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This exploratory study was conducted to investigate mentor teachers' utilization of culturally relevant teaching practices from the perspective of early childhood teacher candidates. More specifically, the current study aimed to identify the number and types of culturally relevant teaching practices utilized by mentor teachers (as reported by teacher candidates), and determine how these practices vary by personal characteristics and placement setting location, and contribute to teacher candidates' teaching efficacy. Fifty undergraduate teacher candidates from two U.S. universities enrolled in early childhood practicum courses participated by completing an online survey during the middle of a fall semester. An ANCOVA determined that the number of culturally relevant teaching practices utilized by mentor teachers did not vary by teacher candidates' race or age, mentor teachers' race, or placement setting location. A MANCOVA and between-subjects follow-ups revealed that two out of 19 types of culturally relevant teaching practices utilized by mentor teachers varied by the interaction of teacher candidates' race and placement setting location. A bivariate correlation between the number of culturally relevant teaching practices utilized by mentor teachers and teacher candidates' culturally relevant teaching efficacy was found insignificant. These findings provide insight on the practices that are being developed in teacher candidates, and enhances current knowledge on how teacher preparation programs and faculty are supporting teacher candidates' culturally relevant teaching practices.

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF CULTURALLY RELEVANT TEACHING

PRACTICES: NUMBER AND TYPES UTILIZED BY MENTOR

TEACHERS DURING STUDENTS' PRACTICUM

EXPERIENCE

by

Demi G. Siskind

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APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis written by Demi G. Siskind has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Page

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The increase in the number of culturally diverse young children, particularly young children of color, being educated in the U.S. requires early childhood educators to implement culturally relevant teaching to support each child's needs and facilitate learning. Culturally relevant teaching is a pedagogy that includes addressing and using children's cultural knowledge, experiences, and learning preferences to design, adapt, or facilitate curriculum, instruction, the classroom environment, teacher--child interactions, and assessments (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Morrison, Robbins, & Rose, 2008; Siwatu, 2007). Culturally relevant teaching seeks to prepare and provide children with the knowledge and skills to not only succeed in the dominant school culture, but also to maintain their cultural connection and identity, so children can fully participate in both home and school realities (Chen, Nimmo, & Fraser, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Morrison et al., 2008; Siwatu, 2007). Moreover, research has shown that culturally relevant teaching in K-12 classrooms has been linked to higher academic achievement and more positive school experiences for children from diverse cultures (López, 2016; Savage, Hindle, Meyer, Hynds, Penetito, & Sleeter, 2011). Taken together, culturally relevant teaching is an approach that goes beyond learning about various cultures in that it acknowledges socio-cultural inequalities and issues, addresses and utilizes strengths of

cultural diversity, and actively responds to children's culture to support their beliefs, practices, values, language, and learning style.

Strikingly, though there is an increase in cultural diversity among the nation's children, demonstrating that the number of children of color in classrooms is rising, there is large demographic homogeneity amongst educators, such that pre-K and K-12 teachers in the U.S. are overwhelmingly White, monolingual, and middle-class (Saluja, Early, & Clifford, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Therefore, the cultural mismatch among teachers and children could pose challenges in the ways in which teachers interact with and educate children (Ladson-Billings, 2005), which could in turn influence academic and social outcomes for children (Fitzpatrick, Côté-Lussier, Pagani, & Blair, 2015; Garcia & Chun, 2016; Tomlinson & Jarvis, 2014). Thus, developing an effective early childhood teacher workforce who implement culturally relevant teaching should be a goal of teacher preparation programs (Chiu, Sayman, Carrero, Gibbon, Zolkoski, & Lusk, 2017; NAEYC, 2009).

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has provided a professional preparation position statement regarding preparing teachers to effectively work with culturally diverse young children. NAEYC and researchers suggest that teacher preparation programs should prepare teacher candidates to teach in increasingly diverse classrooms by utilizing culturally relevant teaching (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006; Groulx & Silva, 2010; Hernandez, 2004; Maude, Catlett, Moore, Sanchez, Thorp, & Corso, 2010; Prater & Devereaux, 2009). However, although there are recommendations for teacher candidates to be prepared to effectively teach in

culturally diverse classrooms and utilize culturally relevant teaching practices, research

on requirements and priorities in teacher preparation programs has indicated that a

majority of programs require few coursework hours devoted to learning about culturally

relevant teaching. Furthermore, research on teacher preparation programs has indicated a

higher priority of addressing other teaching content, such as curriculum, classroom

instructional strategies, and reflection practice, than culturally relevant teaching practices,

specifically (Margolis, 2006; Ray, Bowman, & Robbins, 2006). This priority imbalance

in teacher preparation is problematic, especially since teacher candidates have reported

facing challenges working with children who are of a different race, ethnicity, or culture

than teacher candidates' race, ethnicity, or culture, and have shared concerns about their

preparedness to effectively teach and interact with these children (Au & Blake, 2003;

Hill, 2012; Margolis, 2006; Siwatu, 2007).

Therefore, in order to develop a prepared teacher workforce, culturally relevant

teaching should be at the forefront of teaching content fostered by teacher preparation

programs. As aforementioned, NAEYC emphasizes preparing teachers to effectively

work with culturally diverse young children in its core professional preparation standards,

and an integral part of these core standards is providing classroom-based experiences,

during which teacher candidates can apply their knowledge and teaching skills (Institute

of Medicine and National Research Council, 2015; NAEYC, 2009). Classroom-based

experiences are an optimal opportunity for teacher candidates to develop their teaching

repertoire by learning, acquiring, and practicing fundamental teaching skills that are

practiced by their mentor teacher (Aderibigbe, 2013; Anderson, 2007; Maynard, La Paro,

& Johnson, 2014; Wiggins, Follo, & Eberly, 2007; Zeichner, 2010). Mentor teachers play a profound role during this vital teacher preparation experience, and despite NAEYC, researchers, and policymakers urging teacher preparation programs to prepare teacher candidates to work with culturally diverse children, little is known about mentor teachers' utilization of culturally relevant teaching. Accounting for the role of the mentor teacher could provide more clarity regarding the variety of culturally relevant teaching practices that are being modeled by mentor teachers and strengthened in teacher candidates (Chiu et al., 2017). Therefore, investigating mentor teachers' culturally relevant teaching practices could subsequently impact how teacher preparation programs prepare teacher candidates and design classroom-based experiences for teacher candidates to effectively work with culturally diverse children.

Thus, examining mentor teachers' use of culturally relevant teaching practices will assist in the understanding of the skills that are being modeled to and learned by teacher candidates to effectively work with all children. Moreover, it is critical to focus on mentor teachers' utilization of culturally relevant teaching practices to supplement and enhance current knowledge on teacher preparation, as well as to support teacher preparation programs in effectively preparing teachers through classroom-based experiences. The present study will add to the extant teacher preparation literature by contributing to the research base related to mentor teachers and their teaching practices.

This exploratory study has an overarching goal of exploring mentor teachers' utilization of culturally relevant teaching practices from the perspective of teacher candidates enrolled in early childhood practicum courses. Furthermore, the current study

aims to describe the number and types of culturally relevant teaching practices used by mentor teachers and to determine how types and number of culturally relevant practices may vary by teacher candidates' characteristics, mentor teachers' characteristics, and placement setting location and contribute to teacher candidates' teaching efficacy.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The theoretical underpinning of the current study can be described by critical race theory and Vygotsky's social development theory. Critical race theory can be used to address the ways in which educational practices may suppress marginalized groups, thus suggesting the importance of using culturally relevant teaching practices in early childhood classrooms to support the needs of each child in the classroom (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011). Additionally, Vygotsky's social development theory underscores the role of the mentor teacher in teacher candidates' learning and development. The current study uses these two theories to explore mentor teachers' utilization of culturally relevant teaching, as reported by teacher candidates, as well as the link between mentor teachers' utilization of culturally relevant teaching and teacher candidates' teacher efficacy.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory can be applied to understanding the importance of utilizing culturally relevant teaching practices to equitably support children with a home culture different than the dominant school culture. Furthermore, these children are more likely to be children of color. A core tenet of critical race theory posits that racism is socially constructed and embedded in society throughout all social institutions, structures, and relations, which is inclusive of education (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Moreover, the

practices and institutions of society maintain the marginalization of people of color (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Since racism is systemic, it is pervasive in the dominant culture, and thus difficult to eradicate.

Ladson-Billings (1995) described the use of critical race theory to better highlight racial inequalities in education. Racism is engrained in the institution of traditional education, and Ladson-Billings indicates that "race continues to be significant in explaining inequity in the United States...in school performance" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 51). Since Ladson-Billings' early work, children of color are still being outperformed by their White peers (Hemphill & Vanneman, 2011; Vanneman, Hamilton, Baldwin Anderson, & Rahman, 2009). Additionally, some studies have shown that White teachers have reported that they expect less from children of color compared to White children, or they hold performance biases against these children (McKown & Weinstein, 2008; Peterson, Rubie-Davies, Osborne, & Sibley, 2016), which in turn influences children of color to perform worse than their White counterparts (Peterson et al., 2016; van den Bergh, Denessen, Hornstra, Voeten, & Holland, 2010). Children of color being outperformed by their White peers and being perceived by teachers as less academically competent compared to their White peers could be attributed to the persistent racial inequalities that are deeply embedded in the education system (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Critical race theory draws attention to the effects of racism in the education system while it challenges the traditional practices commonly used in education. Additionally, critical race theory provides a framework and serves as a tool to analyze

educational practices that continue to oppress children of color. Thus, critical race theory proves useful in underscoring the importance of utilizing culturally relevant teaching practices, in that this theory addresses race as a critical factor in education inequality, which allows teachers to become aware of inequalities that children of color (deemed culturally diverse children) in their classroom may face, critique traditional teaching practices commonly used, and move toward using teaching practices that incorporate children's cultural references and strengths and supports the needs of all children.

