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## ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation, ROOTS AND WINGS: A CASE STUDY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AWARENESS IN AN URBAN PRESERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM, by NICOLE DUKES, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Doctor of Philosophy, in the College of Education & Human Development, Georgia State University.

The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student's Department Chairperson, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty.

---

Diane Truscott, Ph.D  
Committee Co-Chair

---

Laura May, Ph.D  
Committee Co- Chair

---

Rhina Fernandes Williams, Ph.D.  
Committee Member

---

Chara Haeussler Bohan, Ph.D.  
Committee Member

---

Date

---

Laura May, Ph.D.  
Chairperson, Department of Early Childhood  
Elementary Education

---

Paul Alberto, Ph.D.  
Dean, College of Education &  
Human Development

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Nicole D. Dukes

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Nicole Denise Dukes  
Early Childhood Elementary Education  
College of Education & Human Development  
Georgia State University

The director of this dissertation is:

Drs. Diane Truscott & Laura May  
Department of Early Childhood Elementary Education  
College of Education & Human Development  
Georgia State University  
Atlanta, GA 30303

**Nicole Dukes**

30 Pryor St. SW

Atlanta, GA 30303.

[ndukes2@gsu.student.edu](mailto:ndukes2@gsu.student.edu)

**Education**

Ph.D., Education, Language and Literacy, Georgia State University	2022
M.A., Education, Cross Cultural Teaching, National University, California	2011
M.A., Interpersonal Communication, New York University	1999
B.A., Interpersonal Communication, California State University, Long Beach	1997
B.A., African American Studies, California State University, Long Beach	1997

**Professional Credentials**

**Instructor** *Clark Atlanta University - Atlanta, GA* 01/2016 - Present

Facilitating undergraduate courses in a Speech Communication and Theater Arts Department.

Courses include Fundamentals of Speech, Interpersonal Communication, Speech for the Classroom Teacher, Rhetoric, and Persuasion. Coaching and managing the forensics team.

**Adjunct Instructor** *University of West Georgia - Newnan, GA* 01/2019 – Present

Facilitating undergraduate and dual enrollment courses in the Department of Mass Communication.

**Graduate Research Assistant** *Georgia State University - Atlanta, GA* 07/2012 – 12/2018

Recruitment, planning and implementing information sessions, career fairs, the student database, and serving as a liaison with undergraduate colleges and universities. Providing support for a research grant focused training pre-service teachers interested in working in urban elementary schools nationwide.

**Adjunct Instructor** *Ohio Christian University - Morrow, GA* 05/2015 – 02/2018

Facilitating undergraduate courses at a satellite campus of this Centerville Ohio based Christian college. I teach public speaking, English composition, and freshman orientation/college learning skills.

**Adjunct Instructor** *Atlanta Metropolitan State College - Atlanta, GA* 01/2012 - 01/2015

Facilitating public speaking and human communication courses at a large urban community college. I also taught speech off campus for the Year Up and Dual Enrollment programs.

**Elementary Grade Teacher** *LAUSD - Los Angeles, CA* 01/1999 - 06/2011

Teaching multiple subjects K-5th in a multicultural, multilingual, Title I public school in South Los Angeles.

### **Scholarship and Professional Development**

Sachs, G. T., McGrail, E., Ellison, T. L., **Dukes, N. D.**, & Zackery, K. W. (2018). Homeless adults, technology, and literacy practices. *Journal of Literacy and Technology*, 1-49.

Sachs, G. T., McGrail, E., Ellison, T. L., **Dukes, N. D.**, & Zackery, K. W. (2018). Literacy scholars coming to know the people in the parks, their literacy practices and support systems. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 1-21.

Gordon, C., Council, T.M., **Dukes, N.D.**, Chea, M. (In Press). Defying a single narrative of Black girls' literacies: Reflections on an African-American read-in. *Multicultural Perspectives*.

Wynter-Hoyte, K., Angay-Crowder, T., Thornton, N., **Dukes, N.** (2014, May 30). Alpha upsilon alpha: Cultivating scholars and developing leaders. *International Literacy Association Literacy Daily* <http://www.literacyworldwide.org/blog/literacy-daily/2014/05/30/alpha-upsilon-alpha-cultivating-scholars-and-developing-leaders>.

### **Refereed National Convention Presentations**

**Dukes, N.**, Johnson, E. (October 9, 2016). *Doctoral Students Coming to Voice*. Research presentation made at Black Doctoral Network. Atlanta, GA

Tinker Sachs, G., **Dukes, N.**, Johnson, E., Lewis, M., Park, J., Poindexter, A., Wang, H., Zackery, K., O'Neil, M. (October 10, 2016). *The outing of doctoral students and coming to voice in a course on language variation and learning*. Research presentation made at the Southeastern Regional Association of Teacher Educators Conference.

Tinker Sachs, G. McGrail, E., **Dukes, N.** (November 20, 2016). *Crafting dialogic spaces elementary age children as language variationist*. Research presentation made at National Council for Teachers of English. Minneapolis, MN.

Tinker Sachs, G., McGrail, E. Zackery, K., **Dukes, N.** & Lewis Ellison, T. (June 18-20, 2015). *How communities serve to or disempower one another - Through the eyes of the people in the parks*. Research presentation made at the International Society for Language Studies. Albuquerque, New Mexico

Tinker Sachs, G., Zackery, K., McGrail, E. **Dukes, N.** & Lewis Ellison, T. (May 1, 2015). *The ATL literacies in the park project; Beyond in-and-out paradigms*. Research presentation made at Korean Association of Multicultural Education. Hanyang University, Seoul, South Korea.

Tinker Sachs, G. McGrail, E., **Dukes, N.** & Zackery, K. Lewis, T. (July 2014). *The hopeful people in the parks*. Research presentation made at NETQ. Loudermilk Center, Atlanta, GA.

## **ABSTRACT**

The study examined how a single urban teacher education program in a large southeastern university educate preservice teachers about English language variation, specifically African American English (AAE). AAE is a rule-based language spoken by a large population of students in urban communities across the nation. Document analysis was employed for internal documents such as coursework, websites, program materials, readings, course schedules, and catalogs for the presence, role, and function of AAE. External documents such as state and federal requirements for teacher certification programs were included. Grounded theory analysis was used with two focus groups exploring implicit AAE teaching approaches. The study found that Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) impacted how AAE was addressed in this teacher preparation program through an intentional emphasis on urban teaching and learning in non-deficit ways. CRP necessitated the building of cultural competence and critical consciousness of preservice teachers. AAE was partly addressed in the program, and yet a platform for understanding and supporting AAE was established through CRP and a commitment to combating bias and legitimizing language. This study also found that standards of academic rigor, high expectations, and understanding the relationship between power and language were advanced through CRP and strongly connected to AAE. Implications of how urban education preservice teacher programs could focus on AAE through CRP were provided.

*INDEX WORDS:* African American English, Teacher Education, Urban Teacher Training, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

ROOTS AND WINGS: A CASE STUDY OF  
AFRICAN AMERICAN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AWARENESS  
IN AN URBAN PRESERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

by  
NICOLE DUKES

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in the College of Education and Human Development  
Georgia State University  
2022

Under the Direction of Diane Truscott, PhD  
And Laura May, PhD



ROOTS AND WINGS: A CASE STUDY OF  
AFRICAN AMERICAN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AWARENESS  
IN AN URBAN PRESERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

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2022

## **DEDICATION**

This was started and completed for my mom, Wanda Fay Griffin Dukes who called me Dr. Dukes since I was in 3rd grade. Our last conversation was on the day before “our” prospectus defense. She was the definition of diligence, faith, tough love, black excellence, and unconditional love.

To my dad who passed far before I entered this program but is the reason, I choose his sweet Georgia. To the people I lost during this process; my grandmother, my aunts Beling, Doris, and Virginia Lee, Cousin Michael, newborn niece Jordan, listening ear Felicia, and sister scholar Roz.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAE	African American English
AAL	African American Language
AL	Academic Language
CAEP	Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation
CCSSO	The Council of Chief State School Officers
COP	Community of Practice
ELL	English Language Learners
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESOL	English to Speakers of Other Languages
InTASC	Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium
NCATE	National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education
NCES	National Center for Education Statistics
SAAE	Standard American Academic English
SAE	Standard Academic English
SE	Standard English
TESOL	Teaching English as a Second Language
UTEP	Urban Teacher Education Program

## 1 THE PROBLEM

English is the most dominant language spoken in the United States (Pérez-Quñones, & Salas, 2021; Trudgill, 2002), yet English can be vastly different depending on the region and who is speaking (Berwick & Chomsky, 2015; Everaert et al., 2017). English, like other languages, has dialects associated with geographic regions, socioeconomic class, and culture (Clopper, 2021; Labov, 2010; Wolfram & Schilling, 2015; Woolard, 1985). In addition, every community has a pool of linguistic resources, including a heritage language, a heritage dialect, a borrowed variety, a mixed variety (Beaudrie et al., 2021; Fought, 2004). The U.S. Census Bureau (2020) noted over three hundred languages spoken in homes in addition to English (Blodgett et al., 2016; Hudley & Mallinson, 2015). Those languages interact with English just as the histories and customs of its people mix and mingle and form mainstream popular culture. As a result of these conditions, students walk into US classrooms sharing multiple Englishes, the systematic ways people use language to “conceptualize their worlds in words” (Kirkland, 2011, p. 295). Thus, English variation exists in US schools and is influenced by communities, socioeconomic status, and other factors.

The concept of Englishes in language variation is more extensive than vocabulary, grammar, and syntax. This concept also includes manipulating multiple tools that seamlessly shift and adapt in various contexts (Beaudrie et al., 2021; Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003). Language is highly influenced by practice, beliefs, attitudes, and community norms (Feagin, 2013; Kinlock, 2011; Steketee et al., 2021). In addition, language communities can be defined using geographic, historical, demographic, social, or psychological factors (Clopper, 2021; Wolfram, 2013). Language can also be layered within groups with different levels of commonalities (Patrick et al., 2002). Language, as it evolves is constantly picking up these influences from the diverse

communities that use it as a form of communication (Barrett & Hordern, 2021; Berwick & Chomsky, 2015; Everaert et al., 2017; Hudley & Mallinson, 2015). Language also allows people to fit in with some individuals and differ from others for community status and social positioning (Wynter-Hoyte & Smith, 2020; Meyerhoff, 2015). This concept of English language variation also includes the need to manipulate multiple teaching tools that can seamlessly shift and adapt in various cultural contexts (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003; Kirkland, 2011; Orellana et al., 2010). Thus, home and community languages are a solid base to build academic language while nurturing and supporting previous knowledge (Fisher & Lapp, 2013; Gee, 2014; Palacios & Kibler, 2016).

In addition to word choice and word order, literature on Englishes covers how shared languages are acquired in communities. Language fosters strong teacher-student relationships (Wynter-Hoyte & Smith, 2020). Language builds relationships, and a strong teacher/student relationship increases student achievement (Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Hughes et al., 2008). Research also supports the benefits of acknowledging language variation and a child's linguistic history, especially in the elementary school setting (Godley et al., 2006; Lippi-Green, 2012; Rickford, 1999). When teachers have information on students' home language, teaching competence increases. This increase in teaching competence is due to the teachers' ability to assess students' needs and express respect for diversity (Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Snow et al., 2005). In addition to English as a Second Language, language variation, specifically African American Language, is an asset and needs to be addressed in a teacher education program. While teachers prepared to serve in urban schools are taught to consider these various language and identity challenges, awareness of English language variation is also required to serve these

students well. Thus, there is a need to establish English language variation as an essential part of preservice urban teaching training programs.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Urban schools are in highly populated cities across America where language and culture vary. In urban schools, language is embedded with unknown and sometimes unintentional ideologies (Iversen, 2021; Wiley & García, 2016). From grammar to syntax to word choice, how we speak carries nested political, historical, and cultural histories (Chomsky, 1991; Chomsky, 2007; Fairclough, 1995; Gee, 2006). Due to this variation in language use, it is essential for teachers and teacher educators to know that the language chosen for instruction in schools sometimes differs from the language children are exposed to at home.

