and social development.

Students who have experienced trauma have unique needs, which must be addressed to adequately include them in educational settings. Trauma affects all aspects of students' lives. Their responses, ideations, behaviors, and more are inseparable from the negative impacts of trauma. Therefore, it is reasonable to estimate that providing teachers and teacher candidates with specific knowledge and skills grounded in TIC could have a positive impact on student

outcomes. When TIC is the basis of decision making, the emphasis changes from education to well-being, which more holistically encompasses students' DEI needs. Educators who practice TIC recognize and respond to the impact of childhood trauma and traumatic stress (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2018).

Although Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) is a widely used framework for the process of providing interventions, TIC is an approach that emphasizes *how* the framework and interventions are implemented (Cavanaugh, 2016). MTSS encompasses Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) which offer a range of interventions that are applied systematically, with fidelity, and provide behavioral supports of increasing intensity across delivery tiers. There is a need for school mental health practices, such as TIC, to be aligned with PBIS, especially when supporting students with exceptionalities, like those with emotional behavioral disorders (Weist et al., 2018). Thus, the purpose of this article is to explore the integration of TIC practices within MTSS frameworks and detail TIC practices that can be included within special education teacher preparation programs and professional development for in-service teachers working with students in inclusive/restrictive K-12 settings.

Trauma and Behavioral Challenges in Special Education

Historically, special educators have intentionally and unintentionally excluded environmental factors during disability identification and accommodation (Berardi & Morton, 2017). Recently, researchers have suggested that experiencing maltreatment places students at a higher risk for developing disabilities, making TIC relevant for the field of special education specifically (Corr & Santos, 2017; Panlilio & Corr, 2020).

According to Merikangas et al. (2010), roughly one out of five students experience mental health challenges that lead to externalizing behaviors such as inattention, impulsivity, and general disruptive behavior. Childhood adversities and traumatic experiences, particularly complex trauma, have often been associated with toxic stress responses in children, defined as the prolonged activation of the stress response system in the absence of responsive caregiving (Shonkoff et al., 2009; Shonkoff et al., 2012). These toxic stress responses, in turn, lead to a host of negative outcomes for children that include physical, psychological, social, and behavioral problems (D'Andrea et al., 2012). Mueser and Taub (2008) reported that post-traumatic stress has been experienced by 30% of adolescents with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). Walker and colleagues (2004) also asserted that students with EBD commonly deal with ACEs and situations that negatively impact their social, emotional, and cognitive well-being. Additionally, in a large-scale study from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC; Felitti et al., 1998), three categories of ACEs were recognized: abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction. When examining results from each category, Felitti et al. found that the most prevalent ACEs were 28.3% sexual abuse (abuse category), 14.8% emotional neglect (neglect category), and 26.9% household substance abuse (household dysfunction category). These findings were further supported by more recent findings from Lightfoot and others (2011), indicating that children in the welfare system who have experienced maltreatment were commonly identified as having emotional disturbances. Although connections have been established between disability diagnoses and childhood trauma (Corr & Santos, 2017; Panlilio & Corr, 2020), research and scholarship that integrate TIC into

special education teacher preparation programs are minimal.

To effectively meet the needs of students with exceptionalities, including students with EBD, one must be familiar with the students' social-emotional, physical, cognitive, and communication skills (Benner et al., 2013). The education of students with EBD is challenging, which is attributed to the complex nature of the disorder (Kauffman & Landrum, 2018). Subsequently, understanding TIC could be an essential element in special education teacher preparation, as it promotes equitable practice (Herrenkohl et al., 2019). Furthermore, given the compulsory nature of K-12 education in the United States, educators are at an important nexus of providing academic rigor and instruction, as well as providing the necessary resources to protect and improve the well-being of their students (Oyler, 2011). While educators will ideally seek to protect children from complex traumatic experiences, a need also exists to help them move from the role of protectors toward the role of promoters of their students' behavioral well-being. In order to do this, schools need to adopt a school-wide trauma-informed approach to engaging with students.

Efforts to support students who experience trauma or maltreatment should occur as a natural part of the educational experience. Consequently, teachers need to be prepared to address the needs of all students who enter their classrooms. As such, preparing teachers for this reality is of utmost importance. Although TIC and the nuances within it could be taught as a standalone course at the pre-service teacher level, classroom and behavior management courses are more than appropriate settings to broach the subject of TIC and introduce the topic to future special educators who will be working with students who experience behavioral challenges.

Trauma-Informed Care and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support in Behavior

A TIC approach has been broadly defined as a prevention approach by any child- or family-serving system that recognizes and responds to the impact of trauma and traumatic stress on children, as well as anyone else that is part of that system, such as caregivers or staff (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2018). Specifically, school-based TIC approaches apply a philosophy toward a school system wherein early adversity and trauma are recognized as important factors that are associated with students' academic-related competencies (Panlilio, 2019). Chafouleas and colleagues (2016) recommended that such school-based trauma-informed approaches be framed within a multi-tiered framework of school-based service delivery. MTSS is typically conceptualized as prevention-oriented models that have traditionally been used to deliver targeted services for students to support their school-based needs.