Vygotsky's Social Development Theory

Vygotsky's developmental paradigm suggests that learning occurs through social interactions, such that individuals' cognition does not develop or maintain development without the exposure of social learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky argued that individuals acquire skills from interacting with others and that learning "with the assistance of others might be in some sense even more indicative of their mental development than what they can do alone" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 37). Considering Vygotsky's social development theory and the current study, teacher candidates partake in classroom-based experiences. During these experiences, mentor teachers work with teacher candidates to model and assist in their learning and application of teaching practices, which potentially includes culturally relevant teaching practices (Anderson, 2007; Fairbanks, Freedman, & Kahn, 2000; Rajuan, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2007, 2010). Following the tenets of Vygotsky's social learning theory, teacher candidates acquire teaching skills from interacting with and the support of their mentor teachers.

Vygotsky also discussed the zone of proximal development, which is the distance between what the learner can or cannot do without the assistance of a more knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1978). Teacher candidates often begin their journey of teacher development through coursework; however, their teaching skills further develop and mature when teacher candidates are practicing in classroom-based experiences and interacting with their mentor teachers. Mentor teachers serve as the knowledgeable other when preparing teacher candidates and help promote teacher candidates' teacher development within the zone of proximal development by supporting the maturation of teaching skills, like culturally relevant teaching skills, which could also support teacher candidates' teaching efficacy.

Teaching efficacy relates to a teacher's own feeling of confidence in regard to his or her own teaching abilities (Protheroe, 2008). Vygotsky's social development theory can be used to describe the formation of teaching efficacy, such that through the social interaction of the mentor teacher and teacher candidate in the classroom, mentor teachers are assisting in the development of teacher candidates' culturally relevant teaching efficacy. By interacting with their mentor teacher and working within the zone of proximal development, teacher candidates are building their culturally relevant teaching repertoire. Teacher candidates are then learning about and adopting these culturally relevant teaching practices from their mentor teacher, which has the potential to influence their culturally relevant teaching efficacy.

Taken together, Vygotsky's social development theoretical principles are useful in orienting the focus of this study by highlighting the importance of the mentor teacher in

the process of preparing teacher candidates' teaching practices and efficacy. In order for

teacher candidates to acquire the skills associated with culturally relevant teaching,

mentor teachers can assist teacher candidates in their learning of and efficacy in utilizing

these practices.

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE REVIEW

Experiences of Culturally Diverse Children in Mainstream American Classrooms

Racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity in the United States has flourished rapidly

within the last several decades (Hernandez, 2004). According to the U.S. Census Bureau,

in 2014, 48% of children under age 18 belonged to non-White racial and ethnic groups,

and by 2060 64% of children under age 18 are projected to belong to non-White racial

and ethnic groups (Colby & Ortman, 2015). Concurrently, the number of non-White

racial and ethnic children is increasing in U.S. public schools, and this number is

expected to grow in a similar trend through 2023 (Musu-Gillette, Robinson, McFarland,

KewalRamani, Zhang, & Wilkinson-Flicker, 2016). With the increase in number of

children from racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse backgrounds, it is important for

all young children to be supported in schools in order for them to have positive, early

experiences for learning and development. Yet, culturally diverse children, particularly

young children of color, face unique experiences that underscore and influence their

educational success in the dominant and traditional school culture, due to inequities

stemming from racial, ethnic, or cultural discrimination and challenges developing and

maintaining racial, ethnic, or cultural identities (Serrano-Villar & Calzada, 2016; Brooker

& Woodhead, 2008). Therefore, these challenges require culturally diverse children,

especially those from differing racial and ethnic backgrounds, to have opportunities that

support the development of positive racial, ethnic, or cultural identities in order to protect and promote their educational success (Brooker & Woodhead, 2008).

Research on racial, ethnic, or cultural identity development experienced by racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse children in K-12 school settings has shown a clear relationship between identity and school outcomes, such that compared to those with a negative racial, ethnic, or cultural identity, children with a positive racial, ethnic, or cultural identity held higher academic achievements and more positive perceptions of school experiences (Altschul, Oyserman, & Bybee, 2006; Brown & Chu, 2012; Corenblum, 2014). Evidence supporting this association for K-12 aged children is similar to findings for younger children, such that children's racial, ethnic, or cultural identity served as a protective factor for poor behavioral functioning in the classroom (Serrano-Villar & Calzada, 2016; Brooker & Woodhead, 2008). Notably, the current literature on young children may be particularly meaningful since developing and maintaining a racial, ethnic, or cultural identity in early childhood could serve as a foundation for developmental trajectories and shape future academic experiences (for a review of the literature, see Brooker & Woodhead, 2008). Given the associations between forming and possessing a positive racial, ethnic, or cultural identity and young children's educational outcomes and school experiences, it is important for teachers to use culturally relevant teaching practices, like acknowledging racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse children's strengths that foster children's identity development.

Additionally, the widespread achievement gap between children of color and their White counterparts found across the nation is still plaguing the education system.

Racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse children of all ages are still underperforming compared to White children (Hemphill & Vanneman, 2011; Vanneman et al., 2009). However, many researchers suggest that schools and educators are predictors associated with the academic achievement potential of racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse children (Fitzpatrick et al., 2015; Garcia & Chun, 2016; Tomlinson & Jarvis, 2014). For example, teacher characteristics, such as their bias toward racial, ethnic, or cultural groups, and racially, ethnically, or culturally diverse children's perceptions of teacher treatment can shed light on the experiences of these children in the dominant school culture. McKown and Weinstein's (2008) work has supported this notion of teacher bias and treatment, and indicated that in ethnically diverse elementary classrooms, high levels of differential teacher treatment towards children in classrooms with a range of standardized testing performances was evident; teacher achievement expectations of African American and Latino children were significantly lower compared to European American and Asian American children in the classroom. Moreover, in these ethnically diverse classrooms where bias was high, there was a significant achievement gap between African American/Latino children and European/Asian American children found. Similar findings have been replicated in the literature (Marcus, Gross, & Seefeldt, 1991; Peterson et al., 2016; van den Bergh et al., 2010), showing how teachers may serve as a direct influence on racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse children's academic experiences. Importantly, the influence of teachers may be significantly more harmful for racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse young children, since developmental trajectories begin to take shape in early childhood and can potentially predict long-term

developmental outcomes (Barnett, 1995; Brooker & Woodhead, 2008). Thus, it is critical

for early childhood teachers, both pre- and in-service, to adopt and utilize culturally

relevant teaching practices which targets using cultural resources to teach, applying

multicultural theory to the environment of the classroom, teaching strategies, and

assessment, being cognizant of socio-cultural inequalities, in order to address bias,

effectively work with all children, and work toward supporting equitable and successful

school experiences among all young children.

Culturally Relevant Teaching

Popularly coined by Ladson-Billings (1992), culturally relevant teaching is a

pedagogy that supports racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse children's learning.

More specifically, through this teaching approach, teaching "is designed not merely to fit

the school culture to the students' culture but also to use student culture as the basis for

helping students understand themselves and others, structure social interactions, and

conceptualize knowledge" (Ladson-Billings, 1992, p. 314). With Ladson-Billings'

(1992; 1995) work, other synonymous definitions of culturally relevant teaching, or

culturally relevant pedagogy, have been used in the literature such as "culturally

appropriate" (Au & Jordan, 1981), "culturally congruent" (Mohatt & Erickson, 1981),

"culturally compatible" (Jordan, 1985), or "culturally responsive" (Gay, 2000) teaching.

Despite the manifold terms used, collectively these terms demonstrate the fundamental

characteristics and principles of culturally relevant teaching and for the purpose of this

study, the term "culturally relevant teaching" will be used.

Culturally relevant teaching entails acknowledging racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse children's strengths, empowering racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse children to achieve in the classroom, using cultural resources to teach, applying multicultural theory to the environment of the classroom, teaching strategies, and assessment, bonding with racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse children, and being cognizant of socio-cultural inequalities and issues (Castagno, McKinley, & Brayboy, 2008; Gay, 2000; Groulx & Silva, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Morrison et al., 2008). Thus, teachers must fundamentally develop and implement teaching methods and materials, and maintain a classroom environment respectful of varied cultures, as well as be aware of cultural references and socio-cultural issues, to effectively meet the needs of and provide engaging learning opportunities for all children in their classroom.

Research on the use of culturally relevant teaching in classrooms has shown positive child outcomes. Work by Garcia and Chun (2016) examined the use of culturally relevant teaching and middle school aged Latino students' academic self-efficacy. Researchers found that the presence of culturally relevant teaching methods in the classroom was associated with Latino students' positive beliefs regarding their academic performance. Additionally, culturally relevant teaching methods have shown a positive influence on racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse students' reading, mathematics, and science outcomes in primary and secondary schools (Ensign, 2003; Irizarry & Antrop-González, 2007; López, 2016; Rodriguez, Bustamante Jones, Pang, & Park, 2004; Savage et al., 2011). Although the literature is limited in addressing how culturally relevant teaching contributes to children in early education settings, one study

15

by Guha (2006) examined how incorporating Indian teaching methods of finger counting supported three-to-seven –year-old Indian children's counting abilities. This study found that these children's counting abilities flourished when learning from this culturally relevant teaching method, since finger counting is embedded in their culture and was infused in their mathematics learning.

Not only does culturally relevant teaching support racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse children's academic achievement, but it also fosters teachers' understanding of and connection with children (see review by Aronson & Laughter, 2015; also Savage et al., 2011). For instance, Savage et al.'s (2001) work focusing on the influence of using culturally relevant teaching in secondary level classrooms with Maori children, demonstrated that teachers who strongly implemented this pedagogy through learning and using the Maori language, obtaining Maori cultural knowledge, and empowering children to achieve in the classroom had more positive relationships with their children, and a higher participation rate amongst their children, compared to teachers with little implementation of culturally relevant teaching.