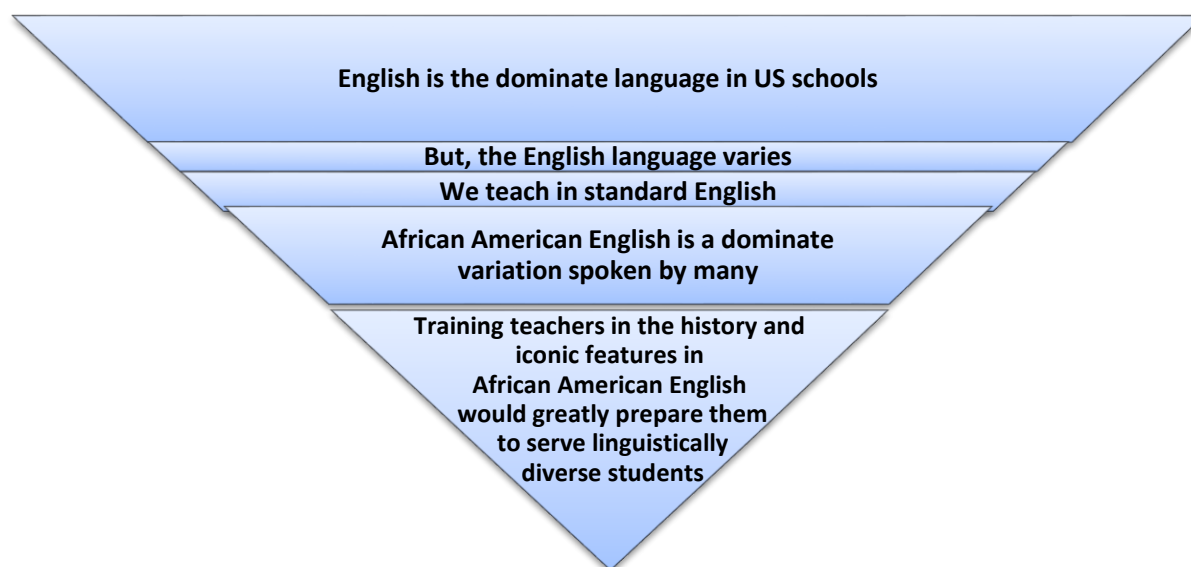
Preservice teachers enter teacher education programs with language philosophies. Teacher education programs then discuss and analyze those language philosophies. This learning process represents another critical piece that shapes teacher education program cultures and bridges the divide between pedagogy and community practice (Preston, 2009). However, often missing from these programs is the knowledge that African American English (AAE) is one of the most widely spoken forms of English language variation found in urban areas. Therefore, the rules and language hypotheses of AAE should be included in the training of all teachers, especially those planning to serve in urban communities.

The purpose of this study was to examine how one urban teacher education program prepared teachers in English language variation, specifically AAE. This program was chosen because of its emphasis on urban education and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP). Culturally Relevant Pedagogy or CRP rests on “three propositions. First, students must experience academic success. Second, students must develop and maintain cultural competence. Third,

students must develop a critical consciousness to challenge the status quo of the current social order” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p.160). Students are nurtured to critically understand that specific systems represent dysfunction while oppressing some members of society and privileging other members (Freire, 1971/2009). In this study, CRP is examined in relationship with the AAE. Awareness of AAE and its value is culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1991, 1992). This study examined various conduits of learning in this program for preservice teachers. This examination included coursework and teaching activities for the presence, role, and function of AAE. Figure 1 shows an inverted triangle of the purpose of the study.

**Figure 1**

*Inverted Triangle of the Purpose of the Study*



## Research Questions

The research attempted to answer the following questions:

1. How is African American English (AAE) addressed in an urban teacher preparation program?

2. To what extent does CRP support an understanding of language variation for urban classroom practice?

### **Background of the Study**

According to the literature, urban schools are diverse in language, culture, and needs. Urban schools are culturally and linguistically diverse, and urban teachers are characterized as empowered, knowledgeable, and community-connected, change agents and advocates of social justice. However, as Coupland (2001) indicated, language is viewed from the functionalist paradigm with society and schools as a moving system using language hierarchy as a contribution to keeping societal systems in place. As such, English language use is one area that merits further study.

Although there are many forms of English, Standard Academic English is the form that is taught in schools. Standard Academic English (SAE) combines authentic conversational language and artificial rules to help people understand each other despite different languages, experiences, communities, and life stories (Chomsky, 2007; Jones, 2015). However, SAE is an artificial construct reflecting Eurocentric ideals embedded deeply in the rules of the language (Chomsky, 1955). Linguistic legitimacy is what Lippi-Green (2012) calls standard language ideology. This view shows that there is proper English spoken by the upper-middle-class mainstream dominant group. Language bias confirms it as the correct form, and every other form of English or other languages is considered inferior.

Chomsky (1955) supported this claim by pointing out that standard language rules were an illusion because, if they were authentic, they would not need to be taught. These ideals also support the Eurocentric myth of purity of language (Labov, 1996) that characterized Englishes spoken by people with less power as degenerate dialects. The resulting education bias is that an



individual's English language variation may be left behind in forming and expressing complex thoughts using SAE. Thus, language use has been related more to social and political power than linguistics.

One result of this SAE language bias is that culturally relevant teachers assume a problematic relationship in their teaching role between students of color, low-income students, and society (Ayers et al., 2008). Teaching SAE is expected, encouraged, and welcomed as an accepted standard for teachers. Teachers recognize that students must have command of SAE to gain access to a broader range of educational and career opportunities. However, one of the most challenging tasks teachers face is affirming and supporting students' rights to their language while teaching and promoting SAE (Palacios & Kibler, 2016). This challenge has been answered through culturally relevant curriculum and pedagogy.

Using culturally relevant curriculum and pedagogy requires consistent examination of the social context for teaching. Culturally relevant teachers care about student competence and critical consciousness, including language awareness. In addition, culturally relevant teachers exhibit high levels of pedagogical knowledge and understanding of the politics and social ramifications of the curriculum. For example, learning to discuss the power and politics behind language variation can empower teachers to become culturally competent and affirming to serve students (Labov, 2000; Rickford, 2016; Rigoglioso, 2014; Wheeler, 2016).

An understanding of the local language not only assists teachers in building a stronger bond with students and family and provides a more profound knowledge of teaching SAE. For example, recognizing variation, patterns, and norms in the variety of Englishes that students speak helps teachers plan practical lessons that serve students' specific needs to build connections. Research also revealed that teachers who were purposeful in their recognition and

use of AAE build effective relationships that resulted in student success (Blake, 1997; Fogel & Ehri, 2006). Knowing that AAE is not *bad English* and is rule-based can help teach students to code-switch to Academic English (Gist, 2014; Jones, 2015; Paris, 2009; Terry, 1994). Learning about AAE allows new teachers to see language variation as an asset instead of a deficiency (Smitherman, 1994). Thus, a teacher's knowledge of the language and history of the population they serve can help all stakeholders (Campbell & Peyton, 1998; Cummins, 2005).

The issues surrounding the recognition of AAE are enormous. Over 21 million children are served in urban inner-city schools, of which 76% are African American (Department of Education, 2015). Nevertheless, despite legislation and substantial research that supports the validity and systematic nature of AAE, teacher education in this area has been lacking. Although culturally relevant educators know that AAE is one of the many variations of English spoken across the United States (Hudley & Mallinson, 2015; Mufwene et al., 2021), knowledge of AAE has not been added to the core curriculum for future educators (English, 1998; Green, 2002). Instead, AAE continues to be ignored in teacher education from philosophical and English language arts mechanics perspectives (Cummins, 2005).

African American English (AAE) should matter to all teachers serving diverse students. This study examined these issues surrounding AAE training provided to those teachers. The purpose of this study was to examine how one urban teacher education program prepared teachers in English language variation, specifically AAE. Two questions guided the study to provide insight into English language variation issues (Mufwene et al., 2021; Wolfram, 2019).

## **Overview of the Study**

This study used a case study design. "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the

boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2000, p.13). Case studies are commonly found in social science, exploratory, and descriptive research. The case study examined how one urban preservice teacher training program focused on preparing teachers to work with English language variation, specifically AAE teaching in urban, high-needs schools. The case under examination was an urban teacher education program (UTEP) at a large southeastern university located at the center of a highly populated urban city.

According to Yin (2000), a case study effectively forms a framework for debate and research. It does not need to cover every case but a specific bounded area. Criteria for case study design included tests for construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability. Table 1 examines the applicability of the case study design to this research study.

**Table 1***Applicability of Case Study Design*

<b>TESTS</b>	<b>CASE STUDY (Yin, 2017)</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
Construct Validity	Operational measures for study – I studied the presence of instruction on African American English in an urban teacher education program. I used syllabi and written documents from the program as well as state and national accreditation standards. I also conducted two focus groups of faculty and supervisors to learn more about ways African American English was addressed that may not be visible in written documents.	Data Collection
Internal Validity	Internal relationships are one condition that leads to other conditions. For example, one internal relationship is teacher education's impact on teachers, therefore impacting schools and students.	Data Analysis
External Validity	Generalization in findings – could implications from this study align with the study of other urban teacher education programs?	Research design
Reliability	Ability to repeat the study using other urban teacher education programs	Data collection Data Analysis Research Design

This case study design used single descriptive case study methods and primarily document analysis. According to Yin (2017), case studies investigate current situations in the context of real life. In this case, the preservice teacher education program's emphasis on preparing teachers to meet the needs of urban schools was a genuine context to examine African American English (AAE) and English language variation in teacher preparation.

One of the benefits of a case study using document analysis was that the data were fixed and not easily manipulated once identified. Data were selected, made sense of, and synthesized into themes and categories. Two sources of data were collected. Program documents and state and federal accreditation standards served as the primary data sources in this study and provided links to recommendations using document analysis. Two focus groups were conducted. The first focus group comprised faculty, and the second was conducted with fieldwork supervisors. These focus groups collected additional information on how AAE is represented in the program.

Grounded theory techniques guided the analysis of the focus group data. This analysis approach asked *how*, *what*, and *why* (Charmaz, 2002). Along with using a personal journal to record impressions and data analysis decisions, analyzing documents through document analysis and analyzing focus groups using grounded theory allowed for triangulation of the data.

### **Significance of the Study**

The importance of teacher preparation in understanding and supporting language variation in elementary classrooms today is understudied (Wolfram, 2019). Nevertheless, schools and teachers play a critical role in language development. Students enter the classroom with extensive linguistic knowledge (Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Pennycook, 2017). In addition, students enter school eager to share what they know but may quickly learn that how they speak at home is not the same as the acceptable language in school (Delpit, 1992; Lippi-Green, 2012; Putnam, 1993; Smitherman & Smitherman-Donaldson, 1977; Wolfram, 2019).

Research revealed that teachers who were purposeful in their recognition and use of AAE built effective relationships that resulted in student success (Fogel & Ehri, 2006; Wynter-Hoyte & Smith, 2020). For example, in a study by Kinlock (2011), students talked about how their language affected their academic success. Students remarked that when teachers used strategies

that considered the differences between AAE and SAE, it made a real difference in their relationship with the teacher and understanding of the material. In Kirkland's (2011) study, one example was a student who acknowledged that not using Academic English posed a disadvantage. However, this student also saw the importance of having command of his community language. Thus, as teachers prepare to enter classrooms, they must be aware of serving and recognize that varied Englishes are not deficits (Gee, 2014; Irvine & Armento, 2001; Orosco et al., 2013; Tomasello, 1999).

### **Assumptions Related to Study Design**

All research contains general assumptions. Assumptions are unquestioned beliefs, statements, or determinations about the research presumed to be the truth (Wargo, 2015). Assumptions are most often beyond the control of the individual researcher (Simon, 2011). I address these assumptions in this section.

This study rests on several significant assumptions. The first assumption concerned the nature of urban schools. It was assumed that urban schools are viewed as linguistically and culturally diverse. Therefore, the findings may provide important implications for the urban teachers' education field and the instruction of language variation in urban classrooms. A significant assumption influencing this study was that teachers who served those schools would benefit from understanding the language variation in their community. Standard Academic English (SAE) is required in schools and is part of the master narrative for the education system. African American English is one of the most widely spoken language variations. Some language variations are more prestigious than others, and if teacher education deemed language variation important, it would be included in program coursework.

There are several societal assumptions about AAE and urban schools in this study. These assumptions are based on recognizing that SAE is the language used in schools. First, this study assumed several variations of the English language, with some variations carrying more prestige than others (Phillipson, 2012; Ricento, 2005). Second, it also assumed that a universal standardized English is privileged over community dialects and is inherited in our education system's master narrative (Janks 2010; Vasquez et al., 2019). Third, teacher education programs acknowledge the value of language when it is a different language but exert little concentrated effort to assist teachers in meeting the needs of speakers of varied forms of the dominant language. However, it also assumed that teachers who served in urban areas would benefit from understanding language variation. Therefore, the design was built on the assumption that language variation would appear in coursework throughout the teacher education program if language variation were considered important.

Another primary assumption in this study was that teacher attitudes about language matter. How teachers view and position themselves in students' lives influences classroom culture and student success. Thus, the preservice teachers' understanding of their language usage and their students' language can be challenging during their transition into the profession. For example, a high school English teacher friend once told me that she tells her students to write in "her voice." She explained that if they could not picture it coming out of her mouth, then it probably was incorrect. This explanation was very troubling because it positioned her dialect as superior. While I hope she did not purposely put down students, I believe this core belief is common among generational or racial teachers. How people feel about a language is connected to how they feel about the people who speak it (Edwards & Redfern, 1992). There are varieties of English labeled lazy or harsh, while others are academic or professional. Exploring teachers'

attitudes toward African American English and examining their ideas and identities as folk linguists shed further light on these issues.