MTSS is a comprehensive framework that provides support for students through targeted preventions and interventions that are connected to providing support for students by catering to their whole self (Hunter et al., 2015). These supports are intentional and developed through a process of identifying a student's level of behavioral needs (Sailor et al., 2021). Multi-tiered models typically include a three-tiered pyramid approach, following the CDC prevention models (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021), wherein Tier 1 includes low intensity support, and Tiers 2 and 3 include moderate and high intensity support guided by the data-based assessments at each tier. MTSS frameworks that focus on behavior are usually described as School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS), and they focus on

the process of students learning how to apply the needed social and emotional skills necessary to control their emotional impulses, set goals, and interact with others competently (i.e., social, and emotional learning [SEL; Kendziora & Yoder, 2016]).

Presently, school systems are implementing SWPBIS through MTSS for students with and without exceptionalities in the school (Steed & Shapland, 2020). MTSS has been an influential framework for teachers and school administrators due to opportunities provided by the framework to: (a) create individualized plans of academic and behavioral support within the classroom, (b) reduce the number of distractions and triggers in the least restrictive classroom setting, and (c) implement intentional instruction with awareness of trauma triggers in the classroom (Benner et al., 2013). The Schools Committee of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (2018) suggests using an MTSS model to incorporate TIC into schools to widen the scope of intentional instruction. This would suggest that TIC can be interwoven with emotional and behavioral supports to improve cross-cutting student outcomes.

In applying TIC within MTSS systems, it is critical to remember the foundational needs of students schoolwide. Cavanaugh (2016) described six trauma-informed school practices; however, we posit that these practices are better described as considerations for setting a supportive school climate by implementing TIC with the MTSS frameworks of SWPBIS and SEL. In the training of pre-service/in-service teachers, particularly when it comes to behavior and motivation, understanding the "why" is essential in supporting students with traumatic experiences. Cavanaugh's six trauma-informed school considerations help frame the conversation around reasons teachers (and schools' writ

large) need to be cognizant of trauma as they implement PBIS and SEL systems. School climate should include consideration for:

1. Safety and consistency knowing that students who experience trauma have usually experienced life circumstances that have threatened their physical and emotional safety as well as lives full of unpredictability.

2. Culturally responsive practices as students' life circumstances vary by culture, background, and language and can provide insight on trauma that they may have experienced.

3. Positive interactions that include positive praise statements, behavior specific praise, and tangible reward systems that support fostering a climate that is encouraging to students.

4. Peer supports that encourage positive interactions with others that have similar experiences or come from similar backgrounds and allow students to see, hear, and practice opportunities that allow for social, emotional, and confidence growth.

5. Targeted supports that will scaffold behavior within tiered systems including PBIS and SEL.

6. Individualized supports that may include identification of students with the most intensive traumatic experiences for services in and out of the school setting.

In addition, SWPBIS and SEL can play an important role within an MTSS framework. The trauma-informed teacher, after collecting data from the student using universal methods, may assign the student to work with a specific group or partner as a tier two intervention (Fondren et al., 2020). If the tier two intervention does not yield the desired results, the student will receive 1:1 support in the least restrictive setting before referral to an interventionist for personalized support in needed areas (Meyer et al., 2013).

Trauma-Informed Care and School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

The focus of SWPBIS is prevention of student behavioral problems through a range of interventions applied systematically and with fidelity across the three MTSS service delivery tiers: (a) Tier 1 (primary) serves the entire classroom and includes pre-diagnosis interventions, (b) Tier 2 (secondary) involves targeted support in small groups, and (c) Tier 3 (tertiary) integrates individualized support (Hunter et al., 2015). This framework is designed to improve academic and behavioral outcomes for students, providing teachers with access to and training in evidence-based practices (Hunter, 2020) and progress monitoring systems. One example includes self-monitoring, in which students working within Tier 2 (small group) engage in instructional learning and independence through self-regulation of behavioral goals that are embedded within their Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP). TIC within a SWPBIS framework can be used proactively and reactively for students in need of behavioral support in the classroom. Another example is students receiving wraparound services (within tier 3) to allow for positive academic and behavioral outcomes in the classroom (Hunter et al., 2018). By integrating TIC into SWPBIS, educators can approach student behavior from a place of healing and understanding, which may positively affect student outcomes. The SWPBIS offers the opportunity for teachers to provide explicit and culturally responsive expectations, as well as to build mutually respectful relationships that establish an environment of positive student engagement. Through the MTSS framework, school systems will be able to integrate a holistic process that transforms classroom learning environments (Lane et al., 2014). As K-12 school leadership teams adopt social-emotion-

TABLE 1: Trauma Informed-Care within School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

Tier	Checklist
Tier 3	· Individual behavioral plans to support students academically, including students transitioning from a restrictive environment into a least restrictive environment. · Wraparound Services featuring teacher, parent, mental health professional, and social worker that focuses on planning, development, and monitoring to allow for student success in the classroom from a positive behavioral intervention support perspective. · Wraparound Team ensuring that an intervention in the form of Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TFCBT) takes place. TFCBT is an evidence-based strategy shown to be effective for students who have experienced single, multiple, and/or complex traumatic events.
Tier 2	· Intentional, small flexible grouping in which the instructor is providing an opportunity for students to monitor their behavioral goals through Check-In/Check-Out. · Intentional, small flexible grouping in which the instructor is providing an opportunity for students to engage in conflict management. · Providing support for instructional learning and independence through self-regulation and self-monitoring of behavioral goals that are embedded within the student's Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP).
Tier 1	· Teachers providing explicit, culturally responsive expectations and building mutually respectful relationships to set a positive, engaging learning environment. · Peer-Mediated Instruction in which students have an alternative to large group instruction by working with peers on academic task and problem-based learning projects. · Conscious teaching and awareness with adults modeling emotion regulation and providing students with constructive, positive behavior to guide students.