Based on these studies' findings, it is evident that culturally relevant teaching can be beneficial for both culturally diverse children and their teachers. It is important to note that existing literature in the field fails to specifically investigate young children's educational experiences and the link with early childhood teachers' utilization of culturally relevant teaching. Considering the projected shift in child demographics, racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity in the early childhood education realm will undoubtedly rise, which creates a crucial demand for educators to skillfully teach and

engage with young children using culturally relevant teaching. Notably, teachers must be prepared to serve young children with this teaching response, and ultimately it is critical for teacher preparation programs to address culturally relevant teaching and implement experiential opportunities for teacher candidates to practice this pedagogy.

Teacher Preparation Programs and Addressing Culturally Relevant Teaching

Teacher preparation programs are responsible for preparing teacher candidates to be effective educators in the classroom. According to national organizations, teacher preparation programs are charged with providing both courses and classroom-based experiences that underscore effective opportunities for teacher candidates to learn and acquire effective, high quality teaching skills (Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, 2015; NAEYC, 2009). Additionally, and notably, teacher preparation programs have a distinct role of preparing future teachers to be able to effectively teach and work with all children and address children's home cultures (Lim, Maxwell, Able-Boone, & Zimmer, 2009). Thus, NAEYC and researchers suggest that teacher educators must be prepared, skillful, and resourceful to support teacher candidates in effectively working with and teaching children from diverse backgrounds (Maude et al., 2010; NAEYC, 2009).

However, there is mixed literature on the preparedness of teacher preparation programs regarding teacher educators' (i.e., faculty and mentor teachers in practicums settings) abilities to teach about diversity and use culturally relevant teaching practices (D'Haem & Griswold, 2017; Jennings, 2007; Maude et al., 2010). Despite the lack of clarity on teacher educators' preparedness to support teacher candidates' understanding

about diversity and implementation of culturally relevant teaching practices, teacher preparation programs still emphasize that teacher candidates should develop knowledge and skills to work with children from a wide range of backgrounds. To do this, teacher preparation programs typically offer multicultural education courses (Assaf, Garza & Battle, 2010; Gay & Howard, 2000). According to Banks (1994), multicultural education entails the teaching and learning about the histories, values, beliefs, and perspectives from people of various cultures. Exposing teacher candidates to multicultural education could potentially foster the development of identifying cultural references used by diverse groups in order to implement culturally relevant teaching strategies in the classroom, yet, these findings vary (Capella-Santana, 2003; Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2005). For instance, a review of multicultural education studies by Trent, Kea, and Oh (2008) suggested that multicultural education perspectives has not been reformed in several years to accurately address culturally diverse groups; thus multicultural education may be an ineffective approach to educate teacher candidates. Additionally, Assaf and colleagues (2010) suggest that teacher preparation programs may require teacher candidates to only explore surface level differences in culture, such as trying new foods or learning basic words in a few languages. In this case, multicultural education in teacher preparation programs may not be supportive of developing meaningful culturally relevant teaching skills in teacher candidates' teaching repertoire.

In addition to providing multicultural education, some teacher preparation programs promote coursework related to learning culturally relevant teaching practices in order to guide teacher candidates to appropriately and effectively work with racially,

ethnically, and culturally diverse children (Capella-Santana, 2003; Chen et al., 2009; Daniel, 2016; Griner & Stewart, 2012). For example, introspective reflection assignments about becoming a culturally responsive teacher have been used in teacher preparation coursework (Chen et al., 2009). Despite some evidence showing that some teacher preparation programs promote learning about culturally relevant teaching practices through coursework, these practices are typically not at the forefront of practices or other teaching methods developed in teacher candidates to implement with the children in their classroom (Anderson & Stillman, 2013; Ray, Bowman, & Robbins, 2006). For example, work conducted by Ray et al. (2006) using a database of program information pertaining to 226 early childhood teacher preparation programs found that a majority of programs only require about eight semester hours of coursework that address responding to the needs of culturally diverse children. It is important to note that eight semester hours equates to roughly 12.5% of hours needed to meet the program requirements, suggesting that other content consumes the majority of the coursework presented to teacher candidates. This finding lends to the argument that promoting culturally relevant teaching practices through coursework may not be a primary priority for teacher preparation programs, which could be detrimental considering a bulk of education literature has indicated that teacher candidates and novice teachers still report feeling underprepared to work effectively with and respond to the needs of racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse children (Banerjee & Luckner, 2014; Bauml, Castro, Field, Morowski, 2016; Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2005). These findings are alarming, especially since a number of novice teachers begin teaching in urban or

impoverished schools—schools in which racial, ethnical, and cultural diversity amongst its children are higher than schools serving rural or higher-income children (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006; Kini & Podolsky, 2016; Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2005).

Thus, teacher candidates need opportunities in addition to coursework, notably classroom-based learning, to promote real-life experiences working with children from diverse backgrounds (Gay & Kirkland, 2003). Research has shown that classroom-based experiences (i.e., experiences, such as a practicum, that provide teacher candidates the opportunity to apply coursework and learn from an experienced teacher) are beneficial and important opportunities for teacher candidates to work with culturally diverse children (Daniel, 2016; Lim et al., 2009). During these experiences, teacher candidates have the opportunity to work with a mentor teacher (i.e., an in-service teacher who generally meets certain program criteria and serves as a mentor and model to teacher candidates during the practicum experience) who further support teacher candidates' development of teaching practices (Anderson, 2007; Maynard, La Paro, & Johnson, 2014; Zeichner, 2010). Mentor teachers could serve as critical supports in teacher preparation experiences, which makes it necessary to investigate their role in teacher preparation programs, and more specifically their role in preparing teacher candidates to use culturally relevant teaching practices.

Mentor Teachers' Role in Teacher Education and Preparation

During the practicum experience, mentor teachers provide both information and feedback to support the development of teacher candidates' classroom knowledge and

skills (Harrison, Dymoke, & Pell, 2006). Moreover, mentor teachers are responsible for modeling high-quality classroom and teaching practices, and often provide teacher candidates information about instructional objectives, lesson planning, theories and research behind demonstrated teaching methods, choices of materials/resources used, and reports or assessments used (Anderson, 2007; Fairbanks et al., 2000; Rajuan, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2007, 2010). Mentor teachers are also responsible for providing teacher candidates classroom responsibilities and opportunities, to teach certain content areas, work with all children, and engage in school-related events (Schneider, 2008).

Mentor teachers are salient figures in the development of effective future teachers. Since mentor teachers model teaching practices for teacher candidates to learn from and adopt, it is important for mentor teachers to guide and demonstrate contemporary teaching practices—practices that are centered on effectively responding to the needs of each child in their classroom. Scholars suggests that due to the increasing number of culturally diverse children being educated in the U.S., those who professionally support teacher candidates, like mentor teachers, should be prepared to guide teacher candidates in learning how to effectively work with children of all different backgrounds (Maude et al., 2010; NAEYC, 2009; Prater & Devereaux, 2009). However, early work by Cannella and Reiff (1994) focused on one student teacher's perspective about the support she felt during her student teaching experience in an early childcare setting. The student teacher indicated a lack of mentor support, especially regarding how to address cultural diversity in the classroom. In more recent work, Lambeth and Smith (2016) found somewhat similar findings. In their study on middle and high school teacher candidates'

perceptions about their culturally relevant teaching preparation, some participants

suggested that their mentor teachers did not utilize culturally relevant teaching practices,

which hindered teacher candidates' preparedness, whereas some participants noted that

they were able to identify culturally relevant teaching practices because their mentor

teach exhibited these practices in the classroom. Although these two studies can provide

some insight on the support teacher candidates may or may not be receiving from their

mentor teachers, there still remains a limited amount of literature specifically indicating

the practices in which mentor teachers are exposing their teacher candidates to in order to

promote teacher candidates' abilities to work with culturally diverse children. Therefore,

there is a need to explore mentor teachers' utilization of culturally relevant teaching

practices to see what types of practices are being modeled for teacher candidates to adopt.

Mentor Teachers' Utilization of Culturally Relevant Teaching Practices

As aforementioned, NAEYC and researchers emphasize that high quality teacher

preparation programs, requires those who professionally support teacher candidates, like

mentor teachers, to be prepared and accountable for supporting the development of

teacher candidates' culturally relevant teaching practices (Maude et al., 2009; NAEYC,

2009; Prater & Devereaux, 2009); however, there is a large gap in education research

examining mentor teachers' utilization of culturally relevant teaching practices.

Early work by Lawrence and Krause (1996) and somewhat more recent work by

Téllez (2008) have examined mentor teachers' incorporation of multicultural education,

which may have some common practices associated with culturally relevant teaching,

like being cognizant of socio-cultural experiences and issues. Lawrence and Krause's

(1996) case study illustrated one secondary education mentor teacher's practices associated with multicultural education, such as being aware of multiple cultures, and challenges with multicultural education, like enlightening her students about race and cultural issues. Similar to this study, Téllez's (2008) research found that elementary education mentor teachers were practicing few multicultural education practices, such as being aware of socio-cultural experiences and references and adjusting the curriculum to meet their students' cultural needs. Although both Lawrence and Krause (1996) and Téllez's (2008) studies highlight culturally relevant teaching practices that were implemented by mentor teachers, mentor teachers did not concurrently implement other vital elements of culturally relevant teaching (i.e., using culturally diverse children's strengths, empowering culturally diverse children to achieve in the classroom, and applying multicultural theory to the environment of the classroom). Work by Lawrence and Krause (1996) and Téllez (2008) could serve as evidence elucidating types of culturally relevant teaching practiced by mentor teachers, but both studies were framed to investigate mentor teachers' practices of multicultural education, which does not entail the utilization of more meaningful culturally relevant teaching practices.