### **Researcher Bias**

A researcher considers assumptions that guide and influence a study to build in means to check bias, if possible. It is impossible to divorce the researcher from the research entirely. I fully embraced and acknowledged my voice in the study by reflecting on what I believed to be true as I moved from one point to the next during the process by reflecting on my own professional and personal experiences. I cannot write about language without addressing my identity as an African American teacher who grew up in Oakland, California. I cannot discuss my identity without looking at it in relation to power and social structure (Grbich, 2013).

Qualitative research requires that researchers examine their possible subjectivities and try to best reconstruct the several shades and tints through which their lens is colored, illustrating how they experience the world (Carducci et al., 2013). Research newly acquired knowledge and the changing landscape of the world adjust horizons. As a member of an often-marginalized group, a teacher is educated by a school system that has received considerable scrutiny from local and national press for its stance on Standard versus African American English. These situated contexts are important acknowledgments for the type of research I would like to conduct. Oakland teachers were being instructed on the patterns of AAE. I remember lessons comparing literature written in AAE and SAE.

I grew up in a multiethnic, multicultural, working-class neighborhood in Oakland, California. My mother was a bus driver, and my dad was a longshoreman in San Francisco. My parents took great pride in my verbal communication skills. I remember my mother often bragging that I was talking in complete sentences by a year old. Hearing this statement



repeatedly made me aware of the power of speech in the Black community. Growing up in Oakland, California, with two southern-raised parents, diction and articulation were constantly monitored by my parents. My grandmother's very guarded speech served as an example of how I was "supposed" to express myself.

As with many African American families, it was necessary to have command of African American language (AAL) and SAE. I was raised to believe that there was a place for formal language, and it was almost equally important to know when to relax. My research interest was born through my upbringing. I loved to hear my family speak and then code-switch when company came over. Having a command of varied codes is tied to socioeconomic class and the ability to assimilate into mainstream society while keeping active and alert within your home community (Smitherman, 1994). I remember having a teenage cousin visit from New Orleans who did not switch when company came over, and I felt it was important that I code switch for him. I remember him yelling at me, "I don't need no translator, little girl." My mother told me it was rude to correct adults. Language is political (Irvine et al., 2009). Thinking back, I wonder if he was choosing not to change his pattern of speaking on purpose.

Growing up, my mom loved to read and tried to get me to see the beauty in AAE through books. She explained how important authentic African American voices are in literature and showed me some great examples through poetry. We read Langston Hughes and James Weldon Johnson, and I was able to see the authenticity of the black experience expressed through spoken soul. We attended an Afrocentric school where we learned about the history of African American people before the transatlantic slave trade. We took African dance classes, participated in programs at the public library, and took part in several programs the city of Oakland had to offer, including winning the city-wide oratorical festival three years in a row. I grew up in church three

days a week, and my uncle was our pastor. My mother's southern roots were apparent in her attitudes toward how she felt I should behave like a young lady. I always had to carry a purse, wear nylons/stockings and a dress to church, make weekly beauty salon visits, doing what she and my grandmother defined as ladylike. Some of the first places African American English was studied were the church, beauty/barber shops, and social clubs, and I frequented all those places weekly, if not daily.

Attending college revealed another language. I was an Upward Bound and Summer Bridge student, both programs designed to nurture and support first-generation college students. Those programs eased some of the fear and tension experienced in the new environment. I then attended a predominantly white university. Long Beach State was already a highly segregated campus, having only an 8% African American population. As a freshman during a challenging period for race relations in Los Angeles, I became accustomed to being invisible and carefully guarding my tongue. Racial tension from the outside community added additional problems. I did not want to give my roommate and her friends ammunition during the LA uprising, Latasha Harlan's shooting, and OJ Simpson's infamous low-speed chase. I remember hearing my roommate and other dorm mates ridicule one of my friends for saying "ax" and "pacifically," as opposed to "ask" and "specifically." They then turned to me and asked if I knew how to speak "ghetto," too? All the dorm activities and school functions were geared toward the normative group.

As a freshman trying to learn a new city, I looked for a hair salon or local hang out and quickly learned how to live on the periphery. I longed to hear some of that spoken soul, AAE, that I grew up surrounded by in Oakland. I became aware of the fundamental cultural differences between racial groups and southern versus northern California language and cultural practices. I

was cautious of what I said and how I shared it with my dorm mates. Today, California State University, Long Beach's population of African American students has decreased to 4%, 39% Latino, 21% Asian, and 19% Caucasian (California State University Long Beach, 2019-2021).

Upon graduating from Long Beach State, I attended graduate school at New York University. In contrast, New York City was highly diverse, and I had the opportunity to teach voice and articulation courses to immigrant students at a community college. I finished my graduate program in a year. After that, I moved back to California, where I taught at a large, urban, Title I elementary school for 11 years.

The school was comprised of 86% English language learners. The other 14% were African American students participating in a program that offered Academic English support to native English speakers. The district adopted a program called Academic English Mastery Program, AEMP. Given the success of our English language learners, the program was designed to offer that same support and linguistic foundation to African American English-speaking students. Professional development for this program taught about patterns and features of African American English. We used our awareness of these patterns to develop a curriculum to serve AAE-speaking students. The program was new, so teachers could contribute to the lessons pool to support AAE rules.

Much of what I learned was similar to my ESOL professional development, which taught me some structural differences between English and Spanish. This ESOL professional development also introduced me to Spanish cognates the importance of hands-on manipulatives and visual representations in my instruction. In addition, I learned why it is so crucial for students to retain their home language and its status within the community where I was serving. We learned that Chicano English was not broken English but a variation of English, another

code, like AAE. We learned why some language patterns exist and how to assist students in shifting between the codes. I also learned how important language is to home and community. Rote translations of formal text did not enhance instruction with my students. Exploring stories, music, and a varied form of literature gave us a better understanding of the student's language and its use. Classroom libraries rich with diverse culturally responsive literature also helped students see and hear varied Englishes. It extended lessons beyond the classroom and solidified the link between teachers, students, parents, and the community.

In hindsight, this professional development about mainstream Academic English provided a sociolinguistic base for teachers to use in lesson planning and delivery. From writing instruction to grammar and language arts, Standard English language is expected in classroom instruction. My experiences teaching in Los Angeles further heightened my interest in this area. As a result, I have an emic and etic view of AAE, urban education, and teacher preparation. I strategically chose to use a preservice teacher program because of its CRP base and urban-centered focus. This study is not about using or not using AAE. This study speaks to whether or not AAE is mentioned in the program as an English language variation that is part of the multicultural and multilingual landscape in many urban schools. I grew up in an African American family, and AAE was spoken often. This form of English language variation is my natural register. In addition, I have had years of informal and formal lessons on code-switching in academic environments and writing. Thus, my life exemplifies how building on a natural language variation can also lead to academic success.

### **Definition of Terms**

I examined a teacher education program at a large southwestern university in this study. I deliberately chose to use the term *urban* instead of *inner-city* to acknowledge the power of

language. I also chose the term *African American English* instead of the Title I, Part A designation (U.S. Department of Education, 2018) or the term *ebonics* for African American Vernacular English, along with other terms used to describe the same phenomenon. The definitions of terms used in this study follow.

**African American English (AAE).** AAE is used in this study to refer to the variation of English spoken in, but not limited to, predominately African American communities. It is sometimes considered a language and, other times, a dialect, depending on the perspective. AAE is a variation of English with roots in West Africa and old English.

**Code-switching.** Code-switching is the ability to switch back and forth between home language and Standard Academic English (Wheeler & Swords, 2006; Young et al., 2018). Code-switching emphasizes the need for both linguistic codes based on context. Students are taught to go between written and spoken English, playground, and classroom talk. For example, African American students naturally learn to speak differently at school than home. By fourth grade, if they have learned how to move back and forth between dialects successfully, they are on average an entire grade level above students who are not proficient in both home and school languages.

**Critical consciousness.** Critical consciousness theory focuses on the inherent disparities in the roles of oppression and privilege that support systemic dysfunction (Freire, 1971/2009).

**Culturally Relevant Pedagogy.** Culturally Relevant Pedagogy or CRP can be defined in a variety of ways. CRP rests on “three propositions: Students must experience academic success. Students must develop and maintain cultural competence and a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p.160).

**Emic.** Emic approaches are sometimes referred to as an insider's investigation. The emic is a perspective that regards the inside behaviors of a group as the normative culture. This point of view helps with understanding a phenomenon.

**Englishes.** Numerous ways English is spoken worldwide, including varieties of Standard Academic English. According to Gee (2014), multiple Englishes are used to participate in (D) discourses.

**Etic.** Qualitative research term used to describe the outsiders' point of view. This point of view helps in the analysis stage of a phenomenon.

**Preservice Teacher (PST).** The term preservice teacher (PST) refers to students enrolled in a teacher education program. This term acknowledges preservice teachers' (PST) professional identities as they develop further through helping students engage in coursework and field experiences.

**Urban.** This study defines urban as densely populated, linguistically diverse areas with high poverty rates, immigrants, and marginalized populations (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2004). Historically, these communities have been underserved and underfunded (Alexander, 2010; Gaines, 2019; Milner, 2008; Walker, 2006). This study's urban teacher education program reported that it worked from a transformative paradigm with plans to level power, privilege, and agency. Language plays an essential role in changing systems of inequity (Giroux & McLaren, 1992). There has also been a distinct relationship in African American communities between history, politics, and education (Jacobs, 2015).

## Summary

This chapter introduced the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the background of the problem. Next, an overview of the research and the methodology are

presented. In addition, the significance of the study, the assumptions, and researcher bias are covered. In the next chapter, literature representing critical aspects of this study is presented and discussed. Four main research threads organized the chapter: Culturally Relevant Pedagogy or CRP, Urban Teacher Education, Preservice Teacher Preparation, and an Overview of Language. Theories related to language, and specifically African American English, are introduced. Finally, an overview of African American English in relationship to power, culture, and education is presented.

## 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Almost seven million US children are educated in densely populated urban schools where resources are limited (Camp-Yeakey, 2012; Haberman et al., 2017; Milner & Lomotey, 2013; Uro & Lai, 2019). These schools are culturally and linguistically rich yet poorly funded and politically constrained (Nasir & Vakil, 2017; Sigdel & Sharma, 2021). As a result, teachers are seldom prepared to serve the unique needs of a linguistically diverse student body (Rhodes et al., 2005; Sigdel & Sharma, 2021), even though many of these students speak various *Englishes*, including African American English. Teacher education programs have a significant responsibility when it comes to language use (Daniels et al., 2017). Nevertheless, teachers are not provided professional development on the iconic features, code-switching, or evolution of African American English.

In this section, I first discuss the background of the urban education issue. Then, I examine urban education and today's urban classroom, and the need for urban teacher education. In addition, I review literature that supports the validity of AAE and its connection to student success. Next, I examine language and AAE. I explain language convergence and divergence, language acquisition, and the origins of AAE. A brief background on AAE, urban education, and the deficit view of AAE in urban classrooms are also introduced.

Additionally, the language and identity of AAE linked through the history of AAE provides a foundation for understanding the issues concerning AAE as a language variation. Finally, the issues of AAE, power, and culture concerning education are reviewed. This overview of the literature gives a foundation to understanding the students who teachers will be teaching as well as the system in which they are prepared to legitimize African American



English as a resource for teachers, solidifying the case for increased attention to AAE in urban teacher training.

### **Background of the Problem**

Historically, major cities were desirable places to live and represented financial prosperity and diverse people, customs, and ideas that gave urban life a cosmopolitan glow (Ball et al., 2021; Darling-Hammond, 2016; Reardon & Owens, 2014). Today, the economy has changed the tide for inner-city urban living. In many cities, poverty and poor resources plague these areas, and they are becoming more and more segregated socioeconomically (Reardon & Owens, 2014; Tough, 2012). Urban is now defined as a highly populated place with heavy business saturation, public transportation, and activity. The area is generally ethnically, linguistically, culturally, and financially diverse (Darling-Hammond, 2016; Hodge & Vigo-Valentin, 2013; Milner, 2012). These factors also affect urban education and how it is viewed.

The government has aimed several policies at urban education (Fusarelli & Fusarelli, 2015; Lipman, 2015; Vinovski, 2015). *Brown v. Board of Education* (U.S. Reports, 1954) was the most popular and most influential catalyst. The results of this litigation shifted populations and affected funding for low-income communities. Based on this litigation, government regulations addressed teacher recruitment and training of urban teachers for high-needs communities. These reforms shrank the achievement gap during the late 1970s and 80s (Darling-Hammond, 2016). Then, the benefits of integration were stifled during the Reagan era. Funding aimed at adequately resourcing classrooms based on need was cut (Lipman, 2015). High-stakes testing took center stage and guided policies and funding opportunities (Edwards, 2016; Milner, 2012). More than sixty years after school integration, a re-segregation has occurred that divides students based on race and income (Dailey, 2004; Ketter & Stoffel, 2008; Knoester & Au, 2017;

Orfield & Lee, 2005). Large urban districts are most guilty of isolating students by race, with minority students having fewer resources and less experienced teachers (Ball et al., 2021; Knoester & Au, 2017; Orfield & Lee, 2005; Reardon & Owens, 2014). As a result, urban schools are often narrowly examined, based on simply race and income (Milner, 2012).