al competency programs to target the needs of their students with and without exceptionalities, a PBIS framework can provide the necessary structures to teach social-emotional competencies effectively, including the use of teams to examine data, monitor fidelity, and measure the overall effectiveness (Barret et al., 2018). Furthermore, the implementation of MTSS and the integration of SWP-BIS constitute a warranted shift in focus to the social and emotional needs of students (Panlilio, 2019). See Table 1 for a checklist of TIC practices that can be used within an SWPBIS framework for students.

Trauma-Informed Care and Social and Emotional Learning

SEL focuses on student understanding of the management of emotions, thoughts, and dispositions within five domains: (a) self-awareness, (b) self-management, (c) social awareness, (d) relationship skills, and (e) responsible decision-making (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2013). SEL's emphasis on

TABLE 2:

Trauma Informed-Care Practices within Social and Emotional Learning

Tier	Checklist
Tier 3	• Develop partnerships within the community for access to intense resources for those who need them. • Use of restorative practices for individual student issues (i.e., refrain from automatic punishment procedures). • Have a recovery services plan for individual students and staff as needed • Ensure students have safe spaces with culturally responsive elements on a per student (or staff) basis. • Refer and engage individual families in services with access to services shared • Continuously monitor responses to traumatic events for individual students and staff.
Tier 2	• Trauma screening for TIC plans and early intervention. • Using developmentally appropriate trauma-informed responses. • Enlisting the help of families to identify students in need of TIC that can be provided in school. • Explicitly teaching identified students' social skills. • Re-evaluate any policies that are antithetic to cultural inclusion and conduct a threat assessment. • Use a multidisciplinary team to create TIC interventions for in-school support across students and staff.
Tier 1	• Identify and map resources and services and how to access them. • Develop an emergency management plan and ensure all staff and stakeholders are aware of TIC procedures. • Ensure school discipline is trauma-informed and equitable (e.g., refrain from zero-tolerance policies or unnecessarily involving the school resource officer). • Develop a positive school community through a culturally supportive learning environment. • Educate staff, students, parents, and stakeholders of TIC policies and procedures. • Assess exposure to trauma for students and staff.

building positive relationships with others aligns with TIC's keen focus on relationships that provide support for students; thus, the two are easily implemented in tandem. One example within Tier 1 includes school consideration of identifying and mapping resource services, and how students can access them. TIC emphasizes the notion of providing school-age children safe spaces and environments (Putman et al., 2020) while SEL helps school-age children survive and cope in various situations (affected by trauma). Another example within Tier 1 includes the administration team/teachers developing an emergency plan and ensuring all staff and stakeholders are aware of TIC procedures. By having a focus on SEL and TIC when working with students, educators are not only knowledgeable about the potential effects but actions as well. See Table 2 for a checklist of TIC practices that can be used within an SEL framework for students.

Incorporating TIC within Special Education Teacher Preparation and Professional Development Programs

TIC training can be infused within courses within special education teacher preparation programs. One option for consideration is ungraduated/graduate classroom/behavioral management courses. This can be done through connecting the content of TIC within the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) High Leverage Practices (HLP's). HLP's for teachers are a set of clearly defined instructional practices that are observable, used frequently by teachers, and associated with improved student outcomes across grade levels, content areas, and academic skills within MTSS (McLeskey et al., 2017). The four domains for HLP's include (a) Collaboration, (b) Assessment, (c) Social Emotional Practices, and (d)

Instruction. From the Collaboration Domain, specifically, HLP #1 *Collaborate with Professionals to Increase Student Success*, classroom/behavioral management instructors can provide detail on what wraparound services are. Wraparound Services (provided within Tier 3 of PBIS) can feature educational teams that includes a student's teacher, parent, mental health professional, and social worker in which the team focuses on planning, development, and monitoring to allow for student success in the classroom from a PBIS perspective (Shepherd & Linn, 2015). From the Assessment Domain, HLP #4 *Use Multiple Sources of Information to Develop a Comprehensive Understanding of a Student's Strengths and Needs*, a discussion on Behavioral Support Plans for students, including student transition within least restrictive environments, can be a featured topic within a classroom/behavioral management course. From the Social Emotional Domain, specifically, HLP #9 *Teach Social Behaviors* (within the domain of Social Emotional Practices) connects with TIC practices, particularly Tier 2/ SEL in which educators explicitly teach identified students' social skills. Instructors can create lessons/discussion points on the aspects of teachers providing social skill instruction. Social skills training programs are often overlooked components of behavior and classroom management plans; however, social skills training is an intervention that may increase the social skills and social competencies of students with EBD (Shepherd & Linn, 2015). From the Instruction Domain, specifically HLP #17, *Use Flexible Grouping*, instructors can model what flexible grouping is. Flexible Grouping incorporates cooperative learning principles where teachers assign students to heterogeneous groups (different content skill mastery, gender, and cultural/ethnic identities) based on

> **" As K-12 students spend at least seven hours per day in school, teachers and school administrators have ample time to positively influence a student's behavior and meet their academic needs."**

clear learning goals, providing a forum for peer mediation, and the opportunity for positive and corrective feedback to support student of learning (Hunter, 2020). Table 1 and 2 feature content on TIC and various connections to HLP's. It is recommended for pre-service/ in-service teachers to engage with content that connects TIC and HLP's within MTSS (Taylor & Bhana, 2021.)