Very limited research specific to culturally relevant teaching exists. One study which has attempted to examine mentor teachers' practice of culturally relevant teaching shed light on one elementary education mentor teacher's experience cultivating the development of culturally relevant pedagogy in her teacher candidate's teaching repertoire (Hill, 2012). Although the researcher found that the mentor teacher encouraged her teacher candidate to read and discuss culturally relevant novels to a

culturally diverse elementary classroom, which had a slight influence on the teacher candidate's comfortability working with diverse children, Hill's (2012) work failed to deeply examine a range of culturally relevant teaching practices that the mentor teacher may or may not use to support and guide the teacher candidate in her classroom. Additionally, this case study had limitations in its methodology such that the researcher assumed the mentor teacher utilized culturally relevant teaching practices based on personally knowing the mentor teacher and selected this mentor teacher based off the assumption that the mentor teacher utilizes these practices, rather than examining the types of culturally relevant teaching practices this mentor teacher may or may not use.

Few studies have attempted to explore mentor teachers' utilization of culturally relevant teaching practices. The studies previously discussed have been limited by case study methodologies and only investigating one or two types of culturally relevant teaching practices, thus failing to deeply examine the various types and number of culturally relevant teaching practices utilized across a larger number of mentor teachers. Additionally, exploring factors that could potentially be linked to mentor teachers' utilization of culturally relevant teaching and teacher candidates' perspectives of their mentor teachers' utilization of these practices have not yet been investigated. The limited research regarding mentor teachers utilization of culturally relevant teaching practices suggests further examination of practicum experiences and the quality of teacher preparation programs in order to support teacher candidates' preparedness to effectively and confidently work with all children.

Teacher Candidates' Teacher Efficacy Related to Using Culturally Relevant Teaching

According to Siwatu (2007), changing demographics demands more effort to prepare teachers to effectively work with racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse children. Teacher preparation programs and specifically classroom-based experiences must serve to support teacher candidates' sense of teaching efficacy in working with all children. Teacher efficacy underscores teachers' perceived confidence in their abilities to promote and support learning for each child in the classroom (Protheroe, 2008). During the practicum experience, teacher candidates are developing their teaching efficacy, and research has shown that teacher candidates report various levels of teaching efficacy in working with racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse children (Bauml et al., 2016; Siwatu, 2007). For example, using a sample of teacher candidates majoring in elementary, middle, and secondary education, Siwatu (2007) found that teacher candidates were more efficacious in their ability to help children feel like vital members of the classroom and develop positive relationships with the children in their classroom, but they were less efficacious in their ability to communicate with the English language learners in their classroom. In a qualitative study, Bauml and colleagues (2016) examined elementary and secondary education teacher candidates' perceptions and found that several participants reported feeling challenged or concerned about their abilities to work with racially and culturally diverse children due to perceived racial and cultural barriers, such as relating to children of a different race or culture. The evidence supporting teacher candidates' teaching efficacy is mixed when investigating their

perceived confidence regarding their capabilities to teach culturally diverse children; therefore, it is reasonable to investigate the culturally relevant teaching practices teacher candidates are being exposed to during the practicum experience, particularly by their mentor teachers in order to further understanding about teaching efficacy in this area. Examining the number of culturally relevant teaching practices that mentor teachers implement for their teacher candidates to adopt could shed light on if this exposure supports teacher candidates' perceived confidence about their abilities to use these practices and effectively respond to the needs of the culturally diverse children in the classroom. The current study seeks to examine the associations between culturally relevant teaching practices that teacher candidates are exposed to by their mentor teachers and teacher candidates' reported efficacy in working with culturally diverse children.

CHAPTER IV

THE CURRENT STUDY

The overarching goal of the current study is to explore mentor teachers' culturally relevant teaching practices from the perspective of teacher candidates enrolled in early childhood practicum courses who completed practicum hours in the mentor teachers' classroom. In particular, the current study aims to identify the number and types of culturally relevant teaching practices used by mentor teachers (as reported by teacher candidates), determine how these practices vary by teacher candidates' characteristics, mentor teachers' characteristics, and placement setting, and examine the association between the number of teaching practices reported and teacher candidates' teaching efficacy. In light of previous literature suggesting that early childhood teacher educators should be well-equipped to support teacher candidates' abilities to work with culturally diverse young children (NAEYC, 2009), it is important to explore culturally relevant teaching practices that mentor teachers are exposing teacher candidates to and potentially developing in these candidates during the practicum experience. Additionally, it is relevant to further investigate if and how personal characteristics, placement setting, and teaching efficacy contribute to the number and types of culturally relevant teaching practices observed by teacher candidates and utilized by mentor teachers as these practicum experiences are critical to teacher candidates' development.

To address the aims described above, the following research questions are examined in the current study:

RQ 1. What is the number of culturally relevant teaching practices that mentor teachers utilize (as reported by teacher candidates)?

> **RQ 1a.** Does the number of culturally relevant teaching practices utilized by mentor teachers (as reported by teacher candidates) vary by teacher candidates' characteristics (race and age), mentor teachers' race, and placement location setting (rural, suburban, and urban)?

RQ 2. What are the types of culturally relevant teaching practices early childhood mentor teachers utilize (as reported by teacher candidates)?

> **RQ 2a.** Do types of culturally relevant teaching practices reported by teacher candidates and utilized by mentor teachers vary by teacher candidates' characteristics (race and age), mentor teachers' race, and placement location setting (rural, suburban, urban)?

RQ 3. Is there an association between the number of culturally relevant teaching practices utilized by mentor teachers (as reported by teacher candidates) and teacher candidates' reported teaching efficacy?

CHAPTER V

METHODS

Participants

　　To address the research questions, teacher candidates enrolled in early childhood teacher preparation programs in four-year university settings in North Carolina (n=46) and Missouri (n=4) during the fall semester participated in an online Qualtrics quantitative survey. The survey was designed to examine the number and types of culturally relevant teaching practices participants recalled their mentor teachers using while in their classroom for their practicum course. The survey also included questions regarding teacher candidates' perceived teaching efficacy related to implementing culturally relevant teaching practices. Teacher candidates were eligible to participate in the study if they were enrolled in a practicum course (not including student teaching) and their placement was in a preschool or kindergarten setting. Recruitment was selected to partake in practicum experiences as opposed to student teaching experiences since practicum experiences provide teacher candidates more opportunities to observe and learn from mentor teachers' practices. Fifty teacher candidates who met eligibility criteria participated in the current study. Participants were predominately female (47 females and 3 males) and ranged in age from 19 years to 50 years (M=28.19, SD=8.95). Age was examined to explore if outcomes differed among younger, more traditional students, and therefore less experienced teacher candidates, and older, non-traditional

students, and therefore potentially more experienced teacher candidates. Most

participants self-reported their racial/ethnic composition as White (n=28), followed by

Black (n=16), Asian/Pacific Islander (n=2), Hispanic (n=2), or Multiracial (n=2). A

majority of teacher candidates reported that they had taken a course specifically

addressing cultural diversity or multiculturalism (66%), whereas a majority reported they

had not taken a course specifically focused on culturally relevant teaching (62%). Most

mentor teachers' race/ethnicity was reported by their teacher candidates as White (54%),

and Black (40%), Hispanic (4%) and other (2%). More teacher candidates self-reported

being placed in an urban setting (46%) for the practicum compared to a suburban setting

(42%) or rural setting (12%). In the practicum placement setting, more than half of the

participants indicated that White (n=47), Black (n=36), and Multiracial (28) racial/ethnic

groups were represented among the children in the classroom. Less than half of the

sample reported Asian/Pacific Islander (n=18), Hispanic (n=17), other (n=10), and Native

American/American Indian (n=4) racial/ethnic groups were represented among the

children in the classroom. Most participants indicated that the White (n=44) racial group

was the race/ethnicity of majority of the children in the classroom. Several participants

reported that Black (n=12), Asian/Pacific Islander (n=2), other (n=2), and Hispanic (n=1)

racial/ethnic groups pertained to majority of the children in the classroom. Half of the

sample did not know if there were children in their placement who are English language

learners, whereas 30% of the sample indicated there was at least one child who is an

English language learner and 20% of the sample reported there were no children who are

English language learners.

Procedure

Teacher preparation programs used for this study were drawn from personal contacts of faculty in teacher preparation programs at 4-year institutions of higher education. Faculty were contacted via email regarding their general interest in participating in the study. The researcher followed up with interested faculty sending an informational email to instructors of practicum courses with the approved IRB. Practicum courses in which the samples were drawn from were either main campus or distance courses focused around birth through kindergarten education or child education. Courses required practicum students to complete placement hours ranging from 2 hours to 24 hours per week; 90% of practicum students were required to complete 6 hours in the classroom per week. Near the mid-term, approximately 7 weeks into the semester, of Fall 2017, the researcher sent the Qualtrics survey link to the course instructors to share with their teacher candidates enrolled in the practicum course. Teacher candidates were given a two-week period to complete the 10-15-minute survey. Teacher candidates who granted consent within the online survey to participate in the current study and completed all components of the survey were included in data analyses for the current study. Out of the full sample, two participants did not indicate their age. Therefore, their reports on the survey were not included in the analytic sample. The participants with missing data did not differ in other demographic information examined from those who completed the survey entirely.

31

Measures

Demographic Information. Demographic information was used to assess **RQ 1** and **RQ 2**. Teacher candidates completed a demographic survey that included questions related to race/ethnicity, age, mentor teachers' race, and the type of geographic location (rural, suburban, or urban) of the practicum placement. Questions pertaining to gender, the practicum course identification, any previous diversity-, multicultural-, or culturally-related education course work and/or experiences in their teacher preparation program, the demographic make-up of the practicum placement (children's race/ethnicity and identified English language learners), and the amount of classroom hours required for the practicum course were also included in the survey, but were collected to help describe the sample (see Table 1). Additionally, two open-ended response questions were asked related to what culturally relevant teaching meant to the teacher candidate and teacher candidates' perceptions about if and how their mentor teacher helped them gain something in the area of culturally relevant teaching.