There are various ways the general public defines and conceptualizes today's urban classroom. Popular media characterizes urban schools by low standardized test scores new and unprepared teachers and highlights violence within the community (Barton et al., 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2016; Milner, 2012). According to Milner (2012) and Noguera and Wells (2011), internal and external challenges trouble urban schools. Everything from poor health care and homelessness to unprepared teachers and stagnate administrators factors into urban school performances. Structural and systemic inequalities trouble the effectiveness of these schools (Anyon, 2005; Haberman, 2010; MacLeod & Urquiola, 2012). Urban schools are often under-served and under-resourced (Dowrick et al., 2001).

Conceptualizing urban schools is also challenging because some schools are not technically located in densely populated areas. These schools serve a highly transient community with high poverty populations resulting in low test scores (Jacobs, 2015). Milner (2012) suggests three categories of urban school districts. First, urban intensive districts are located in large, densely populated metropolitan cities. Sometimes these are called inner-city schools. Milner's (2012) second distinction, emergent urban districts are located in smaller cities yet still densely populated. Finally, Milner (2012) mentions characteristic urban districts. Some schools are located outside of major metropolitan cities but face many of the same challenges. However, issues in all urban schools are lack of resources, subpar teacher preparedness, and student success measured by standardized testing (Karner, 2017; Milner, 2012). Distinguishing between

the needs of urban, rural, and suburban schools helps teachers understand the history of the profession related to power and privilege and possible motives and messages reproduced through curricular choices (Jacobs, 2015).

Ellsasser's (2008) article discusses the pathology of urban schools and addresses reforming the dialogue used to "diagnose" and "heal" the problems associated with urban education. He described the limitations of urban schools as imposed by the bureaucratic education system. This system shapes urban schools' philosophy and day-to-day context, from rules unrelated to teaching and learning to teachers, administration, and personnel. An unfortunate outcome of this system for teachers is the veering away from the job they longed to do but became bogged down with other responsibilities (Apple, 2014; Cuban, 1970; Karner, 2017; Milner & Lomotay, 2013). In addition, urban teacher education can be challenging to frame as it sits in the context of a conservative field of education (Apple, 2014; Smagorinsky & Barnes, 2014). Teacher education operates within two parameters. This first parameter is the organizational culture of accreditation, and the second is the school and focus of the individual program. Meeting the tight parameters of state and district frameworks while trying to serve students and the community can place urban teacher education in a very precarious position. Another outcome is that teachers do not feel adequately equipped to handle teaching in urban schools (Colbert & Wolff, 1992; Haberman, 1995; Higgins et al., 2015).

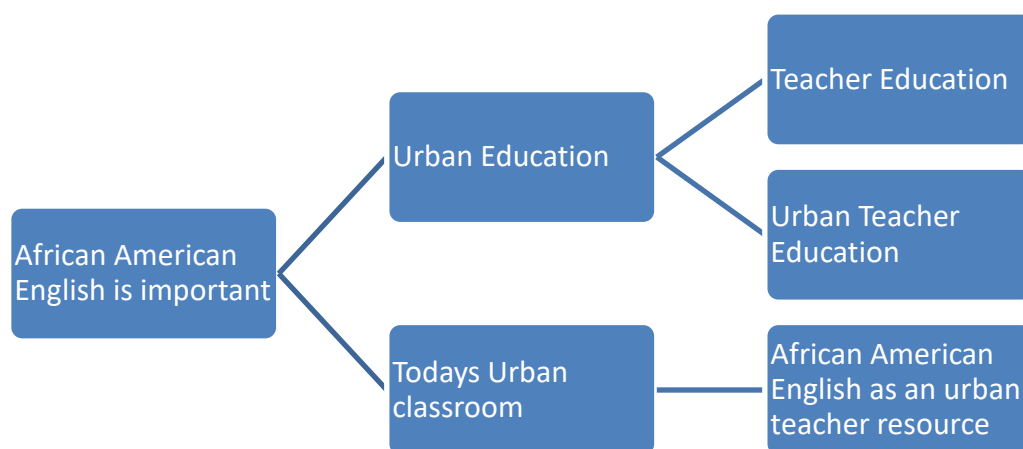
Interestingly, some of the characteristics labeled as "challenges" to urban schools can be seen by urban teacher education programs as resources--language diversity is one of those resources. Language diversity often refers to the more than three hundred languages spoken across the United States (Flores & Rosa, 2015). With population shifts, schools are learning to serve students acquiring English as an additional language (Villegas et al., 2018). Many states

have included a new component to teacher certification that speaks to pedagogy and practice related to teaching English language learners (Hung, 2015).

This study is concerned with urban teacher education speaking to the needs of English language diversity, specifically African American English. I examine an urban teachers' program that seeks to prepare teachers to meet the demand of urban schools that tend to be culturally, economically, and linguistically diverse. My focus is English language variation, specifically African American English (AAE). How AAE is discussed in this program represents a theoretical framework that guides pedagogical practice. This research study examines this program's philosophy and approach to teaching about AAE. Figure 2 illustrates the pathways of accepting AAE as a critical component in urban schools and the areas this acceptance affects.

**Figure 2**

*African American English Flow Chart*



An unseen, more covert way teacher education can build linguistically relevant teachers that affirm AAE, encourage, and develop strong code-switching skills for AAE speaking students is through education philosophies. The focus of the teacher education program influences classroom culture through the teacher's philosophy of education (Baldwin & Lui, 2010). Teacher education programs follow a philosophy creating a unique organizational culture that guides and shapes classroom teachers' perception of classroom etiquette, behavior plans, curriculum, environment, and attitudes within the classroom.

Ultimately, a teacher's view of society contributes to language and culture (Baldwin & Lui, 2010) through the organizational culture of the urban school as the result of societal norms (Schein, 1997; Siehl, 1985). Values, traditions, beliefs, normative behaviors, habits are all layers of an organization's culture (Ogbonna & Harris, 2002) transmitted to student groups as societal values.

### **Culturally Relevant Pedagogy**

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy or CRP can be defined in a variety of ways. The program of focus for this study primarily uses Ladson-Billings; however, CRP is conceptualized by several scholars. Gay (2002) links CRP to both teaching and learning. She found that knowledge of student's life and culture affirms their voice and importance in the education process. Milner (2011) explains the power of CRP as a way teachers can position lessons that inform and engage students on a variety of levels. CRP is more than just good teaching but impactful and engaging (Irvine, 2010). Schmeichel (2012) links CRP to counter some deficit beliefs that underscore teaching and learning. CRP practices develop critically aware and intentional practitioners (Durden & Truscott, 2013). In addition, the scope of CRP considers all aspects of the education

process. It involves teachers, students, and communities and guides perspectives, goals, assessment, and practice.

To understand the nature of cultural competence in teaching, Ladson-Billings' (1995) culturally relevant teaching components rest on "three propositions: Students must experience academic success. Students must develop and maintain cultural competence and a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p.160). This study looks at CRP specifically related to AAE. These three propositions are presented in more detail as they relate to AAE instruction.

### ***Academic Success***

Academic success is the first proposition and a significant pillar of Ladson-Billings' (1995) CRP framework. Academic success is defined as culturally appropriate ways teachers yield the most success from students. Students benefit from learning to respect and honor their heritage and one another's cultural heritage and lived realities (Ladson-Billings, 1996b). Academic success also encourages preservice teachers to seek a firm grasp of ways to bridge gaps between the students' authentic experiences and new or challenging information in the learning process.

### ***Cultural Competence***

The second proposition, cultural competence, is imperative to working in culturally diverse settings (Alizadeh & Chavan, 2015). It is also a concept that transcends fields of study. Cultural competence is related to knowing the history and ways of a cultural group. According to Ladson-Billings (1994), cultural competence is a teacher's awareness of culture's role in education, both the teacher's culture and that of the students being served. This form of cultural awareness is an understanding of the normative values, beliefs, and behaviors of students in

relationship to the culture of the self. The *self* and the *other* concepts inherent in cultural awareness relate to identity, norms, social groups, and networks that support identity.

Alizadeh and Chavan (2015) compiled research on cultural competence from over twelve hundred sources related to business and healthcare. They found the three essential components, cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills, are an ongoing process and not simply a goal to be achieved and forgotten. These components align with Ladson-Billings' (1996) CRP model in education. Students are taught skills to affirm and appreciate their culture while also learning about another culture.

Based on this complexity of understanding culture, Ladson-Billings (1996, 2014) says teachers need to be aware of their own culture and at least one other. Exploring the meaning of culture on the *self* and the *other* centers the cultures of both preservice teachers and students. Culturally competent teachers know their own identity and bias and their role in instructional practice and pedagogy.

CRP and cultural competence call for teachers to learn about the community they serve. This approach includes gaining an awareness of student histories. Culturally competent teachers plan and teach considering students' cultures, backgrounds, and beliefs. These actions are the foundation of culturally relevant pedagogy. CRP is then enacted through the teacher's awareness of the other. The influence of culture, knowledge, and context on learning guides a teacher's approach to presenting the material.

Cultural competence also supports language variation by allowing preservice teachers to explore their language and the language of others, along with their attitudes about varied Englishes. In addition, cultural competence validates preservice teachers' interest in the language

students speak at home. Finally, preservice teachers also look to language as one way to increase access and agency in schools.

### ***Critical Consciousness***

Critical consciousness is an awareness of what policies and procedures directly affect the people. As the third tenet of CRP teaching and practices, the development of critical consciousness is where “students and preservice teachers learn to challenge the status quo of the current social order” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p.160). Through critical consciousness, preservice teachers advocate for the representation of all students in their classrooms. Critical consciousness is significant to an awareness of the issues surrounding language variation. Critical consciousness supports language variation through this approach to equity-oriented instruction.

Additionally, critical consciousness requires understanding the problem in how language hierarchies are reinforced. Thus, it is teaching preservice teachers to be advocates and make them aware of students' and families' resources and the resources available to the community. Finally, critical consciousness can be achieved by emphasizing equity-oriented instruction and commitment to social justice.

**Equity-Oriented.** Equity topic often explored in education. It has been tied to a wide range of advantages from income to life expectancy (Delphit, 2012; Mickle-Wright & Schnepf, 2007; Sirin, 2005). Equity is a matter of both quality and the number of opportunities ( Mickle-Wright & Schnepf, 2007; Gorski, 2005). Education equity impacts and enhances all of society (Delphit, 2012). Socio-economic status is one of the key factors in access to equity because technology is limited or inaccessible to lower-income communities. Education equity, much like CRP, is in direct opposition to one-size-fits-all standardized instruction (Kinlock & Dixon, 2017; Armor & Taylor, 2003; French, 2016; Gollwitzer & Bayer, 1999). Teacher bias and beliefs



are either a help or hindrance to achieving equity in education (Gay, 2002; Sleeter, 2012; Montgomery, 2001).

Teachers are conduits of equity through CRP. Equity is about fairness and inclusion, while this section supports language as representational with the power to establish, create realities, and invite identities (Freire, 1971/2009; Giroux, 2010; Janks, 2010). Equity is significant for culturally responsive teachers. Equity in education increases opportunities and assures fairness, inclusion, and a chance at success without barriers. For this to happen, teachers need to be aware of pedagogical techniques and other resources to expand access to all students. An example of support for this pedagogical awareness is found in a study by Brown (2017), who conducted a meta-synthesis of 52 empirical articles to examine complementary techniques inherent in culturally responsive and inquiry-based science practices identified in the National Research Council's Framework for K-12 Science Education. The findings from this study indicated several areas of complementarity, including the science inquiry-based practices of Obtaining, Evaluating, and Communicating Information, Constructing Explanations and Designing Solutions, and Developing and Using Models. These practices were also used to advance culturally responsive instruction and assessment. In particular, the study found that developing and using models allowed students to bring families' funds of knowledge to science explorations, while analyzing and interpreting data allowed exploration of local community health and pollution issues, thus resulting in the development of equity-oriented awareness in students.

CRP promotes student-controlled and academic-related discourse (Ladson-Billings, 1994), supporting an equity orientation. Allowing those varied student voices is related to power. Preservice teachers are supported to learn how to nurture students to critically understand that

specific systems represent dysfunction while oppressing some members of society and privileging other members (Freire, 1971/2009)—as such, giving voice to English language variation is a step toward equity. Preservice teachers should be aware of the political nature of language and how important it is for students to be represented in the classroom.

**Social Justice.** Social Justice is another big topic in several fields, but especially in education. Righting the wrongs of educational inequity is the base of social justice. The education system is built upon years of inequality based on race, class, gender, and sexual orientation (Darling-Hammond, 2005; Irvine, 1990; Kozol, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 2006). Lack of awareness of these inequities reproduces more inequities and continues the status quo. In the past few years, Ladson-Billings (2006), Lee (2005), and Love (2004) have turned the focus to systemic inequities and how they affect teaching and learning as opposed to assessment-centering language about achievement gaps. Preservice teacher preparation programs play a significant role in teachers' ability to see and neutralize inequity in curriculum, policy, and other various ways (Cross, 2003; Lopez, 2003; Nieto, 1999).