Considerations for special education professional development includes teachers undergoing an extensive training that addresses the following components:

• Understanding Trauma and ACEs (Dong et al., 2003)

• Challenging current thought processes vs. TIC attributions (Hoskins et al., 2018)

• Identifying ways educators may be trauma informed (Plumb et al., 2016)

• Direct overview of MTSS (August et al., 2018)

National Centers and state agencies provide continuous professional development to support in-service teachers with implementing strategies associated with the MTSS framework (Barret et al., 2018). School-wide training in the

implementation of TIC practices, with specific training at the classroom level, is recommended, and educators are encouraged to bear in mind that the process of becoming a trauma-informed institution requires continuous evaluation. As an ongoing learning process, school systems should incorporate observation of trauma-informed practices during teacher evaluation, as well as provide ongoing professional development opportunities that continuously support teachers within schools that utilize the MTSS framework.

Final Thoughts

As K-12 students spend at least seven hours per day in school, teachers and school administrators have ample time to positively influence a student's behavior and meet their academic needs. At this point, teacher education around TIC is not a national requirement, as there is currently no mandated trauma-informed training for educators. However, educators will not be able to implement trauma-informed practices without first being introduced to TIC (Plumb et al., 2016), practices that are crucial to working with vulnerable student populations.

The goal of joining principles of TIC with the MTSS framework, and interventions (e.g., SWPBIS and SEL) is to make sure consideration is given to the behavioral and emotional aspects surrounding current interventions and practices that are effective with all students (Adams, 2014). The overall goal is to design actionable steps toward creating mandatory TIC trainings, certifications, and educational curricula for educators and educational leaders within special education teacher preparation programs and the continuation of professional development (Cavanaugh, 2016). In her work, Ladson-Billings (1999) shared the importance of preparing educators for teaching diverse populations with indi-

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vidualized needs. University teacher education programs that include classroom behavior management courses should include instruction and support for TIC in MTSS frameworks (e.g., SWPBIS and SEL) which will assist with supporting students from diverse populations with individualized needs. By changing the mindsets and approaches of educators, student learning outcomes can be positively affected (Wiest-Stevenson & Lee, 2016).

Pre-service special education teachers who are trained to recognize the signs of trauma and to implement instructional strategies and interventions which support students who have been exposed to trauma can better provide equitable services to students with exceptionalities (McInerney & McKlindon, 2014). As TIC is implemented, the educational nexus would not be replaced. Rather, special education research and practice would be complemented with TIC research and practice to provide a more holistic approach to student success.

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Contemporary Issues of Special Education in Turkey

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ABSTRACT

The first international declaration of inclusive education through the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) underlined the importance and necessity of inclusive practices and recommended that all students should benefit from the same educational approaches in the same environment. In addition to that, growth in field applications, published research papers, the number of trained professionals, and general awareness around students with disabilities triggered the improvement of special education services in Turkey during the last three decades. This article displays a brief history of special education, laws and regulations, the path of special education, and introduces contemporary issues in special education in Turkey. Without recognizing the existing situation and contemporary issues of the field of special education, it is not possible to take steps for planning and obtain better outcomes.

KEYWORDS

Inclusion, special education, teacher training, Turkey

The number of individuals with disability are increasing and will continue to increase due to chronic health conditions. The population of people who live with some form of disability is more than a billion globally, which is around one in seven people and representing about 15% of the world's population (World Health Organization, 2015). According to the World Health Organization, around 90 million children or 1/20 of children under 15 years of age experience moderate to severe disability and more than 100 million adults experience significant difficulties in functioning. While this is the case globally, national statistics are influenced by the country's conditions such as health services, environmental factors, violence, and natural disasters. In Turkey, the population of individuals with disability is stated as 12.29% by Turkish Statistical Institute (TSI, 2002). Although the up-to-date number of individuals with disability is not clearly known and the last legitimate statistic is almost 20 years old, for which data collected from smaller samples by different institutions were gathered, it can be concluded that the number of individuals with disabilities is more than 10% of the population which equates to around 8.5 million individuals.

In 1994, the United Nation's educational agency (UNESCO), supported by 92 governments and 25 international organizations met in Salamanca, Spain at the World Conference on Special Needs Education. As a result, the Salamanca Statement was adopted highlighting every child's right for education and identified the importance of educational placement in regular education systems for all children from various backgrounds. Moreover, article 25 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) emphasizes the right of reaching the highest standards for all individuals with disability without any discrimination. However, the reality is that many countries have difficulties providing quality services for individuals with disabilities (e.g., Hollenweger, 2014; Kohen et al., 2010; Kolupayeva et al., 2014). Dissemination of special

education and support services around the world has been widely supported in the last few decades and these practices are elevating the discussion on addressing the needs of all individuals with disabilities as well as enacting laws and regulations to provide these services. Many of the legislative acts and foundational principles of special education (e.g., the least restrictive environment) in Turkey were modelled after policies in the United States. However, for specific practices and services in special education, it would be more practical to look from a regional perspective.