Early Childhood Cultural Competence Scan. An observational classroom scan assessment developed by the WSSU Cultural Competence Breakthrough Series Collaborative with funding from the North Carolina Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant at NCDCDEE (2015) was adapted to be used as a checklist completed by teacher candidates in the current study to address **RQ 1, RQ 2,** and **RQ 3**. The purpose of the Early Childhood Cultural Competence Scan is to provide an understanding of the cultural competence of an early childcare center by quantifying observed culturally responsive teaching in the form of learning environments, planned opportunities,

routines, social-emotional climate, adult and child relationships, overall physical space, procedures, policies, relationships, mission and presence in the community. For the purpose of the current study, only items teacher candidates could have observed in the classroom were used (for instance, indicators focusing on policies, mission, and presence in the community were not included in the current measure). Thus, 19 items from the original scan were used in and adapted for the current study (See Table 2).

Teacher candidates were asked to think about their practicum experience during the current semester, and recall what culturally relevant teaching practices they observed in their classroom, and then check the corresponding box. To address the total number of culturally relevant teaching practices utilized by mentor teachers, the number of practices checked were summed for each participant. To address the types of culturally relevant teaching practices utilized by mentor teachers, the percentage of the sample that reported they observed each of the 19 culturally teaching practices was calculated.

Culturally Responsive Teaching Self- Efficacy Scale. Siwatu's (2007) Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale (CRTSE) was adapted for the purpose of this study to examine **RQ 3**. Siwatu's (2007) 40 item scale has been used to examine practicum students' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy. The scale integrates both general teaching practices, such as "I am able to use a variety of teaching methods" and culturally responsive teaching practices, for example "I am able to implement strategies to minimize the effects of the mismatch between my students' home culture and the school culture". These statements are then rated on a zero-to-100 rating scale ranging from "no confidence at all" to "completely confident". However, to reduce any

time-related burden on the participants, only questions focusing on culturally responsive teaching practices were used and the rating scale was simplified to a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (no confidence at all) to 5 (completely confident), for efficiency purposes. In addition, items with the term "students" used to describe the population in which culturally responsive teaching was implemented toward were then changed to use the term "children" to reflect a more commonly used term in early childhood education. Responses to each of the 20 items were summed to create a total individual score. Participants with a higher overall total score were considered more efficacious in their abilities to implement culturally relevant teaching practices compared to participants with a lower overall individual score, which indicates they report less efficacy in their abilities to implement culturally relevant teaching practices. A Cronbach's alpha of .89 was calculated for this adapted scale.

Data Analyses Plan

Descriptive analyses were conducted to address the three research questions in the study. To examine **RQ 1**, the summed score of reported culturally relevant teaching practices utilized were computed for each participant to determine the overall number of practices utilized by their mentor teacher. To address **RQ 1a**, an ANCOVA was conducted to assess if the number of culturally relevant teaching practices reported vary by teacher candidates' characteristics (age and race), mentor teachers' race, and placement setting location. The overall effects of teacher candidates' characteristics, mentor teachers' race, and placement setting location, and their interactions, with age as a covariate, were examined. In order to investigate **RQ 2**, the percentage of the sample that

reported they observed each of the 19 culturally teaching practices was computed. To

address **RQ 2a**, a MANCOVA was used to assess if the types of culturally relevant

teaching practices reported vary by teacher candidates' characteristics (age and race),

mentor teachers' race, and placement setting location. Again, the overall effects of

teacher candidates' characteristics, mentor teachers' race, and their interactions, with age

as a covariate, were investigated. To examine **RQ 3**, a bivariate correlation was used to

determine if there was an association between the number of culturally relevant teaching

practices utilized by mentor teachers and teacher candidates' reported teaching efficacy.

All statistical analyses conducted were completed using the IBM Statistical Package for

the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 25. Open-ended responses were also examined to

further explore teacher candidates' perspectives on culturally relevant teaching and how

their mentor teacher supported teacher candidates' culturally relevant teaching. More

specifically, themes and patterns in participants' reports on what "culturally relevant

teaching" means and if and how their mentor teacher helped them gain something in the

area of culturally relevant teaching were coded. Responses that were similar to one

another were grouped together as a theme or pattern.

CHAPTER VI

RESULTS

Descriptive Analyses

Descriptive statistics on the demographic information were analyzed to describe

the number and types of culturally relevant teaching practices utilized by mentor teachers

(as reported by teacher candidates), teacher candidates' characteristics, mentor teachers'

race, and the placement setting location. The mean or frequency for each of these

variables is shown in Table 1.

The mean number of culturally relevant teaching practices utilized by mentor

teachers (as reported by teacher candidates) was 10.94 (SD=5.14) with a range of 0 to 19.

Three participants reported that their mentor teachers did not utilize any of the culturally

relevant teaching practices and four participants reported that their mentor teachers

utilized all 19 practices. Amongst teacher candidates who reported that their mentor

teacher did not utilize any of the culturally relevant teaching practices, all were located in

urban settings. Additionally, two of these three teacher candidates were from the

Missouri university sample (n=4). Amongst teacher candidates who reported that their

mentor teacher utilized all 19 practices, 75% indicated that the race/ethnicity of their

mentor teacher was Black. Other patterns did not emerge.

Of the 19 possible types of culturally relevant teaching practices, 12 practices

were checked by 50% or more of the participants. Six were checked at or above 70% of

the sample: respectful, responsive, engaging language between the teacher and the

children of the classroom (88%); learning materials that do not portray stereotypes and

are accurate in portraying how people live, work, play, etc. as demonstrated in visual

representations, stories, books, songs, etc. (82%); child and/or family made pictures,

which are prominently displayed (76%); language that affirms, encourages, guides,

respects children as individuals with knowledge, skills and gifts (76%); books that reflect

and transmit authentic cultural traditions folktales and current depictions of the family

life of the cultures of each child in the classroom (72%); and culturally responsive

characteristics including curiosity, awareness, open-mindedness, and self-reflection

(70%). Six types of culturally relevant teaching practices were checked by 50-69% of the

sample: learning materials that reflect a variety of cultures, learning materials includes

music/musical instruments, games, tools, construction materials, dramatic play props

(64%); variations in furniture type, room arrangements, routines and schedules that

reflect cultures that are both collective and independent (ex. independent reading nooks,

group story time) (62%); curriculum that allows children to explore and respect their

culture and develop respect for cultures different from their own (62%); cultural diversity

in creative expressions (visual art, music, dance, performances, stories, etc.) (60%);

cultural variety in menus, food preparation, and eating/feeding practices (60%); and

learning activity plans that reflect and include the cultural and linguistic diversity of each

child in the group (52%). Seven types of culturally relevant teaching practices were

checked by less than 50% of the sample: variations in how and where children eat and

sleep based on the children's needs or preferences (46%); each child's native language

when describing everyday objects or routines (44%); books written in the home language of each child in the classroom (40%); each child's home language and/or dialect to have conversations (40%); various types of assessments that reflect and include the cultural and linguistic diversity of each child (40%); cultural greetings when greeting each child and their family members (36%); and multiple languages that reflect the dialect, phrases and speech patterns of each child in the group (24%).

Teacher candidates' reports of their teaching efficacy indicated a mean of 3.67 (SD=.53) and a range from a minimum score of 2.40 and a maximum score of 5.00. Culturally relevant teaching practices that teacher candidates reported the most efficacy in their abilities to implement included: "develop a personal relationship with each child" (M=4.57); "help children feel like important members of the classroom" (M=4.47); and "help children to develop positive relationships with their peers" (M=4.31). Culturally relevant teaching practices that teacher candidates reported the least efficacy in their abilities to implement included: "implement strategies to minimize the effects of any possible mismatch between the children's home culture and the school culture" (M=3.06); "identify ways that standardized tests may be biased towards culturally diverse children (M=3.18); and "greet English language learners with a phrase in their native language" (M=3.22).

Main Effect Analyses

An ANCOVA was used to examine if the total number of culturally relevant teaching practices reported by teacher candidates varied by teacher candidates' characteristics (race and age), mentor teachers' race, and placement location setting

(rural, suburban, and urban). The results were not significance (p > .05). Chi square tests of independence were conducted to further investigate any associations between the total number of culturally relevant teaching practices and teacher candidates' race, mentor teachers' race, and placement setting location. Chi square tests for each of these variables were not significant (p > .05). A bivariate correlation was computed to further investigate the association between the total number of culturally relevant teaching practices and teacher candidates' age. This correlation was not significant (p > .05).

A MANCOVA was conducted to test if types of culturally relevant teaching practices reported by practicum students varied by teacher candidates' characteristics (race and age), mentor teachers' race, and placement location setting (rural, suburban, urban). Main effects for teacher candidates' characteristics, mentor teachers' race, and placement setting were all found insignificant (p > .05). An interaction effect for teacher candidates' race and placement setting was significant [F(38, 24)= 2.03, p=.035, λ=.06]. Tests of between-subjects effects indicated that "learning materials that do not portray stereotypes and are accurate in portraying how people live, work, play, etc. as demonstrated in visual representations, stories, books, songs, etc." [F(2)=3.82, p=.03] and "respectful, responsive, engaging language between the teacher and the children of the classroom" [F(2)=4.13, p=.03] practices reported by practicum students varied for teacher candidates of various races and placement settings. Other interactions effects tested were insignificant (p > .05). Due to the small sample sizes in several race/ethnicity groups and placement setting groups, univariate follow-ups could not be conducted.

A bivariate correlation used to determine if there was an association between total number of culturally relevant teaching practices reported by teacher candidates and teacher candidates' reported teaching efficacy was not significant ($p > .05$).

Open-ended Responses

Two open-ended response questions were asked to explore what culturally relevant teaching meant to teacher candidates and teacher candidates' perceptions about if and how their mentor teacher helped them gain something in the area of culturally relevant teaching. Various themes and patterns among teacher candidates' reports describing their perspective on culturally relevant teaching emerged. Some teacher candidates defined culturally relevant teaching as representing and including various cultures in the classroom, teaching practices and lessons, or curriculum. Several teacher candidates reported culturally relevant teaching involves being aware of or respecting numerous cultures and various cultural aspects, like wardrobe, food, and language. Also, few teacher candidates reported culturally relevant teaching means to teach about various cultures. Interestingly, about a quarter of teacher candidates did not respond to the question.