A social justice stance challenges social, cultural, and political inequalities and distributions of power. A social justice stance also supports the development of critical consciousness (Apple, 2014; Kumashiro et al., 2012). Evans (2013) defined social justice as a preservice teachers' dedication to equity and high-quality education for all students. Education empowers students and teachers by allowing students space to exchange ideas and not position teachers as all and only knowing in the classroom.

The educational goal is increased opportunity for students from marginalized groups. Social justice considers the students' backgrounds in preparing and delivering meaningful, engaging, and effective lessons considering the students' needs (Gay, 2013; Ladson-Billings,

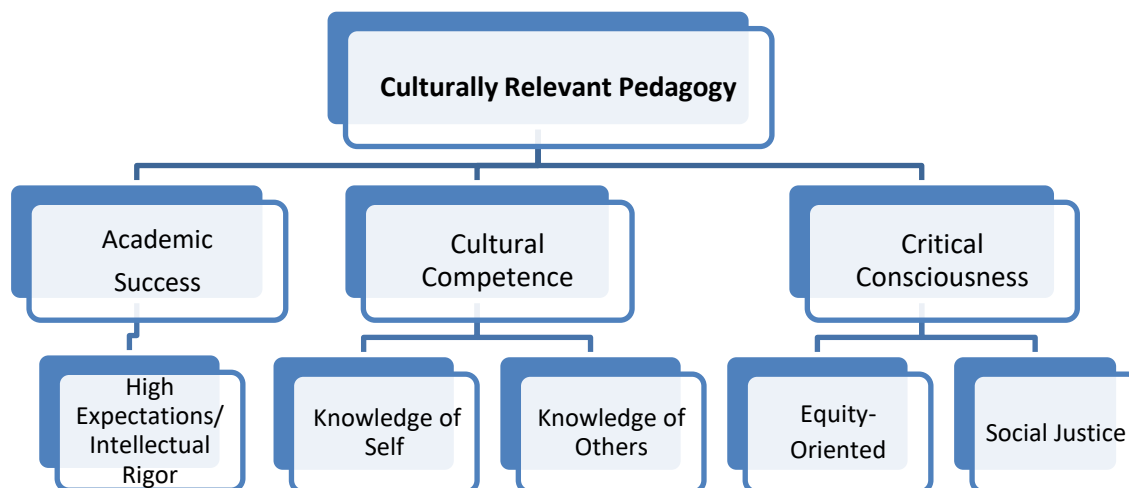
1994; Leonard & Martin, 2013). Thus, social justice is actions that actively value diversity and reject bias and discrimination. In a qualitative study by Esposito and Swain (2009), interviews and a focus group were conducted with seven urban schoolteachers concerning CRP techniques in their classrooms. One robust finding was that teaching social justice skills required teaching critical thinking skills, empowering students, and helping them succeed academically. Another robust finding was that CRP was an effective mechanism for teaching social justice.

Django Paris developed culturally sustaining pedagogy as an updated version of CRP. While CRP was more about acceptance and tolerance, CSP was about supporting and explicitly exploring students' language and cultural traditions. CSP acknowledges language as an essential aspect of culture. Paris and Alim (2017) suggest that teachers mesh or blend language. This approach opens classrooms to a variety of Englishes, formal and informal registers. CSP allows students to see the power in language and position themselves as writers and scholars. CSP is an updated revisited version of CRP.

See Figure 3 for an illustration of the components related to CRP.

**Figure 3**

*Features of CRP Relevant to Language Awareness*



### Urban Teacher Education

Teachers are a bridge between government, policy, academia, and the community. Urban teacher education programs prepare teachers to be community advocates offering access and agency through high-quality instructional practices (Flores et al., 1991; Murrow, 2008).

Assisting teachers in forging relationships with students and the community is a significant component in urban education. There is a strong interpersonal, political, and transformative tone to this type of teacher preparation (Adams & Bell, 2016). Thus, urban teacher education should not just be defined by the achievement gap or lack of resources, but the mismatch between student and community needs versus traditional classroom practice (King et al., 2013).

Unfortunately, teacher education programs have become more autonomous, leaving focus and culture to the university, department, and program (Baldwin & Liu, 2010).

Many new teachers entering urban schools have little to no experience in urban settings (Banks, 1996; Easton-Brooks, 2021; Gay, 2002; Milner, 2012; Sleeter, 2001). The vast majority

of preservice teachers come from a suburban school background (Easton-Brooks, 2021; Simon & Johnson, 2015; Pennycook, 2017; Whipp & Geronime, 2017). Teachers today are predominantly white, middle-class women (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Boser, 2011; Easton-Brooks, 2021; Merryfield, 2000; Sleeter, 2008). When preservice teachers are placed in urban schools without the assistance of programs that specifically support the urban experience, they leave the site with more negative perceptions than when they first entered the experience (Burant & Kirby, 2002; Smith & Smith, 2006). In Smith and Smith's (2006) study of 321 urban schoolteachers, many felt unprepared to serve cultural and linguistic diversity. Given that two-thirds of new teachers reported feeling unprepared (Ticknor, 2014; Ryan et al., 2005), this lack of understanding and experience is perhaps part of the reason behind negative perspectives and deficit thinking (Jacobs, 2015; Smith & Smith, 2006). As a result, teachers called for specific content and contextual knowledge to strengthen their understanding of teaching in urban settings (Cochran-Smith, 2001; McIntyre, 2006; Sleeter, 2001; Smith & Smith, 2006).

Because of the mismatch in backgrounds, or what Gay and Howard (2000) call the demographic divide, urban teacher education programs need to pay special attention to guiding teacher perceptions of urban schools. Defining a successful teacher education program is just as complicated as describing a quality teacher. Educating teachers is a tremendous responsibility, and with an ever-evolving population, technological advances, and budgeting changes, teacher education continues to change. Teacher education programs prepare prospective educators to interact with perhaps our most precious resource, children, to meet the upcoming needs of our communities and world (Cohen, 2011). Teacher education programs also recruit, train, and challenge the people tasked with preparing students to meet the nation's needs (Cibulka, 2009). The reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (2017) called for a partnership between

districts, schools, and the university to develop a new crop of teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). Ideally, teachers would be accustomed to the classroom before becoming the teacher of record and have some support in place as they embark upon their first year as a teacher (Haberman, 2010; Shakespear et al., 2003;).

Shaping and countering deficit thinking early in their careers is imperative in teacher training, especially teachers preparing to serve the needs of urban schools (Jacobs, 2015). Urban teacher education also causes teachers to investigate deeper into their own identities exposing belief systems and traditions that may have never been challenged before (Banks, 2009; Britzman, 1991; Kennedy & Heineke, 2016; Marx & Moss, 2011; McAllister & Irvine, 2000; Sleeter, 2001).

Urban-centered teacher education programs seek to change urban schools' narratives by developing a teaching philosophy that empowers them as change agents for student success. It flips the narrative from condemning the children, families, and community for not fitting into the traditional school model to looking at the greater context in which the school is situated.

Power seems to be the underlying issue (Ellsasser, 2008). Teachers in urban schools are not allowed the space to exert power and autonomy, which limits innovation and independence. Control and routine have been significant factors in the pathology of all schools since the adoption of national standards and common core. Since the 1996 report entitled, "Equality of Educational Opportunity," by James S. Coleman and others condemning the efforts of urban schools, the children, and teachers who populate them, there has been a body of research seeking to disprove the Coleman report (1996) findings. Ellsasser (2008) names inexperienced teachers with limited practical professional development, a culturally unresponsive curriculum that is not useful for the population being served, low academic and behavioral expectations, troubled and

inconsistent funding, workplace bullying, and an overall restrictive classroom environment as the problem with urban schools. Ellsasser (2008) characterizes urban schools as a place where policies are enacted under the assumption that parents do not care, children are uninterested, and teachers are trying to get away with the least effort possible.

### **Teacher Preparation**

Teacher education programs influence preservice teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2016; Graber, 1995) who will ultimately influence their students (Brophy, 1986; Darling-Hammond, 2016; Matias, 2016). An essential purpose of preservice teacher programs is to “design teacher preparation spaces that can disrupt deficit discourses and assumptions about urban students and schools” (Jacobs & Lüdtke, 2017). Urban teacher education programs dig deeper into redefining urban schools to promote equity and diminish stereotypes (Karner, 2017).

Teacher education, curriculum, and instruction are effective social structures that reproduce ideologies that disrupt or maintain the status quo (Backer, 2017; Hudley & Mallinson, 2015; Trudgill & Chambers, 2017). Strategic field placement, multicultural awareness, and effective recruitment and screening are proven ways to prepare preservice teachers to serve in urban schools (Allen, 2003). Urban teacher education programs target curriculum and experiences designed to assist preservice teachers entering the field in large metropolitan areas. In addition, teacher education programs help preservice teachers develop their linguistic identity, which influences their practices (Banks, 1996; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999; Goodlad, 1994). Finally, alternative routes to teacher education diversify the applicant pool by attracting more minority preservice teachers than traditional routes.

Teaching Standard Academic English skills in speaking and writing while affirming and respecting linguistic culture at the same time is paramount for teachers planning to serve in

diverse, urban, inner-city settings. Presenting and using SAE development pedagogy as *one size fits all* for native English speakers is inaccurate given the diversity of students and English varieties. The mismatch between home or community languages and schools has been an ongoing issue in test scores and written and oral language instruction (Bernstein, 1971; Hudley & Mallinson, 2015; Rymes, 2015; Valdez, 2014). Ladson-Billings (2000) calls for a program-wide systemic approach to educating preservice teachers to meet African American students' needs.

Perhaps one of the most challenging tasks teachers face is affirming and supporting students' rights to their language while teaching and promoting SAE (Palacios & Kibler, 2016). Teachers recognize that students must have command of SAE to gain access to a broader range of educational and career opportunities. The question is, how? How can a teacher education program that focuses on preparing teachers to serve in urban high needs schools prepare teachers to address different Englishes, specifically AAE?

### **AAE and Urban Student Success**

Supporters of AAE in classroom teaching look at the use of AAE as a strategy instead of skills-based learning. The recognition of AAE as one of many codes that students speak is an elevated level of metalinguistic awareness for the preservice teacher and students (Ramirez et al., 2016). In addition, there have been several studies supporting students' understanding of code-switching and language variation for improved reading and writing test scores and increased class participation and classroom buy-in.

Communication accommodation theory (CAT) shifts speech and changing style to fit the person in power. A primary assumption is that people gain favor through similarities (Giles, 2016). CAT supports shifting identities. Teachers and students become more aware of Englishes



based on speech shifts. "Teachers who used language interaction patterns that approximated the students' home cultural patterns were more successful in improving student academic performance. Improved student achievement was also evident among teachers who used These mixed language forms present as a combination of Native American and Anglo language interaction patterns. Giles and Powesland (1997) termed this instruction "culturally congruent" (p. 110). In this way, language becomes another way of community building in the classroom.

Given the language components and traditional differences that students who speak AAE at home make while in schools, teachers with a strong background in language variation would be better able to support students. The study of AAE helps researchers and educators develop strategies to strengthen students reading and language arts skills in Standard Academic English (Fogel & Ehri, 2006; Rickford, 1999; Rickford et al., 1991; Taylor & Sobel, 2001; Wheeler & Swords, 2006). Baugh (1995) equates education equity with attention to language diversity and calls for systemic reforms. Theories of learning, reading comprehension, and formal and informal achievement all support increased attention to AAE (Orellana et al., 2010). Whether presented from top-down to bottom-up, comprehension theories cite that reading comprehension is not a passive process. A relationship between the reader and material is always affected by the reader's background and prior experience, further supporting AAE as a classroom aide (Orellana et al., 2010).

In Piestrup's (1973) seminal study, AAE and teaching styles were examined. Researchers looked for language conflicts next to teaching styles. The approaches characterized how AAE is handled using 104 episodes in 14 predominantly African American classrooms. Reading scores were used as a measure of success for each method. The most successful style used tools such as rhymes, play, and student-focused lessons. Researchers also showed that students listened to

them and pointed out distinctions in Standard Academic English. The researchers found that student participation was much greater with this approach to teaching.

The least successful teaching styles asked students repeatedly to revise or rephrase AAE and viewed differences as errors. Teachers corrected students using Standard Academic English. However, they did not use comparative analysis. Students either did not respond, responded in a barely audible voice, or engaged in an activity unrelated to what the teacher was doing. Piestrup's (1973) study allowed readers to see how teachers respond to children's language in the classroom. The study results showed a strong relationship between how teachers react to language, build on vernacular language, and make room for student dialogue student success. When the teacher repeatedly corrects students, barely allowing them to complete a thought, it communicates the teacher's disdain for the dialect and the teacher's inability to use that pattern-based dialect to teach students to linguistically and strategically navigate school versus home environments.