History of Special Education in Turkey

The Republic of Turkey was established in 1923, however the history of special education goes back hundreds of years to the Ottoman Empire. The first formal education started during 15th century where gifted and talented children were systematically selected and educated in Enderun School (Melekoglu et al., 2009). The purpose of systematic selection and replacement in Enderun School was targeted at educating talented children who would become future scientists, artists and leaders (Enc et al., 1987). For the Republic of Turkey, the first formal special education school was The School for Deaf, Mute and Blind which was established in İzmir (Melekoglu, 2014). The school provided services for students with hearing impairments and visual impairments under the responsibility of Ministry of Health and Social Welfare until 1950. During this decade, 1950s, significant steps were taken for special education in Turkey. Starting in 1951, the control over special education services were carried out by the Ministry of National Education (Senel, 1998). The first special education teacher training program (Department of Special Education) was opened at

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the Gazi Education Institute in Ankara in 1952, however the department was shut down after two years of training (Sahin, 2005). Moreover, the first Guidance and Research Center (GRC) was initiated in 1955. GRCs are institutions working under the Ministry of National Education, designed to develop and provide psychological and educational services for individuals with disabilities, families, and other stakeholders (Karasu, 2014). Main responsibilities of these centers related to special education services, including planning, providing, coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating the services (Ministry of National Education, 2020). GRCs are also the first destination of individuals after medical diagnosis and teacher/parent referral responsible for educational evaluation of children with disabilities. Furthermore, a limited number of special education classrooms were established in different primary schools in Ankara for students with intellectual disabilities for the first time in Turkey's

history during 1955 (Sahin, 2005).

Special Education Laws and Regulations

A form of education that is special to individuals with disabilities was first mentioned in the Children in Need of Protection Law in 1949 (amendments in 1957, and 1958). Article 19 indicated that necessary institutions be established by the Ministry of National Education for children who require special education methods and these children undergo a period of observations before being accepted into these educational institutions. The two constitutional laws in force on education in Turkey (Ministry of National Education, 1961; Ministry of National Education, 1973) referred special education within a single article. These articles underlined that children with disabilities should be provided with special education and special precautions should be taken to raise children in need of special education and protection, respectively. The importance of special education in Turkey became even more prominent in 1980s when the Ministry of National Education established a division for special education services (Melekoglu, 2014). Following this decision, the first comprehensive regulation of Children with Special Education Needs Regulation became law in 1983. This law is the first by being specific to individuals with special needs and more significantly highlighting the importance of educational placement among typically developing peers. The purpose of this law was to regulate principles regarding the education of children with special education needs to secure a job and a profession, as well as, adapt to the environment and society. Disability categories, basic principles related to special education services, responsibilities of stakeholders such as public services and other professionals were defined (Senel, 1998).

The growth in field applications, published research papers, the number of trained professionals, and general awareness around the subject triggered the improvement of special education services during 1990s. Decree Law No.573, enacted in 1997, is the first regulation that mentioned the term "Inclusion". This law is essential for special education in Turkey since it is considered as the first legal step of the country into inclusive education. The law includes the basic principles of special education underlining the importance of early intervention, educational evaluation, individualized education plans, parental involvement, as well as needs, interests, and abilities of all children with disabilities. In addition, with the adjustment provided by the Decree Law, special education expenses of children whose parents are insured and retirees affiliate to the Social Insurance Institution was covered by the government. Soon after the government become responsible for special education costs, the number of private special education and rehabilitation centers increased exponentially (Vuran & Unlu, 2012). Based on the provisions of the Decree Law No.573, the Ministry of National Education legislated the Special Education Services Regulation (SESR) in 2000 (amendments in 2006, 2012, and 2018). The purpose of this law was to regulate principles to ensure that individuals with disabilities benefitted from special education services to receive academic and vocational education. Special education categories and some of the definitions included in this law are based on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) and the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM; American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

The Path of Special Education in Turkey

The special education process begins when an individual is diagnosed with a disability in a hospital following a referral from a school administrator, a parent, or a request by the individual who has not previously been diagnosed with an intellectual disability and who is over the age of 18. After the medical diagnosis, the first encounter with a GRC occurs for the educational evaluation and identification process to place the individual in an appropriate educational program. GRCs make decisions regarding the individual's present levels of performance, and educational and supportive opportunities that are available in proximity. Then, following the educational evaluation, the GRCs' Special Education Evaluation Board prepares a report for the individual who is going to benefit from special education. These reports are prepared by considering the principle of the least restrictive environment. These GRC reports are usually issued on a 1-year basis, with rare exceptions of 6-month or 2-years. Following the evaluation process, the individual with disability might be directed to an inclusive general education classroom, a special education classroom in a general education school, a special education school, homeschooling, or hospital school (Ministry of National Education, 2018a). An individual with disability could also be directed to a private Special Education and Rehabilitation Centers (SERC) as another option, or an additional option to their educational placement based on the family's decision. For example, a student with a disability can receive education from both a special education classroom in a general education school while also receive face-to-face and/or group education in a SERC for part of the day. On the other hand, there are Science and Arts Centers for gifted children in addition to their regular education placements. The Turkish government covers the expenses of 8-hours face-to-face and 4-hours group education per month. If families decide to have more services and/or additional hours from SERCs, they are responsible for those extra costs. Regardless of the educational environment, it is mandated to prepare an IEP (MEB, 2018a) based on the individuals' needs and goals.