Themes and patterns in teacher candidates' reports describing if and how their mentor teacher helped them gain something in the area of culturally relevant teaching were also evident. 56% of teacher candidates reported 'yes', 22% reported 'maybe', and 14% reported 'no'. Those who responded 'yes' indicated that their mentor teacher is inclusive of cultural diversity by learning about and incorporating the children in the classroom's culture and other examples of culture in their teaching practices and

40

classroom activities. Teacher candidates who reported 'maybe' commonly described

their classroom as not culturally diverse, so they were uncertain if they observed or

gained knowledge about culturally relevant teaching practices. Teacher candidates who

reported 'no' suggested that their mentor teacher did not utilize culturally relevant

teaching or that their classroom was not culturally diverse, so there were no opportunities

to implement culturally relevant teaching.

CHAPTER VII

DISCUSSION

The overarching goal of the present study was to explore mentor teachers'
utilization of culturally relevant teaching practices as reported by teacher candidates
enrolled in an early childhood practicum. Both the number and type of practices were
explored as well as associations with teacher candidate efficacy. NAEYC and scholars
suggest that high quality teacher preparation programs should require those who
professionally support teacher candidates, such as mentor teachers, to be well prepared
and implement effective practices that foster the development of teacher candidates'
culturally relevant teaching practices (Maude et al., 2009; NAEYC, 2009; Prater &
Devereaux, 2009) and teacher candidates need to be appropriately prepared and feel able
to effectively teach the growing population of young, diverse children (NAEYC, 2009).
The current study contributes to the limited research by exploring mentor teachers'
utilization of these critical practices.

Descriptive analyses from the present study indicated the number of culturally
relevant teaching practices utilized. On average, teacher candidates reported that mentor
teachers utilized just over half (54%) of the culturally relevant teaching practices
included on the checklist. This finding suggests that, for the most part, mentor teachers
are implementing of culturally relevant teaching practices in their classrooms. Previous
qualitative studies have shown that mentor teachers, and their teacher candidates, do

report some utilization of these practices, like practices aligned with multicultural education (Cannella & Reiff, 1994; Hill, 2012; Lambeth & Smith, 2016; Lawrence & Krause, 1996; Téllez 2008). Importantly, the present study adds to the extant studies since a majority of existing qualitative studies only explore 1-2 culturally relevant teaching practices, and the current study found that a range of culturally relevant teaching practices are utilized. While this finding contributes to the field, it is also important to consider that the number of culturally relevant teaching practiced reported by teacher candidates ranges from none (0) to all (19) the practices listed in the survey.

The low end of the range could indicate that teacher candidates may be in classrooms with a mentor teacher who does not practice any culturally relevant teaching, or teacher candidates may be in classrooms with mentor teachers who use culturally relevant practices that were not represented on the survey. Furthermore, this range of reported practices could suggest that teacher candidates did not recall the practices used, or did not identify the practices used in the classroom with the teaching practices listed on this particular survey. Therefore, it could also be that in the current study, teacher candidates may not have understood or been clearly able to discern what practices are culturally relevant. Sixty-two percent of the sample reported that they have not taken a specific course on culturally relevant teaching; thus, it is possible that teacher candidates in this sample did not understand or could not identify what practices to indicate. While 66% of the sample reported that they have taken a specific course on cultural diversity or multiculturalism, research has shown that these types of courses may not be the most effective in preparing teacher candidates to identify and adopt these practices (Assaf et

al., 2010; Ray et al., 2006; Trent et al., 2008). In this case, perhaps participants were not

appropriately prepared in their coursework to support them in identifying culturally

relevant teaching practices. In addition, and notably, teacher candidates who indicated

that few culturally relevant teaching practices were utilized by their mentor teacher also

reported a lack of diversity in their classroom in their responses to an open-ended

question regarding what they gained regarding culturally relevant teaching from their

cooperating teacher. Teacher candidates may not understand that culturally relevant

teaching can still be implemented in classrooms where cultural diversity may be limited,

since culturally relevant teaching encourages responding to the needs of all children.

This misunderstanding may be affected by the courses they have, or have not, taken on

cultural diversity or multiculturalism. More investigative work on the cultural diversity,

multiculturalism, or culturally relevant teaching courses in which teacher candidates have

or have not taken should be explored, as well as the classroom diversity in the practicum

placement setting to deeply understand this finding.

Teacher candidates who reported a high number of culturally relevant teaching

practices utilized by their mentor teacher may be having the opportunity to observe a

mentor teacher that strongly implements culturally relevant teaching, which is a critical

opportunity in teacher preparation (Maude et al., 2009; NAEYC, 2009; Prater &

Devereaux, 2009). In brief responses to an open-ended question, these participants also

noted that their mentor teacher helped them gain something in culturally relevant

teaching, such that these mentor teachers were inclusive of cultural diversity and

supported teacher candidates' learning about the home culture of the children in the

classroom, as well as how to incorporate children's culture in teaching practices and classroom activities. According to these responses, these particular mentor teachers may have been equipped with knowledge of and preparation in implementing several culturally relevant teaching practices. Despite the limited literature, studies have shown that mentor teachers do utilize some culturally relevant teaching practices in which are identified and sometimes cultivated in teacher candidates (Cannella & Reiff; 1994; Hill, 2012; Lambeth & Smith, 2016; Lawrence & Krause, 1996; Téllez 2008). However, these studies have failed to investigate a range of these practices, so there is not much clarity across the field in terms of the number and various types of culturally relevant teaching practices that mentor teachers utilize, and that teacher candidates are able to identify and develop.

In addition to the range in number of culturally relevant teaching practices, descriptive results from the present study show the number of culturally relevant teaching practices utilized. Overall, study participants reported mentor teachers use a relatively moderate number of culturally relevant teaching practices. Although this finding suggests approximately 11 of the 19 culturally relevant practices were utilized by mentor teachers and identified by teacher candidates, careful examination of the type of practices used reveals the patterns of various culturally relevant teaching practices utilized.

The practices checked by the majority of the participants underscored mentor teachers' use of responsive language and culturally relevant materials. Given that participants were placed in high quality centers, mentor teachers may be aware of and adhering to professional standards put forth by NAEYC in their classroom. More

specifically, NAEYC's (1995) position statement, *Recommendations for Effective Early Childhood Education*, recommends that for children's optimal development, teachers working with culturally and linguistically diverse children must use respectful and encouraging language and materials that promote each child's home culture. Therefore, those mentor teachers implementing NAEYC's recommendations may be more inclined to utilize practices framed around engaging in responsive language and promoting culturally relevant materials.

Nearly half of participants also indicated that mentor teachers were using culturally relevant practices related to implementing curricula. A possible explanation for a moderate number of participants indicating these practices is that the curriculum implemented in the placement setting may or may not emphasize culturally relevant pedagogy. Additionally, participants may not have learned about the scope or objectives of the implemented curriculum, and if the scope or objectives of the implemented curriculum were inclusive of encouraging culturally relevant teaching practices. It is important to note that the present study did not ask participants questions about their placement setting's curriculum use; therefore, supplementary information is needed about these placements' curricula to deeply understand associations between culturally relevant practices and curricula.

Practices that were checked by less than half of the sample represented those of responding to and incorporating children's home language. Interestingly, NAEYC's (1995) position statement emphasizes that teachers should accept, promote, and respond to children's home language. Moreover, NAEYC (1995) indicates that those educating

teacher candidates should cultivate skills like valuing, encouraging, and responding to children's home language. It could be that, in this sample, only 30% of placement settings had at least one child in the classroom who is an English language learner. It could also be that participants may have not considered that the phrase, "child's home language", does not always refer to a language other than English and, thus, could include English. Additionally, participants may not always know each child's home language to report if they had observed their mentor teacher incorporate children's home language in their teaching practices. It is also possible that the range of children's languages in the classroom could have been extensive, and potentially limiting the mentor teacher's ability to incorporate the children's home language in their teaching practices. Interestingly, in addition to 30% of participants reporting that there were no children who were English language learners in the classroom, 50% of participants reported that they did not know if there were English language learners in the classroom. It could be that teacher candidates in this sample may be unfamiliar with certain aspects of their practicum placement setting. Moreover, teacher candidates may not know specific details about each child in the classroom or other processes, like curriculum or particular teaching practices that occur in the classroom. Therefore, more information is needed on participants' understanding of the phrase, "child's home language", and their familiarity with certain aspects of their placement setting. Additionally, greater detail on the home language of children in the classroom is necessary to gain a more accurate picture of this finding.

Results of the present study also showed that reports in the types of culturally

relevant teaching practices utilized by mentor teachers varied by teacher candidates' race

and placement setting. Specifically, reports of mentor teachers' utilization of "learning

materials that do not portray stereotypes and are accurate in portraying how people live,

work, play, etc. as demonstrated in visual representations, stories, books, songs, etc." and

"respectful, responsive, engaging language between the teacher and the children of the

classroom" practices varied by teacher candidates' race and placement setting. Due to

the small sample sizes for each racial-ethnic category and placement setting group,

evidence could not have been drawn to determine which racial/ethnic groups and

placement settings reported significant differences for these teaching practices. Research

in the fields of early childhood education and teacher education have demonstrated that

there are various definitions of culturally relevant teaching, suggesting that there is not

much clarity across the field about what culturally relevant teaching may represent (Au &

Jordan, 1981; Castagno et al., 2008; Gay, 2000; Groulx & Silva, 2010; Jordan, 1985;

Ladson-Billings, 1992; Mohatt & Erickson, 1981; Morrison et al., 2008; NAEYC, 1995).