Another approach encouraged student participation and allowed them to respond in AAE. Teachers did mention the differences between AAE and SAE. However, they did not change the context nor manipulate the language to show students some key distinctions. The standard pronunciation group focused on SAE. This group was most successful with children whose English is most aligned with SAE. The vocabulary approach highlighted unfamiliar words. The decoding approach focused on phonemes and pronunciation.

Until now curriculum has sought to fix the problem of students speaking AAE. However, additional studies have supported the contention that AAE competence results in student success (Dillard, 1972; Lee, 2005; Mitchell, 1969; Smitherman, 1994; Smitherman & Smitherman-Donaldson 1977). Thus, in a program specifically geared toward providing quality teachers to

urban schools, deficit thinking and language hierarchy issues need to be addressed. This revised approach supports students in learning how to switch from AAE to the universal form of SAE (Lee, 2005). When the teacher understands, respects, and affirms students' home language, competence in AAE and SAE phonology, intonation, modes of discourse, and lexicon can be developed.

## **Language**

Natural language is language in use. Thus, language has many parts and is observed through multiple lenses. Language unifies and divides (Hoff, 2006; Pennycook, 2017). It is also a rich cultural and community asset (Brown, 2017; Cummins, 2005; Kramsch, 1998; Risager, 2006; Whorf, 1956). Language acquisition influences language development in a speech community (Hoff, 2006). Humans are most confident about their own experiences, experiences with others, and reflexive interpretation constructions developed to account for what is seen (Russell, 2007).

According to orderly heterogeneity, language is random (Weinrich et al., 1968). However, language can be a divisive or a unifying agent that allows access to special rights and privileges reserved for insiders to group membership (Carter, 2003; Fishman, 1989; Greene, 2011). According to Bakhtin (1981), language is composed of individual concrete utterances by participants engaged in various activities (Cazden, 2017). Language has phonological, morphological, and lexemic systems (Baugh, 2017; Lanehart & Malik, 2015; Roengpitya et al., 2015; Wheeler, 2016). Thus language is also open, incomplete, imperfect, irreversible, and contextual (Burke, 1966; Gee, 1998; Fairclough, 1995; Martin & Nakayma, 2010). In addition, words have a history of usage (Bakhtin, 1981; Ball & Lardner, 1997; Shields & Mohan, 2008). It is impossible to use a word without it echoing or refracting past connotations (Bakhtin, 1981;

Shields & Mohan, 2008). Compositional structure, linguistic style, lexical, phraseological, and grammar are all part of the message. Thus, language reflects specific goals and conditions. Using the lens of linguistics, languages and dialects are not distinguished from one another, but there are distinct differences based on sociocultural factors (Green, 2017; Rose & Galloway, 2017). Thus, speech also plays a significant role in social class and is used as a marker for education (Carter, 2003). This means that educators, linguists, and sociologists talk about language differently.

Finally, to say that language changes is misleading. It evolves with people and is pragmatic in nature. Languages mix and dialects happen due to conquest between generations. Over time there are small changes and some structural changes in a language. Lexicon (words) are created out of necessity, such as technology, because there was no word for new tools, concepts, or ideas. It is hard to predict where a language is going, but relatively simple to look back at its history. The following sections will review the convergence and divergence that occurs with language and the process of language acquisition and AAE. Next, Standard Academic English is contrasted with AAE and the deficit view of AAE that results from this comparison in schools.

### ***Convergence and Divergence***

Language is reproduced by its' speakers. Convergence is when language variations fuse together (Butters, 1989; Wolfram, 1990). In densely populated urban communities, languages merge, and people pick up features of dominant languages and cultures. Growing up in a particular community causes people to join that community's speech patterns (Hazen, 2002; Hoff, 2006; Morgan, 2001). Furthermore, some theorize it results from divided neighborhoods and limited encounters (Morgan, 2001; Rickford et al., 1991; Wyatt, 1995). For example,

Caucasian immigrants originally moved to segregated communities. Then, more job opportunities and intermarrying people from different neighborhoods occurred. Subsequently, areas became more integrated, and languages converged (Hershberg, 1981).

Divergence is when language variations draw farther apart (Morgan, 2001; Rickford et al., 1991; Wyatt, 1995). Time, conquest, and convergence has caused many world languages to disappear (Brenzinger, 1997; Clyne, 1997). In addition, social change has annihilated some languages and dialects (Brenzinger, 1997). For example, one continuing major factor was residential segregation (Labov, 2010; Klein, 2015). Neighborhoods and schools have been relatively segregated, and they continue to divide in language.

The African American experience is very different. AAE is one of those dominant languages built on divergence (Hudley & Mallinson, 2015; Labov, 1972). The divergence hypothesis says that when Blacks migrated north and west to inner cities, there was more divergence between vernacular cultural languages (Butters, 1989; Dougherty et al., 2009; Wolfram, 1990). According to Labov (2010), the best condition for divergence was segregation in residential conditions. Due to institutional racism, poverty, and other social factors, African American communities did not integrate as seamlessly, and therefore language convergence was less likely (Morgan, 2001; Rickford et al., 1991; Wyatt, 1995;).

### ***Language Acquisition and AAE***

Language variation can directly affect reading comprehension (Lee, 2005). How students read the words, make meaning of them, and connect them to prior knowledge are significant components of comprehension. Reading comprehension theories break down into three traditional approaches; decoding, comprehension, and metacognition (Davis, 1988; Goodman,

1965; Smith, 1973; Urquhart & Weir, 2014). Goodman (1965) calls it an interaction between thoughts and language.

Language is also grammar, syntax, and semantics. These are all components of AAE and have distinctly different rules from Standard academic English. Understanding the systematic nature of African American English requires some understanding of the essential components of language acquisition. Language acquisition is measured by the mastery of phonology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatic rules (Green, 2002; McDevitt & Ormrod, 2013). Phonology concerns the basic components of speech. These basic speech components are used together to make meaning (Terry et al., 2014; Thomas & Bailey, 2015). Semantics refers to the order of words that constructs cognitive meaning and understanding (Labov & Baker, 2015). Syntax is related to how this order of words form sentences (Thomas & Bailey, 2015; Britt & Weldon, 2015). Pragmatic rules teach children appropriate language based on context. Pragmatic rules are socially and culturally based (Wyatt, 1995). Each of these components affects the perception and usage of African American English in educational settings.

Phonology relates to how words are pronounced and to intonation. Phonology can be the tagline of African American English as an ethnic marker over the telephone or other audio devices (Bailey & Manor, 1989; Rickford, 1999; Washington & Craig, 2004). The phonological differences of African American English are thought to be responsible for at least two biases. First, standardized testing bias in reading and the disproportionate amount of African American students in speech therapy and other special education can be explained by these phonological differences (Baratz & Shuy, 1969; Fasold & Wolfram, 1970; Labov, 1972; Stockman, 1996). Testing limitations make it difficult to distinguish between linguistic variation and actual phonological problems, so AAE speakers are often tracked into special services that are not

needed (Craig & Washington, 2004). An example of an iconic phonological feature of AAE is the final consonant cluster reduction, as in saying “lef” as opposed to “left” (Wolfram, 1990).

Word structure, order, and grammar are inevitably linked. The use of the habitual “be” is an example of an iconic AAE feature based on semantics and syntax. AAE is morphosyntactic (Washington & Craig, 2004). There are few differences in the syntax of AAE and Standard Academic English (Green, 2002). For example, Standard Academic English calls for only one negative word in each sentence, AAE uses multiple negations to communicate intensity.

Pragmatic rules are explained in stages and examined through expressive and receptive language knowledge. Expressive language refers to the production of language when children can share their thoughts in words and sentences (Wise et al., 2007). The most notable features of African American English are phonological and grammar-related; knowledge of these systematic differences could support teachers in pedagogical practice (Rickford, 1999; Washington & Craig, 2004). Receptive language refers to understanding what others are saying (Craig & Washington, 2004; Korucu et al., 2017). Receptive language can include gestures and other nonverbal cues. According to pragmatic rules, language acquisition is socially governed and reinforced (Pica, 1987). When adults or peers express understanding and approval of verbal communication, it reinforces children’s language use.

Early language acquisition is linked to natural order (Krashen, 1983) or innate facility (Chomsky, 2007). Children are born with an innate ability to acquire language and grammar structure. Babies turn their attention to speakers and begin to respond to their names. Mastering receptive language is an important milestone (Bloom, 1974; Krashen & Terrel, 1998). By four months, babies master saying “no” and begin to pay more attention to tone and voice. Music and toys with sounds also catch their attention. Between six- and 12-months, children try out familiar

words. By three years old, most children are conversational. Although children have a greater understanding of phonology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics, they are competent enough to relay messages (Valdez, 2014).

Language acquisition theories are extremely important for K-6 teachers. Additionally, language acquisition has been linked to their ability to meet the needs of English learners (Krashen & Terrel, 1998). Furthermore, knowledge of language acquisition can assist teachers in building vital programs to support both oral and written communication. Finally, understanding language acquisition helps teachers understand how AAE is acquired and continued in communities.

### ***Standard Academic English***

Standard Academic English (SAE) is also known as Standard English (SE), Standard American Academic English (SAAE), and Academic Language (AL). SAE is considered the most universal form of English (Clark, 2013; McKay, 2017; Sofinski, 2008). Bailey (2007) describes Standard Academic English or SAE as “English in academic context for academic purposes” (p.3). According to Cummins (1986), Standard Academic English is a “precise and predictable way of using language” (p. 163). Thus, linguists have used these terms interchangeably to describe the type of English used for commerce and education.

Despite countless English variations, there is an overwhelming belief that Standard Academic English (SAE) is the only acceptable form of communication. According to Cummins (1986), academic language is decontextualized, meaning people who speak academic English do not need shared history or similar backgrounds. Instead, it is based on words, phraseology, grammar, expression, and interpretation. Thus, standard language ideology (Lippi-Green, 2012)



is a bias that helps standard, academic forms of English maintain their dominance. SAE dominates as a prestige language in our education system based on this language bias.

Education policy has also supported the choice of a standardized preferred type of English as a “superior, more acceptable” form. This choice has been instituted despite extensive research that supports the conclusion that there is no right or language hierarchy. Thus, SAE is accepted and expected in school and work. Academic writing and standardized tests are all conducted in SAE. As the standard, all other Englishes are defined in relation to and by it (Fanon, 1952/1967). It is a standard that is assumed to be superior, despite the lack of academic grounds to support an English language hierarchy (Chomsky, 1991; Labov, 1982).

Labov (1972) insists that all language is equal, and hierarchy is imposed by society. Bourdieu (1991) indicates there are political, social motives, and power behind the normalized form of English and that one language is always considered superior to others. According to Heath (1977), the spread of American English as a prestigious language worldwide was strategic in this country's political and economic power. However, like all languages, SAE evolves over time (Chomsky, 2011). Thus the question of SAE's superiority over varieties of English is an ongoing social and political debate among linguists, historians, and educators (Watts, 2002).

Based on this accepted standard, students must have command of SAE to gain access to a broader range of educational and career opportunities (Echevarria et al., 2008; Pandey et al., 2000). In addition, not having command of the standard form of English comes with a set of implications about education, work, family background, income, and class (Craig et al., 2009; Knapp et al., 1974).

### ***African American English (AAE)***

In this study, AAE refers to a variety of English spoken widely across the US by primarily, but not limited to, African Americans. Until the 1970s, AAE was called Nonstandard Negro English or Black English Vernacular. Ebonics (ebony + phonics) was the term coined by social psychologist Robert Williams in 1973 at a forum discussing the psychology of Black children. Williams felt the term should speak to the history of Black people and the science of sound (Williams, 1997). African American Vernacular English (AAVE) was another label associated with AAE language variation criticized for the lack of connection to the legacy of Africa and language (Baugh, 2010).

In many ways, the definition of AAE is grounded in cultural underpinnings. AAE is multilayered and represents a variation of English with roots in old English and Niger-Congo languages (Smitherman, 1998; Williams, 1997). Smitherman (1998) defined it as the Africanization of American English. Claude Brown (1968) referred to it as spoken soul.

AAE is not monolithic (Fought, 2006). Speakers of AAE have regional differences (Hilton, 2008; Labov, 1972). According to Wolfram and Schilling (2015), the differences are minimal but exist. Technically, AAE is viewed as a creole language, meaning that it is derived from bits and pieces, influences, structures, and words from other languages that have merged and evolved with West African languages as a substrate and English as its superstrate (McWhorter, 1997; Turner, 1969). As a creole language, AAE is diverse. African Americans do not just speak AAE, and it is not spoken by all African American people (Rickford, 2000; Tolliver-Weddington, 1979). Instead, common features happen across most AAE varieties (Dandy, 1991; Delpit & Dowdy, 2008; Wolfram et al., 2003).

Common features are known as iconic features of AAE. For example, words are often pronounced differently in SAE and AAE. Often some letters are not pronounced, and others accented. Charity (2007) found that where the community was located geographically influenced how much AAE variation was observed. Charity (2007) studied the language patterns of African American children across three large metropolitan cities. Using cognitive load theory, a theory that says the brain is only capable of a limited process at a time, Charity's (2007) study connects language access to comprehension. In this study, children were told a story in SAE and tasked with retelling the story sentence by sentence to the researcher. The researchers read the story to the children and then asked the children to retell the story.