Inclusion

Inclusion, as a model of special education, refers to the education of students with disabilities in the same environment with typically developing peers (Kargın, 2004). Inclusion has become more prevalent in Turkey over the last decade. More than 70% of all students with disabilities in formal education spend at least 60% of their school time in the same classroom alongside their typically developing peers (Ministry of National Education, 2021). Table 1 indicates the total number of students in formal education in comparison with the total number of students with disabilities in formal education and the number of students who are placed in inclusive classrooms during the last decade.

Inclusion is more than physically placing all children from various backgrounds in the same classroom environment. The participations of students with disabilities must also include social and educational integration, and meaningful support services to achieve shared learning opportunities, new peer relationships, and raised expectations (Agran et al., 2014; Carter et al., 2015). Alongside an emphasis on the benefits of inclusive practices (Batu, 2008; Sucuoglu et al., 2020) and positive teacher attitudes (Rakap & Kaczmarek, 2010; Sari, 2007), it is obvious that there are serious issues regarding the implementation of these practices (Vural & Yıkmış, 2008; Yilmaz & Batu, 2016). One of the most prominent barriers to inclusive practices is teachers' lack of knowledge and skills. It is found that the teachers' classroom management skills affect the behaviors

TABLE 1: Number of Students and Teachers in Formal Education in Turkey

School Year	TOTAL NUMBERS IN FORMAL EDUCATION		TOTAL NUMBERS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION		TOTAL NUMBER IN INCLUSION
	Students	Teachers	Students	Teachers	Students
2019-2020	18,241,881	1,117,686	425,774	15,321	318,300
2018-2019	18,108,860	1,077,307	398,815	14,043	295,697
2017-2018	17,885,248	1,030,130	353,610	12,846	257,770
2016-2017	17,702,938	989,231	333,598	12,009	242,486
2015-2016	17,588,958	993,795	288,489	11,595	202,541
2014-2015	17,559,989	919,393	259,282	10,596	183,221
2013-2014	17,532,988	873,747	242,716	9,733	173,117
2012-2013	17,234,452	832,726	220,649	10,344	161,295
2011-2012	16,905,143	774,602	199,513	8,139	148,753
2010-2011	16,845,528	743,564	141,248	7,868	92,355

of students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms (Sucuoğlu et al., 2010) and the academic communication of teachers with students with disabilities is deficient (Guner-Yildiz, 2015).

Teacher Training

After the shutdown of the first attempt to train special education teacher candidates in 1952, teacher training for special education was initiated in 1983 for the second time at the Anadolu University in Eskisehir. A candidate had to take a nationwide student selection and placement exam to qualify into the undergraduate program. Teacher candidates of a special education department are required to complete a 4-year special education teacher education program. Teacher candidates are supposed to complete 150 credits that are composed of general knowledge (13%), teaching knowledge (28%), and field knowledge (59%) subcategories (Council of Higher Education, 2018). The teaching knowledge category includes a mandatory 10-credits of teaching practicum during

the last two semesters of undergraduate education. Teacher candidates who graduate from a Special Education Department earn the title of special education teacher. However, not all title holders are graduates from Special Education Departments. Since special education is relatively new, and the number of students with disabilities surpasses the number of special education graduates, the Ministry of National Education started short-term certificate programs that were earmarked to produce more teachers into the system (Unlu et al., 2019). The short-term certificate programs have helped increase the number of teachers that are working in special education schools. As Cavkaytar (2018) noted, many of the teachers working in special education schools participated in the short-term certificate program. Though the program has helped in providing large numbers of teachers, it is a matter of debate how these short-term programs are going to close the gap and how these trainings produce qualified teachers. Research studies indicate that

teachers who graduate from a special education department perform significantly better than teachers holding short-term certificates (Nougaret et al., 2005) and teachers with certificates need more help and support related to the education of students with disabilities (Sivrikaya & Yikmis, 2016).

The identification process, educational placement, and teacher training are essential aspects of the path of special education worldwide. Especially when it comes to the education of individuals with disabilities and preparing qualified teachers, many countries experience various challenges and issues (e.g., Garcia-Cedillo et al., 2014; Kolupayeva et al., 2014). Turkey uses a unique assessment method for children with disabilities compared to those used in most countries which may create its own problematic issues.

Contemporary Issues in Special Education

There are many challenges in Turkey related to special education that are

discussed by students, family members, researchers, and practitioners in the field. In the next section of this article, five contemporary issues of special education in Turkey are presented.