Additionally, an open-ended question asking participants about their definition on

culturally relevant teaching demonstrated that teacher candidates in this sample had

varying conceptualizations of this pedagogy. Thus, despite the small sample size in the

present study, perhaps reports of mentor teachers' utilization of culturally relevant

teaching practices are influenced by variations in the meaning of culturally relevant

teaching attributed by variations in the interaction of teacher candidates' racial/ethnic

group and placement setting. A solid research base examining non-White teacher

candidates' conceptualization of culturally relevant teaching does not exist; yet, research

has shown that non-White teacher candidates' experiences in teacher preparation differ

from the experiences of their White counterparts (Haddix, 2012; Partelow, Spong,

Brown, & Johnson, 2017). Thus, it is possible that these varying experiences amongst

various racial/ethnic groups could shape variations in conceptualizations of culturally

relevant teaching, which could in turn affect the teacher candidates' reports on mentor

teachers' utilization of culturally relevant teaching practices. Similarly, the current

literature fails to investigate how teacher candidates' reports on types of culturally

relevant teaching practices may vary by practicum placement setting (i.e., rural, urban, or

suburban). However, research has shown that those completing their field experiences in

an urban setting may have unique experiences, like potentially working with more

racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse children, relative to other placement settings

(Proctor, Rentz, & Jackson, 2001). Therefore, although extant research is limited, there

is reason to consider that reports of mentor teachers' utilization of culturally relevant

teaching practices may be influenced by variations in the meaning of culturally relevant

teaching attributed by variations in teacher candidates' racial/ethnic group and placement

setting. Future studies should explore this avenue of research, particularly to determine

how various teacher candidates' characteristics and experiences may shape their

conceptualizations of culturally relevant teaching.

Results of the current study were not able to significantly indicate if the total

number of culturally relevant teaching practices reported by teacher candidates varied by

teacher candidates' characteristics (race and age), mentor teachers' race, and placement

location setting (rural, suburban, and urban),. Again, perhaps the variation in teacher candidates' understanding and conceptualization culturally relevant teaching practices played a role in the non-significant findings.

Lastly, the findings from the current study showed that there was not a significant association between the total number of culturally relevant teaching practices reported by teacher candidates and teacher candidates' reported teaching efficacy. Variations in teacher candidates' understanding and conceptualizations of culturally relevant teaching could have influenced the variability in this relationship. Additionally, this particular sample rated their teaching efficacy relatively high. This restricted range may have contributed to the lack of association with the total number of culturally relevant teaching practices utilized by mentor teachers, as reported by teacher candidates, and teacher candidates' teaching efficacy. The only known study to examine teacher candidates' culturally relevant teaching efficacy in their field experience is Siwatu's (2007) work. Teacher candidates in Siwatu's (2007) study also indicated rather high culturally relevant teaching efficacy scores. Thus, perhaps teacher candidates do perceive that they are efficacious in their abilities to utilize culturally relevant teaching practices, but it is not associated with the number of culturally relevant practices utilized by mentor teachers. Future research should investigate if teacher candidates' culturally relevant teaching efficacy is related to the types of culturally relevant teaching practices utilized by mentor teachers, another aspect of the field experience (such as the racial and ethnic composition of the classroom) the practicum course's content, and other teacher candidate

characteristics, like years of experience teaching, to determine how to promote high

culturally relevant teaching efficacy in teacher candidates.

Limitations and Future Research

Although the present study contributes to the field of early childhood teacher

preparation, it does so with limitations. A main limitation of this study is the sample size

(N=50). Not only does this small sample limit generalizability to larger populations, it

also limits the ability to draw findings about which racial/ethnic groups and placement

settings reported significant differences on the teaching practices found significant. It is

important to note that the sample for this study was conveniently drawn from practicum

courses instructed by personal contacts of the researcher. Therefore, having a larger

sample of participants and a sample from various institutions could yield more statistical

power to shed light on which racial-ethnic groups and placement settings show

significant differences on culturally relevant teaching practices utilized by their mentor

teachers.

Another limitation of the current study is the variability in participants'

understanding and conceptualization of culturally relevant teaching and related practices.

Various definitions or synonymous terms associated with culturally relevant teaching

exist that are used at a national level, state level, and teacher preparation program level

(i.e., culturally appropriate teaching, culturally responsive pedagogy; Au & Jordan, 1981;

Castagno et al., 2008; Gay, 2000; Groulx & Silva, 2010; Jordan, 1985; Ladson-Billings,

1992; Mohatt & Erickson, 1981; Morrison et al., 2008; NAEYC, 1995). With this lack of

a clear definition of culturally relevant teaching comes a lack of clarity across the field

about what culturally relevant teaching means. This ambiguity continues to be a challenge in teacher preparation programs, since programs address culturally relevant teaching in numerous ways, such as multicultural education and coursework, as they prepare teacher candidates to effectively work with racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse children (Assaf et al., 2010; Capella-Santana, 2003; Chen et al., 2009; Daniel, 2016; Gay & Howard, 2000; Griner & Stewart, 2012). Thus, there may be extensive variability in defining and indicating teaching practices that are culturally relevant, which makes it difficult to consider if this particular sample is using the term 'culturally relevant teaching practices' consistently. It is important to note that the researcher did include an operational definition of the term, culturally relevant teaching practices, in the Qualtrics survey distributed to participants. However, participants may have still been working with their conceptualization of culturally relevant teaching practices to answer the survey. In future studies, it may be helpful to qualitatively assess teacher candidates' understanding and conceptualization of culturally relevant teaching practices in order to better understand their perspective of the term and how it may contribute to their reports.

A related limitation is retrospective study design. The current study relied on teacher candidates recollections of observed culturally relevant teaching practices. Teacher candidates may be working on multiple components of teaching during their practicum experience (i.e., course assignments), and not have complete accuracy in their recall, as well as understanding of culturally relevant teaching.

Another limitation of the present study is that the culturally relevant teaching practices checklist portion of the survey did not specifically tap into practices associated

with acknowledging socio-cultural inequities and issues. Acknowledging socio-cultural inequities and issues among young children may be difficult to explicitly observe early childhood mentor teachers practice, since engaging in a dialogue with children around inequities and issues is too complex for their developmental age. Therefore, future studies could explore mentor teachers' perceptions about how they may implicitly practice acknowledging socio-culture inequities and issues in the classroom.

Therefore, the present study suggests several directions for future research. First, future researchers should consider how to extricate participants' conceptualization of practices associated with culturally relevant teaching. For instance, interviewing participants about what culturally relevant teaching looks like and means to them will add clarity to how teacher candidates observe and report their mentor teachers' utilization of culturally relevant teaching practices. Providing vignettes to participants about teacher candidates and mentor teachers utilizing culturally relevant teaching practices could also shed light on how teacher candidates conceptualize these practices being utilized by their mentor teachers. Additionally, asking teacher candidates to bring the checklist portion of the survey to their placement and observe their mentor teachers' utilization of culturally relevant teaching practices, rather than recalling their utilization, could strengthen accuracy in the reports.

The second suggestion for future research includes exploring mentor teachers' perspective on their utilization of culturally relevant teaching practices, as well as their teaching efficacy. The present study did not examine mentor teachers' perspectives due to small sample sizes; however, future research could qualitatively explore mentor

teachers' conceptualization of culturally relevant teaching practices and their teaching efficacy in utilizing culturally relevant teaching and intentionality in conveying these practices and the use of these practices to teacher candidates.

Future research should also consider examining the influence of classroom racial and ethnic composition on mentor teachers' utilization of culturally relevant teaching practices. Literature has linked the implementation of culturally relevant teaching with the presence of racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse classrooms (Ensign, 2003; Garcia & Chun, 2016; Irizarry & Antrop-González, 2007; López, 2016; Milner, 2011; Rodriguez et al., 2004; Savage et al., 2011). Thus, it could be hypothesized that the classroom composition of the practicum setting could contribute to the number and types of culturally relevant teaching practices mentor teachers utilize. Despite not being a significant correlation in this particular study, perhaps future research with a larger, more diverse sample could examine this aspect in classrooms and additional demographic information about the classroom composition. As teacher preparation strives to include NAEYC standards related to cultural diversity, they may need to address classroom composition and teacher candidate exposure to and opportunities to work in classrooms with children from diverse backgrounds.

Implications for Practice and Conclusion

There are several implications for practice that can be drawn from the current study's results. First, indicating the number and type of culturally relevant teaching practices mentor teachers utilize may help teacher preparation programs consider evaluating the effectiveness and preparedness of their mentor teachers. For instance,

programs who reported a low number of culturally relevant practices utilized by their mentor teachers may consider the quality and preparedness of these mentor teachers in supporting teacher candidates' teaching knowledge and skills and alignment with NAEYC standards. Second, results from the present study may be able to shed light on which culturally relevant teaching practices teacher candidates are or are not able to identify and recall, which may help teacher preparation programs evaluate teacher candidates' understanding and identification of such practices. Lastly, evidence from the present study related to teacher candidates' teaching efficacy may help teacher preparation programs structure their courses, assignments, and field experiences to continue fostering teacher candidates' highly rated culturally relevant teaching efficacy.

It is critical to note that teacher candidates' experiences in their practicum vary depending on multiple aspects, including the classroom composition (i.e., racial/ethnic, age, and language composition), mentor teachers' teaching style, the relationships between the teacher candidate and mentor teachers, program philosophies, and state standards. The present study specifically explored teacher candidates' reports regarding their mentor teachers' utilization of culturally relevant teaching practices and teacher candidate teaching efficacy related to culturally relevant teaching. In all, the current study provides exploratory findings which begin to lay a foundation for examining mentor teachers' utilization of culturally relevant teaching practices and teacher candidate experiences related to culturally relevant teaching practices.