Interestingly, the retellings included words and phrases not part of the child's vernacular. Charity's interpretation was that as the child's working memory reached capacity, AAE was accessed to help the child make sense of the story. This resulted in the child retelling the story through what was meant instead of what was read. Variation was observed less among southern communities, while northern states showed more significant differences in language variation (Labov, 1982; Wolfram & Schilling, 2015). In another study on dialect variation, Washington et al. (2018) conducted a four-year study of one thousand elementary-aged low-income students on dialect and education. She found that students who spoke the heaviest dialect had the most trouble with testing and garnered the lowest scores.

### **Language and Identity Linked Through AAE**

School systems lack an African-centered curriculum and instruction that could better shape student identity. Students recognize the absence of their ways of being and feel detached and displaced from the education process (King et al., 2013; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2016). Group identity is necessary to achieve a sense of belonging (Siwatu et al., 2011). Being

acknowledged by others is a primary need in the development of positive self-identity. The limited information offered on the Black experience in curriculum and education materials speaks volumes about the perceived value of this group. African American students lack a collective group identity that recognizes the diversity within the group in the curriculum. This lack of group identity leads to distorted self-perception due to the lack of recognition in the education system (Fraiser, 2000; King et al., 2013). Students need to be able to connect their history and the contributions of their people to a legacy of productivity and worth (Taylor, 1994). Identity is primarily formed in the home; however, omitting students' cultural value in schools can take a toll on self-concept and identity (King et al., 2013; Taylor, 1994).

Dismantling the ideological and methodological constructs that threaten African American students' concept of self in urban schools takes culturally sustaining practices that nurture and support language and identity development (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Paris & Alim, 2017). Culturally relevant pedagogy covers the importance of linguistically diverse text and scholarship (Ladson-Billings, 1996a; Paris & Ball, 2011). In addition, the study of language adds to teachers' pedagogical practices serving all students (Conrad, 2004).

The preservation of culture and identity benefits students (Adams & Bell, 2016; Hilliard III, 1978; King et al., 2013). Strong connections between school and home cultures are imperative in teacher education (Ledlow, 1992; Reed-Danahay, 2000; St. Germaine, 1995; Easton-Brooks, 2021). Approaching the education of African American students from a socio-cultural context with an understanding of identity formation allows teachers to better meet students' academic needs (King et al., 2013). Cultural assimilation is part of identity for African American students (Fraiser, 2000).

## **History of African American English**

Language is a cultural resource (Seelye, 1984; Tsui & Tollefson, 2017). The study of AAL began in 1926 with Lorenzo Dow Turner's work with Gullah Geechee communities (Cooper, 2017). Turner studied Gullah, an American language spoken primarily of the coast of Georgia and South Carolina. Turner taught English at South Carolina State College and became interested in his student's unique linguistic style (Wade-Lewis, 2007). Initially, he used this information in providing academic support. Later, he expanded his research to include the history and traditions of the Geechee/Gullah community (Campbell, 2011, Harris & Graves, 2010). The study of Gullah Geechee languages provides an essential link in the history of AAL and the history of African people in the United States (Harris & Graves, 2010; Turner 1969; Wolfram & Whiteman, 1971). Four major language hypotheses explain the development of AAL.

### ***Pre-linguistic Deficit Hypothesis***

Preceding Turner's ground-breaking work in 1926 with the Gullah-Geechee, was that of Ambrose Gonzales. Gonzales wrote down the oral folktales taken from the Gullah Geechee (Baratz & Baratz, 1969) and studied the people through their stories. His early explanation of the Gullah Geechee language became linked to the pre-linguistic deficit hypothesis. A deficit is seen as a lack, or deficiency in some account or quality (Ford, 2005; Roijas-Cortez, 2000). According to the pre-linguistic deficit hypothesis, African Americans were not capable of speaking *good* English. The pre-linguistic deficit hypothesis supported a prevailing narrative that African Americans were not equipped to speak English due to their "clumsy tongues, flat noses, and thick lips" (Baratz & Baratz, 1969; Rickford, 1999; Wade Lewis, 1992). Slavery erased all language, culture, and traditions from African people (Matto & Momma, 2008; Rickford, 1999).

### *Anglican Hypothesis*

The Anglican hypothesis later replaced the pre-linguistic deficit hypothesis. Through tautological reasoning, this hypothesis supports the idea that the strongest language is the one that people speak of greater power and prowess (Holm, 1988). This theory followed a linguistic axiom that has been since disproven, the belief that when groups merge, the group with higher cultural status will overpower the lower.

According to this belief, AAL was wholly derived from early British colonists. H.P. Johnson (1928) wrote about some of the features that have been attached to AAL and Southern Englishes (Bonfiglio, 2011). Johnson agreed that AAL was the result of imitating and corrupting White Southern speech. Conversely, Johnson provided evidence that the opposite. According to the Anglican Hypothesis, there was no cultural exchange or borrowing from the subordinate groups. Famous writers like Charles Dickinson and Walt Whitman both refer to the similarities of AAL and Southern English dialects. Other linguists believed that the difference results from learning a language orally with no written component (Krapp, 1924). This hypothesis did not regard the link between the people, culture, practice, and language (Paris & Ball, 2011).

### *Africanist Hypothesis*

In response to the Anglican hypothesis, the next try at explaining the development of AAL was the Africanist hypothesis. The Africanist hypothesis indicated that AAL was directly related to African languages (Hudley, 2018; Smitherman & Smitherman-Donaldson, 1977; Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015; Wolfram, 1973). Gullah Geechee is unrelated to American English, but the language is a derivative of British English and several African languages (Green, 2002). Linguist L.W. Payne supported this claim in his iconic work with white southern dialects in Alabama years before Lorenzo Dow Turner (Sundquist, 1994; Wolfram, 1973). Herskovits and

Turner (1951) studied the Englishes of Africans in the diaspora. Turner later conducted empirical studies on Gullah Geechee communities then traveled abroad to other places with large English-speaking African populations (DeBose & Faraclas, 1993). Through this study, Turner too confirmed the heavy influence of West African languages on both internal and external components of American English. Internal features of the language are vocabulary, pronunciation, and rhetorical strategies. Melville Herskovits (1958) was another critical theorist supporting the Africanist hypothesis. He was an anthropologist who anchored his work in believing that African American culture is grounded in African traditions and beliefs (Herskovits, 1990; Neumann-Holzschuh & Schneider, 2000). His work has been criticized as well as praised. As a Jewish scholar specializing in Africanist thought and perspectives, some have looked at his work as possible academic colonialism, while others welcome the scholarship to disprove further the prior hypothesis grounded in racism (Herskovits, 1990).

### *Creolist Hypothesis*

The final language theory is the Creolist hypothesis. This theory is more in tune with today's sociolinguistic theories. Creole languages are contextual and pragmatic (Collins, 1998; Rickford, 2000; Winford, 1997). Superstrate languages are considered languages of power and influence spoken by people in leadership and hold a certain amount of prestige. Substrate languages are more community-based and often referred to as the people's language (Neumann-Holzschuh & Schneider, 2000). They influence one another. When the communities collide, vocabulary is taken from the language of power, while structure from the community and they form what is known as a pidgin, a trade language created in order to facilitate communication among speakers of mutually unintelligible languages (Baugh, 2010; Weldon, 2003; Wolfram, 2008). For example, integration would open AAE to other English varieties and, over time,

would cause a convergence into another creole language (Labov, 2010; LePage & Tabouret-Keller, 1985). As language theories, thoughts, studies, and hypotheses are tested, the value of AAL is constantly called into question legally and socially. Nevertheless, insulated community languages hold their structure fairly consistently (Labov, 2010; LePage & Tabouret-Keller, 1985).

### **AAE and Power, Culture, and Education**

I have chosen to use the term African American English (AAE) throughout this study. This is a deliberate choice. Language, as it relates to power, culture, and education, plays a role in how this urban preservice teacher program addresses, affirms, discusses, and disputes AAE through the curriculum. Language carries power and privilege in society (Fairclough, 1995; McGregor, 2003). As such, language and culture cannot be separated.

Culture can be difficult to conceptualize. It is often mixed up into the definition of race and ethnicity. It can be characterized as the people's normative behavior or family structure. From teachers to neighborhoods, regions, and individual families, we are all part of several cultural communities that carry their own language and references. Culture is the performance of identity. Culture affects language, practice, behavior, and the structure of the community (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003).

### ***AAE and Power***

The term used in this study is African American English (AAE). It is crucial that the term-in-use pays respect to the African legacy and acknowledges AAE as a language instead of a dialect (Hudley, 2018). What is considered a language and a dialect is highly political and power-based (Lu, 2018; Trudgill & Chambers, 2017). Some languages are utterly unintelligible to one another but are considered dialects, while other languages are only slightly varied and



considered an entirely different language (Francis, 2016). There is a saying that the difference between a language and a dialect is an army. I would add connections to Western culture, power, and economics (Morgan, 2017; Webber, 2018; Wiese, 2015).

### ***AAE and Culture***

Language is a cultural mediator, never neutral or static, and represents as well as reinforces ideologies. Haberman and Whitney (2009) identified school culture and teachers as leads to establish and maintain that culture. Preparing preservice teachers to acknowledge and embrace their students' language means making sure they understand the culture within the community they plan to serve. Linguistic relativity says that language influences life and life influences language (Lee, 1996). According to linguists, language must evolve with people. New words and uses are born out of societal needs, and language development is innate (Berwick & Chomsky, 2015; Lee, 1996; Sims, 1997).

Students must be able to express themselves effectively to the teachers and teachers understanding and accept the responsibility of serving a linguistically diverse population of students without stigma. Initially, schools offered speech therapy for students who spoke AAE. However, upon further research, it was discovered that language dialects consist of systematic differences (Labov, 1982). For example, African American English is a distinct, definable version of English, different from Standard Academic English in patterns, syntax, grammar, and history (Ball & Lardner, 2005; Baugh, 1995; Green, 2002; Rickford et al., 1991).

### ***AAE and Education***

Ladson-Billings (1994) argues that African American culture is left out of teacher education. African American culture is regarded as an interruption of mainstream American culture and counterproductive to the education process. A groundbreaking historic moment in the

conversation of AAL recognition of AAE was the *M.L. King Elementary v. Ann Arbor* school district case (Baugh, 2015; Paris & Alim, 2017). This three-year trial took place in Ann Arbor, Michigan, at a racially, culturally, and linguistically mixed affluent suburban school. Some students lived on the University of Michigan campus with parents working on advanced degrees. However, almost all of the 13% African American population lived in a nearby low-income housing project. The school's population almost perfectly represented the city's population with a Caucasian majority of 80%, 13% African American, 7% Asian, and Latino. The school was characterized as thriving academically. However, the African American students were not doing as well as the rest of the population.

In response to this achievement gap, the school began to designate special services for African American students by declaring those students as learning and language deficient. The argument began as a debate about academic achievement between economically affluent versus impoverished students. Language was eventually cited as the great divide.

In addition to amendments on busing for school integration, President Nixon requested that schools overcome language barriers that impede student achievement (McAndrews, 1998). The law (U.S. Department of Education, 2018) requires schools to have specific procedures to identify and evaluate language minority students. The issue of Black English falling into the category with other languages and warranting the same support was the question at hand. *M.L. King Elementary v. Ann Arbor* school district case (Baugh, 2015; Paris & Alim, 2017) established Black English as a variation of English requiring dual language services instead of special education services (Nonaka, 2014; Paris & Alim, 2017; Wheeler, 2016). There were four main questions this case sought to answer. First, is there a language barrier? Second, does the language barrier impede a students' ability to participate in coursework? Third, has the school

taken appropriate action, and fourth and finally, if they have not taken appropriate action, does that fall under the guidelines of denial of economic opportunities based on race? (Ball & Lardner, 1997, 2005; Baugh, 1995; Smitherman, 1999). African American students at King Elementary School were code-switching using African American English in their homes and communities and using a similar dialect more closely aligned with the academic vernacular in the school setting. The findings were that teacher education coursework failed to prepare teachers philosophically or tactically to understand or serve language variation, specifically African American English. This case opened a vast body of research that fused linguistics and education.

A major contributing factor to the progress of African American students is the teacher's lack of knowledge of Black English (Ball & Lardner, 2005; Hudley, 2018). Students completely lost interest due to the lack of acknowledgment of cultural and linguistic diversity in curriculum, literacy, and school culture. Teachers were not equipped to address code-switching and saw English as right or wrong instead of looking at the contextual value of varied forms of Englishes (Hudley, 2018).