1. Identification and Placement

How and when to identify students with disabilities are primary questions of the process. It is not difficult to come up with responses such as "by collecting data" and "as early as possible." However, these answers will bring along more questions like "what type of standardized measures were employed to collect data?" or "what if the intervention they receive are not actually needed?" Furthermore, implementation methods for the identification in each state or county might change the process dramatically. In Turkey, educational evaluations and identifications of individuals with disabilities are done by GRCs. These centers work under the Ministry of National Education with responsibilities of designing and providing both educational and psychological services for individuals with disabilities, their parents, and their teachers (Karasu, 2014).

Turkey's SESR (2018) highlighted that GRCs are responsible for the identifications, educational placements, and supportive services for students with disabilities. Thus, GRC personnel make all decisions for the individual with disability regarding the type and degree of the disability, developmental characteristics, current performance, and educational placement. In a study conducted by Karasu (2014), parents expressed concern about the evaluation process done with their children and had mostly negative experiences with GRC personnel in terms of inadequacy, professionalism, guidance, and bureaucracy. In another research study about GRCs, parents of individuals with intellectual disabilities described their unsatisfactory experiences related to their children's

educational evaluation, personnel communication, and overall GRC collaboration (Karal & Unluol-Unal, under review). In a study conducted with GRC administrators, participants stated problems related to the identification process as allocating insufficient time for an individual to be evaluated and lacking a sufficient number of experts in GRCs (Ozak et al., 2008). In fact, GRC personnel have indicated that that their greatest area of need for in-service training is on conducting standardized evaluations (Aslan & Bal, 2014).

2. Support Services

Meeting the needs of all students with disabilities is only possible when they have access to support services. Support services are essential for not only meeting the needs of students with disabilities, but also enhancing the quality of special education services for all stakeholders that include, teachers, professionals, family members, and the students with disabilities themselves. These services consist of in-class and out-of-class educational support, assistive technology, social supports, guidance and counseling, and related services such as health services, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech-language therapy. The first issue related to the support services is about the understanding of the concept of "support," since it is usually mentioned to refer supporting education of students with disabilities (i.e., supportive education services and resource room). However, there are serious challenges for families to reach support services such as social support, legal rights, guidance and psychological counseling, and parent training opportunities due to their needs and expectations (Sardohan-Yildirim & Akcamete, 2014). Mothers of students with disabilities indicate that support services are not sufficient either for their children or family members

(Baglama & Sakalli- Demirok, 2016).

Second, as the number of inclusive classrooms increase, and the necessity is highlighted in the law, there remains little support services in schools (Melekoglu, 2014). Results of the project on Investigating the Efficacy of Supportive Special Education Services showed that necessary support services are not provided to the students with disabilities or their teachers. Teachers stated that they have difficulties and need support services related to education of students with disabilities, problem behaviors, and informing typically developing peers (Yenigun & Odluyurt, 2020). It is mandatory to have a resource room and provide educational support services in each school where students with disabilities are placed (Ministry of National Education, 2015). The purpose of a resource room is to create an opportunity for teachers to work with students in small groups or face-to-face to provide individualized education (Moody et al., 2000). However, resource rooms are not appropriately designed, lack specific planning and curriculum, and the environment is not appropriate for students with special needs (Pemik & Levent, 2019; Yazicioglu, 2020).
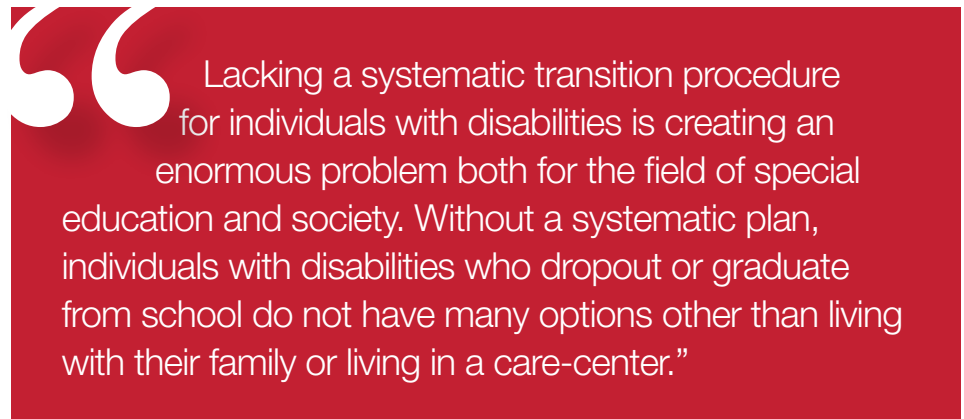
3. Gap between the Research and Practice

Another issue of special education in Turkey is related to the implementation of evidence-based practices and research-based practices such as classroom management strategies to meet the needs of students with disabilities. The purpose of these practices is to promote positive outcomes for students from various backgrounds. These practices should be utilized to design individualized education and interventions since the effectiveness is established. Although there are many practices and classroom management strategies that have been identified as scientifically rigorous by

research, practitioners do not usually employ these practices (Lauderdale-Littin & Brennan, 2018; Melekoglu, 2014). Thus, there is still a gap between research and practice, especially in inclusive classrooms.