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TABLES

Table 1. Demographic Information of Sample (N=50)

Teacher Candidate Characteristics	M (SD) or %
Race/ethnicity	
Asian/Pacific Islander	4%
Hispanic	4%
Black	32%
White	56%
Native American/American Indian	0%
Other	0%
Multiracial	4%
Age	
(19-50 years old)	28.19 (8.95)
19-35 years old	23. 67 (4.32)
36-50 years old	41.75 (3.89)
Gender	
Female	94%
Male	6%
Cultural diversity/multiculturalism course	
Yes	66%
No	34%
Culturally relevant teaching course	
Yes	38%
No	62%

Mentor Teacher Characteristics	%
Race/ethnicity	
Asian/Pacific Islander	0%
Hispanic	4%
Black	40%
White	54%
Native American/American Indian	0%
Other	2%
Multiracial	0%

Placement Setting Characteristics	N or %	
Location		
Rural setting	12%	
Suburban setting	42%	
Urban setting	46%	
Race/ethnicity groups represented among children in classroom		
Asian/Pacific Islander	18	36%
Hispanic	17	34%
Black	36	72%
White	47	94%
Native American/American Indian	4	8%
Other	10	20%
Multiracial	28	56%
Race/ethnicity of majority of children in classroom		
Asian/Pacific Islander	2	4%
Hispanic	1	2%
Black	12	24%
White	44	88%
Native American/American Indian	0	0%
Other	2	4%
English language learners		
Yes	30%	
No	20%	
I don't know	50%	

Note: Number and percentage of race/ethnicity groups represented and of majority of the children in the classroom are greater than N of the sample because teacher candidates could select all that applied.

Table 2. Culturally Relevant Teaching Practices Utilized

Total Number of Culturally Relevant Teaching Practices	M (SD) or % and cumulative %	
(0-19 practices)	10.94 (5.14)	
0 practices	6%	6%
1 practice	2%	8%
2 practices	2%	10%
3 practices	0%	10%
4 practices	0%	10%
5 practices	2%	12%
6 practices	4%	16%
7 practices	6%	22%
8 practices	8%	30%
9 practices	8%	38%
10 practices	10%	48%
11 practices	6%	54%
12 practices	4%	58%
13 practices	4%	62%
14 practices	10%	72%
15 practices	10%	82%
16 practices	4%	86%
17 practices	4%	90%
18 practices	2%	92%
19 practices	8%	100%

Types of Culturally Relevant Teaching Practice	%
Respectful, responsive, engaging language between the teacher and the children of the classroom.	88%
Learning materials that do not portray stereotypes and are accurate in portraying how people live, work, play, etc. (as demonstrated in visual representations, stories, books, songs, etc.).	82%
Child and/or family made pictures, which are prominently displayed.	76%

Language that affirms, encourages, guides, respects children as individuals with knowledge, skills and gifts.	76%
Books that reflect and transmit authentic cultural traditions, folktales and current depictions of the family life of the cultures of each child in the classroom.	72%
Culturally responsive characteristics including curiosity, awareness, open-mindedness, and self-reflection.	70%
Learning materials that reflect a variety of cultures. Learning materials includes music/musical instruments, games, tools, construction materials, dramatic play props.	64%
Variations in furniture type, room arrangements, routines and schedules that reflect cultures that are both collective and independent (ex. independent reading nooks, group story time).	62%
Curriculum that allows children to explore and respect their culture and develop respect for cultures different from their own.	62%
Cultural diversity in creative expressions (visual art, music, dance, performances, stories, etc.).	60%
Cultural variety in menus, food preparation, and eating/feeding practices.	60%

Learning activity plans that reflect and include the cultural and linguistic diversity of each child in the group. 52%

Variations in how and where children eat and sleep based on the children's needs or preferences. 46%

Each child's native language when describing everyday objects or routines 44%

Books written in the home language of each child in the classroom. 40%

Each child's home language and/or dialect to have conversations. 40%

Various types of assessments that reflect and include the cultural and linguistic diversity of each child. 40%

Cultural greetings when greeting each child and their family members. 36%

Multiple languages that reflect the dialect, phrases and speech patterns of each child in the group. 24%

Table 3. ANCOVA Testing if Total Number of Practices Varied by Placement Setting, Teacher Candidates' Characteristics, and Mentor Teachers' Race

Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	403.22[a]	17	23.72	1.00	.48
Intercept	530.17	1	530.17	22.44	.00
TCAge	3.18	1	3.18	.14	.72
TCRace	80.98	4	20.24	.86	.50
PlacementSetting	36.10	2	18.05	.76	.48
MTRace	137.27	2	68.64	2.91	.07
TCRace * PlacementSetting	97.75	2	48.87	2.07	.14
TCRace * MTRace	9.21	2	4.61	.20	.82
PlacementSetting * MTRace	72.00	2	36.00	1.52	.23
TCRace * PlacementSetting * MTRace	7.99	1	7.99	.34	.57
Error	708.78	30	23.63		
Total	6920.00	48			
Corrected Total	1112.00	47			

a. R Squared = .36 (Adjusted R Squared = .001)

Table 4. MANCOVA Testing if Types of Culturally Relevant Teaching Practices Varied by Placement Location Setting, Teacher Candidates' Characteristics, and Mentor Teachers' Race

Variable		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Intercept						
	Wilks' Lambda	.36	1.11	19.00	12.00	.44
TCAge						
	Wilks' Lambda	.48	.70	19.00	12.00	.77
TCRace						
	Wilks' Lambda	.01	1.43	76.00	49.66	.09
MTRace						
	Wilks' Lambda	.18	.87	38.00	24.00	.66
PlacementSetting						
	Wilks' Lambda	.08	1.62	38.00	24.00	.11
TCRace * MTRace						
	Wilks' Lambda	.12	1.19	38.00	24.00	.34

TCRace * PlacementSetting	Wilks' Lambda	.06	2.03	38.00	24.00	.04*
MTRace * PlacementSetting	Wilks' Lambda	.11	1.24	38.00	24.00	.29
TCRace * MTRace * PlacementSetting	Wilks' Lambda	.46	.75	19.00	12.00	.72

Note: N=48, *p<.05
a. Design: Intercept + TCAge + TCRace + MTRace + PlacementSetting + TCRace * MTRace + TCRace * PlacementSetting + MTRace * PlacementSetting + TCRace * MTRace * PlacementSetting

Table 5. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Teacher Candidate Race and Placement Setting

	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
TCRace * PlacementSetting	Each child's native language when describing everyday objects or routines.	.74	2	.37	1.43	.26
	Learning activity plans that reflect and include the cultural and linguistic diversity of each child in the group.	.28	2	.14	.51	.61
	Learning materials that reflect a variety of cultures. Learning materials includes music/musical instruments, games, tools, construction materials, dramatic play props.	.02	2	.01	.03	.97
	Books that reflect and transmit authentic cultural traditions, folktales and current depictions of the family life of the cultures of each child in the classroom.	.02	2	.01	.03	.97
	Child and/or family made pictures, which are prominently displayed.	.75	2	.38	2.17	.13
	Cultural diversity in creative expressions	.13	2	.07	.24	.79

(visual art, music, dance, performances, stories, etc.).					
Cultural variety in menus, food preparation, and eating/feeding practices.	1.12	2	.56	2.20	.13
Learning materials that do not portray stereotypes and are accurate in portraying how people live, work, play, etc. (as demonstrated in visual representations, stories, books, songs, etc.).	.87	2	.43	3.82	.03*
Variations in how and where children eat and sleep based on the children's needs or preferences.	.80	2	.40	1.71	.20
Variations in furniture type, room arrangements, routines and schedules that reflect cultures that are both collective and independent.	.90	2	.45	2.03	.15
Multiple languages that reflect the dialect, phrases and speech patterns of each child in the group.	.19	2	.10	.73	.49
Books written in the home language of each child in the classroom.	.08	2	.04	.17	.85
Respectful, responsive, engaging language	.71	2	.36	4.13	.03*

between the teacher and the children of the classroom.					
Language that affirms, encourages, guides, respects children as individuals with knowledge, skills and gifts.	.59	2	.29	1.81	.18
Each child's home language and/or dialect to have conversations.	.83	2	.41	1.64	.21
Cultural greetings when greeting each child and their family members.	.54	2	.27	1.09	.35
Curriculum that allows children to explore and respect their culture and develop respect for cultures different from their own.	.17	2	.08	.35	.71
Culturally responsive characteristics including curiosity, awareness, open-mindedness, and self-reflection.	.81	2	.40	2.03	.15
Various types of assessments that reflect and include the cultural and linguistic diversity of each child.	1.40	2	.70	2.84	.07

Note: N=48, *$p<.05$

Table 6. Teaching Efficacy Reports

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Average teaching efficacy score	2.40	5.00	3.65	.53
Teaching efficacy item				
Identify ways that the school culture (e.g., values, norms, and practices) is different from the children's home culture.			3.32	.94
Implement strategies to minimize the effects of any possible mismatch between the children's home culture and the school culture.			3.06	.82
Assess children's learning using various types of assessments.			3.48	.995
Obtain information about the children's home life.			3.65	1.03
Develop a community of learners to support children from diverse backgrounds.			3.78	.85
Use children's cultural background to help make learning meaningful.			3.73	.79
Identify the ways that children may differ in their home communication compared to the program norms.			3.41	.91
Obtain information about children's cultural background.			3.63	.88
Greet English Language Learners with a phrase in their native language.			3.22	1.25

Design a classroom environment using displays that reflects a variety of cultures.	4.04	.87
Develop a personal relationship with each child.	4.57	.61
Give feedback to children, including English Language Learners, for their accomplishments using a phrase in their native language.	3.43	1.06
Help children to develop positive relationships with their classmates.	4.31	.80
Revise instructional materials to include a better representation of cultural groups.	3.76	.83
Critically examine curriculum to determine whether it reinforces negative cultural stereotypes.	3.35	1.03
Model classroom tasks to enhance English Language Learners' understanding.	3.49	1.10
Help children feel like important members of the classroom.	4.47	.74
Identify ways that standardized tests may be biased towards culturally diverse children.	3.18	1.15
Use examples that are familiar to children from diverse cultural backgrounds.	3.47	1.02
Explain new concepts using examples that are taken from the children's everyday lives.	3.84	.80

Table 7. Bivariate Correlation Between Total Number of Culturally Relevant Teaching Practices and Average Teaching Self-Efficacy Score

		Total number of practices	Average teaching efficacy score
Total number of practices	Pearson Correlation	1	.24
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.10
	N	50	50
Average teaching efficacy score	Pearson Correlation	.24	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.10	
	N	50	50