Research indicates that effective classroom management decreases the likelihood of problem behaviors (Korpershoek et al., 2016) and increases student engagement by enhancing opportunities to respond and receive performance feedback (Simonsen et al., 2008). In a study conducted by Guner-Yildiz (2015), a high number of students with intellectual disabilities were found to be academically engaged (58.6%) however, their teachers' approval for appropriate behaviors was low (0.13%). The use of feedback increased students' academic engagement and on-task behaviors, while decreasing off-task and problem behaviors (Akalın & Sucuoğlu, 2015). In a study conducted by Guner-Yildiz and Sazak- Pinar (2012) to examine teachers' behavior in inclusive classrooms, results indicated that none of the teachers used reinforcements for students with disabilities who followed the classroom rules and only 20% of teachers used reinforcements for students with disabilities who performed socially or academically appropriate behavior.

Potential reasons of not utilizing scientifically validated practices and strategies in the classroom include teachers' lack of training as well as lack of knowledge related to the deficits associated with a disability, which practices and strategies have been identified as evidence-based, and the prospective benefits of these practices (Lauderdale-Littin & Brennan, 2018). A majority of general education teachers who teach in an inclusive environment are not equipped with support services and may have little awareness about evidence-based practices and effective classroom management strategies for student with disabilities (Melekoglu,

> "Lacking a systematic transition procedure for individuals with disabilities is creating an enormous problem both for the field of special education and society. Without a systematic plan, individuals with disabilities who dropout or graduate from school do not have many options other than living with their family or living in a care-center."

2014). Even if they know about these practices and strategies, they sometimes view them as not suitable with their classroom management techniques (Lang et al., 2010). In a study conducted by Ceylan and Yikmis (2017), teachers were asked about the type of intervention strategy they use when problem behaviors occurred and teachers stated that they used verbal warnings (44%), tried to find the reason (28%) and did nothing specific (12%).

4. Transition

Transition involves changes and adjustments that occur cumulatively in the lives of individuals as they move through various experiences (Wehman, 2006). For instance, school-to-work transition might be defined as the status change that an individual makes from leaving the student role to an adult role and live in society (Defur et al., 2001). This transition process can be exciting and full of expectations and dreams for typically developing individuals while it may also be discouraging for individuals with disabilities and their families. Moreover, other additional factors such as economic situation, lack of opportunities, and societal attitudes may affect the possibilities of individuals with disabilities and their families in the transition process.

According to the SESR, one of the purposes of special education services is to prepare individuals with disabilities for employment, higher education, and social life. However, there is no transition procedure for individuals with disabilities in Turkey. Related to the after-school life of individuals with disabilities, some regulations appear to support their employment in order to prepare them for their adult lives. It is stated that a company employing fifty or more employees is obligated to employ 4% of individuals in governmental institutions and 3% of individuals with disabilities in private institutions. Lacking a systematic transition procedure for individuals with disabilities is creating an enormous problem both for the field of special education and society. Without a systematic plan, individuals with disabilities who dropout or graduate from school do not have many options other than living with their family or living in a care-center.

5. Teacher Training

Teacher training is another challenge for the field of special education in Turkey. This issue includes the training of special education teachers and general education teachers who are going to work in inclusive classrooms. Teacher training plays a vital role in promoting teacher candidates' willingness for inclusive practices and utilizing various strategies that can meet the individual needs of students with disabilities (Flo-

rian & Spratt, 2013). However, there is only one mandatory course called Special Education and Inclusion in the new program published in 2018 for general education teacher candidates to attend during their last year of undergraduate school. Furthermore, the structure of the program for general education teacher candidates does not involve any type of practicum opportunity with student with special needs. Research indicates that teachers lack knowledge and skills about inclusion and inclusive practices (Yilmaz & Batu, 2016), and it is suggested that undergraduate programs should offer elective courses related to special education and teacher candidates should do school visits to gain more knowledge and develop positive attitudes towards students with disabilities (Akyildiz, 2017). Teachers' negative perspectives related to inclusive practices might interrupt their future educational applications (Forlin et al., 2009) and it is unlikely that those teachers will change their existing perspectives (Sharma et al., 2013).

The training that teacher candidates experience during their undergraduate education is considered to be one of the key factors in determining teacher candidates' perceptions regarding students from various backgrounds in their prospective schools and how they influence outcomes of students in inclusive environments (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2017). Improving the quality of programs for teacher candidates by adding more courses and professional development opportunities related to the special education and inclusive practices are essential for prospective teachers to meet the needs of all students from various backgrounds. However, enhancing the quality of undergraduate programs is not just about changing or designing the program but also about training more highly qualified faculty members. According to the Council of

Higher Education in Turkey, employing three faculty members is sufficient for programs to be opened for student registrations. Therefore, many special education departments are started with three faculty members for the purpose of filling the teacher shortage. Since there are not enough graduates with doctoral degrees in the field of special education, departments sometimes cannot even find three qualified faculty. Thus, teacher training in Turkey is experiencing significant and complicated issue for the future of special education.

Conclusion

The identification process, educational placement, and teacher training are essential components of special education worldwide. Even though the legal and practical steps of special education in Turkey are relatively new, the field has come a long way during the last three decades and is still improving. As with many other countries, there are issues and concerns related to special education that must be addressed to reach equal opportunity for all students. The contemporary issues of special education in Turkey addressed in this article could be summarized as a research and policy to practice gap. In order to reach better outcomes and overcome challenges in special education, it is essential to enhance the quality of teacher training programs and professional development opportunities for special educators in Turkey.

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