### ***The Deficit View of AAE***

Teachers have little knowledge of rules beyond SAE and may not recognize AAE as a language or dialect. Instead, perceptions of AAE have been historically saddled with deficit thinking and cultural stereotypes. Initially, AAL was used to support notions of mental and academic inferiority of African American people and deemed limited in its ability to communicate complicated ideas and concepts (Gee, 2000; Gee, 2014; Spears & Di Paolo, 2014). As a result, in past decades, AAE has been mislabeled as a disability, an inferior form of English, and a setback for teachers (Beneke & Cheatham, 2015; Gravois & Rosenfield, 2006; Rickford et al., 2004). While African American English was characterized as impoverished, this deficit way

of examining language variation received pushback when strides were made toward African American civil rights (Smitherman, 2021). As a result, many people enter these teaching programs having race-neutral or deficit views of urban schools and the populations they serve (Hughes et al., 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1996b; Matias, 2016; Milner & Lomotey, 2013). This viewpoint is essential to consider in planning curricula for preservice teachers entering urban communities.

In Labov's (1972) classic study of Harlem youth, Labov found that African American English (AAE) is as rule-governed as SAE. Using individual and group interviews, Labov was able to identify some of the iconic rules of AAE and described the concept of code-switching, or the ability to switch between SAE and AAE. "From this point of view," Labov (1972) wrote, "teaching English is a question of imposing rules upon chaotic and shapeless speech, filling a vacuum by supplying rules where no rules existed before" (p. 201). Labov (1992) suggested teaching speakers of AAE using similar methods as English as a second language teachers.

Before the Ann Arbor case (1979), AAE was designated as a language disability. This case ruled that schools and teachers needed to identify AAE speakers and focus specifically on teaching them to have a command of SAE. The Oakland resolution was a plan to improve student success that included information on English Language variation within the district and sought to include patterns and knowledge of AAE into teaching planning and practice. Both the Ann Arbor case and Oakland Resolution cited AAE as a rule-governed system (Baugh, 1995; Rickford, 1999; Stewart, 1968). Despite these strides towards understanding, AAE continues to be viewed as a deficit language (Bland-Stewart, 2005; Seymour et al., 1998). Teachers' negative attitudes toward the dialect play a role in student success or failure (Martin et al., 2018). Labov's (1966) seminal study of AAE in Harlem addresses teachers' perceptions and subsequent teaching

practices concerning AAE. Labov (1996) found that teaching practices based on assumptions of AAE as a substandard language resulted in reduced opportunities for African American children to develop verbal communication skills. Consequently, intervention programs focused on language deficits of African American children worked from a false understanding that African American children lacked the vocabulary and the ability to convey complex or even logical thoughts (Labov, 1972). Labov challenged this notion of AAE as linguistic deprivation, arguing that this theory is dangerous because it places blame on the child or community instead of problems within the system.

## **Summary**

This literature review covered the Background of the Problem related to the preparation of preservice teachers in urban education. Various aspects of language were explored, including the convergence and divergence of language, language acquisition, and AAE. Next, standard Academic English and AAE were compared, along with the deficit view of AAE and the various hypotheses concerning AAE. Finally, literature is reviewed concerning AAE and power, culture and education. This next chapter outlines the methodology for the study, including the case parameters, data sources and analysis, and how trustworthiness is established.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative approach to a case study of a single teacher education program grounded in CRP principles. The research questions focus on the exploration of a relatively new area in urban teaching programs. Using inductive logic typical of qualitative research design assisted my investigation within a new domain to develop a broad, general understanding of the concept under study. Deductive reasoning typical of a quantitative research method aimed at testing an existing theory was not appropriate to the purpose of this study (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Therefore, qualitative research provided an appropriate approach when the variables under examination were unspecified to the researcher (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, in the exploration and analysis of syllabi, course readings, and focus groups, the qualitative approach to the research assisted in identifying how and if AAE is addressed. This study examined the role of AAE in one program concerning curriculum and the program's governing systems. The study was guided by sociolinguistic theory as defined by William Labov and his early work on social order and language variation (Labov, 1966, 1972). Sociolinguistics also guided understanding the program's curriculum, what is read, studied, and how assignments are evaluated for AAE.

#### **Theoretical Framework: Sociolinguistics**

Sociolinguistics was the guiding theory in the design of the study. Linguistic identity is shaped through lived experiences and interactions growing and navigating the world. Language patterns, ideas, and paradigms are dynamic (Andrews, 2010; Welch, 2015). Preservice teachers are influenced by the program that educated them (Clark, 2013; Morrell & Carroll, 2003). Their thoughts about language and English variation can be questioned, reinforced, or even completely

changed through the process of becoming a teacher (Birch, 2009; Jenkins, 2007; Tan & McWilliam, 2009; Tercanlioglu, 2008).

The study of sociolinguistics fuses sociology, linguistics and language in relation to society (Hudson, 1996). Sociolinguistics also examines how language works in the everyday lives of people (Wardaugh & Fuller, 2015). A sociolinguistic lens investigates natural language, studying people and society in which that language is the norm (Fairclough, 2014). In sociolinguistics, language rules correlate with social structure, and how people speak within a community is viewed as social facts and (Cazden, 2017; Pateman, 1987). Language is also considered within the context of its usage (Dillard, 197; Green, 2002; Labov, 1972; Lippi-Green, 2012; Stewart, 1968; Turner, 1969; Wolfram, 2019).

How language influences culture is a cornerstone to sociolinguistics (Tsui & Tollefson, 2006). Furthering the social construction of SAE as a standard, philosopher, Franz Fanon (1952/1967), explored the effects of racism and critiques the system under which it thrived. In his book *Black Skin, White Masks*, he stated, “A man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language” (p.18). Language is not only part of our identity, but one of the lenses through which we see the world. Despite its controversial history, linguists today regard AAE as a rich and valid language (Kendall et al., 2018).

Both an educational and sociolinguistic lens was applied to explore AAE in teacher preparation. Educational sociolinguistics is a subfield of sociolinguistics that focuses on language as it relates to classrooms and communities. Sociolinguistics has several important theories that support implications made in this study. According to accommodation theory, people gain favor through similarities. Shifting speech, changing style to fit context, supports shifting identities, so teachers and students become more aware of Englishes based on speech

shifts (Giles & Powesland, 1997). According to Labov's (2014), concept of variations in sociolinguistics, language is one way society is stratified through perceptions of class and status despite there being no real hierarchy between Englishes. A case study was a means to effectively investigate current situations in the context of real life (Yin, 2017). Single descriptive case study designs offered ways to explore language emphasis within specific context. A case study design was adopted for this study.

### **Case Study Research Design**

Theory development, program evaluation, and focused intervention are just some of the benefits of doing a case study (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Case studies are typically conducted in social science research. "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2000 p.13). Done well, case studies have the power to influence policy and inform practice and are most effective for questions of how and why. According to Yin (2017) a case study is a good way to form a framework for debate and study. It does not need to cover every case, but a specific bounded area. There are three conditions to determine the research strategy best suited for a study. Table 2 provides a research design development protocol.



**Table 2***Questions for Design Development*

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Design Issues</b>
What types of research questions are being asked?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How is African American English (AAE) addressed in an urban teacher preparation program?</li> <li>2. To what extent does CRP support an understanding of language variation for urban classroom practice?</li> </ol>
Does the researcher have control over events and behaviors?	No, the program is governed by several forces, and the curriculum is set. Also, I use primary documents as well as a focus group.
Does the research look at a contemporary issue while considering historical factors?	Yes, African American English, CRP, and urban teacher education are affected by political, economic, societal, and historical factors (Yin, 2000)

Context is of supreme importance in case studies. This case study examined one teacher education program found in a large urban university in the heart of a highly populated city in the southeastern portion of the United States. The program was called UTEP (Urban Teacher Education Preparation Program) and was purposefully selected for several reasons. First, UTEP had a specific focus on teachers seeking to serve in urban, diverse communities. Based on program literature, coursework was described as that which “explores and deconstructs deficit thinking and prepares teachers to affirm and embrace students’ home language while teaching standard academic American English.” Second, this program described the use of culturally responsive practices as the heart of the integrated coursework and field experiences. CRP calls teachers to be familiar with their own cultural background as well as the customs, values, traditions of at least one other culture. A specific course in CRP was the first course preservice teachers took in this program and the program reported that all other teacher preparation courses

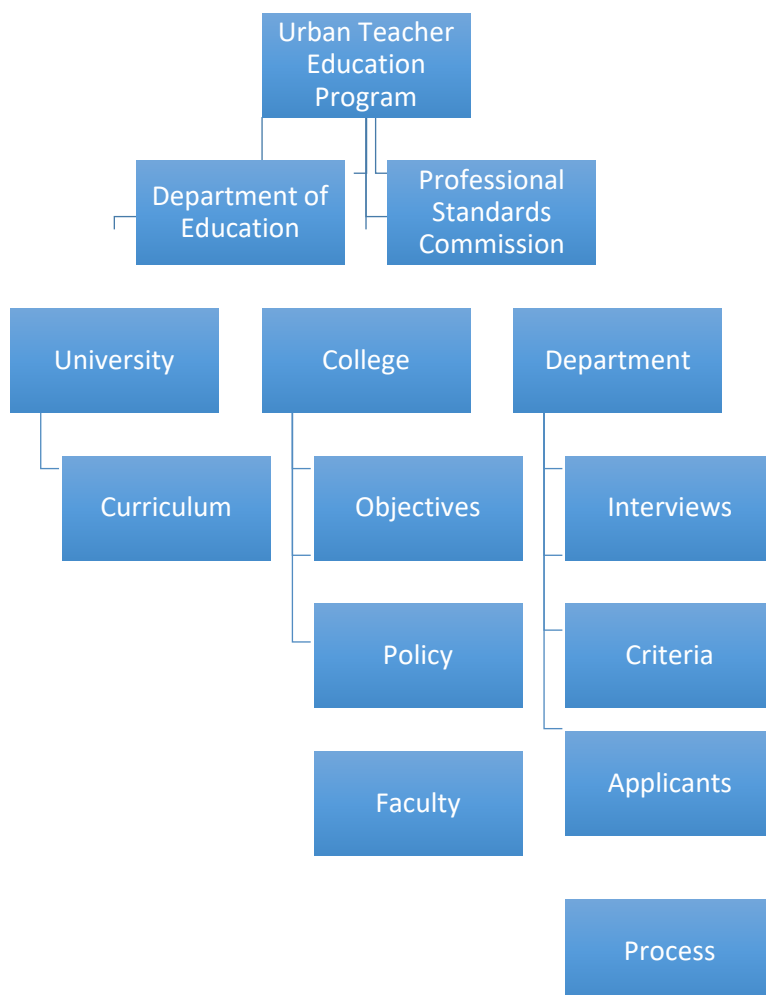
are grounded in CRP. My interest was in how, or if, preservice teachers were given information on language variation, specifically AAE. Importantly, I wanted to understand to what extent can CRP supported an understanding of language variation for urban classroom practice thereby illustrating an awareness and commitment to preparing teachers for the linguistic diversity that exists in urban settings.

Finally, I was an insider and outsider in this program. From an emic perspective, I am an African American teacher who uses English language variation studies to assist in meeting the needs of my diverse student population. I also have worked with this program and was familiar with the department culture. Emic researchers must be very aware of potential bias during the analysis process. To assist in minimizing the bias, in addition to the document analysis, I conducted two focus groups. From an etic perspective, teacher preparation is very different today from when I was a preservice teacher. I did not attend a program with a specialized interest in urban education. My program was at a small private school located on the West Coast. The population and goal of my teacher education program was completely different from the urban-centered, large, public, preservice program highlighted in this study. As a researcher, I am an etic outsider because I am not part of the program as a student.

### ***The UTEP Program***

The case in this study was a single urban education teacher certification and masters program. There are three local school districts in partnership with the focus program in this study. One of the districts was located in the middle of a large metropolitan city, while the other two would be considered urban emergent districts, located near, but slightly outside of the city. The program was bound by time, policy, regulations, and curriculum. This case served as a social unit bounded by most recent years of 2020, where  $n=1$ . Given the climate of civil unrest

and calls for change, 2020 was the perfect year to examine how the program responded to the unique needs of speakers of AAE. The UTEP designed and implemented instruction targeting English language variation through coursework for an ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) endorsement, including state, district, and professional standards and regulations. In addition, the presence of AAE in the program was examined concerning other external influences from the university, college, department, and local districts, as illustrated in Figure 4.

**Figure 4***UTEP Governing Systems*

The program was physically located in a large, diverse southeastern city rich in both US history and the history of the civil rights movement. Almost every corner has a gateway to past struggles and triumphs in the road to freedom and equality. The program was located in a city known currently for finance and a vibrant arts and entertainment industry. Several Fortune Five Hundred companies were also located within the city limits. Historically, 62% of the city's inhabitants were African American, giving the state the fourth highest population of African Americans in the nation. However, according to the U.S. Census (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010),

this number had dropped to 54% due to gentrification. A large refugee population also contributed to the city's diversity. Each year approximately 30,000 refugees were welcomed in nearby cities. All these factors influenced this program's creation and mission.

The university (INT#1) that housed and ran this program was located within the state's capital and was one of the largest public research universities in the state system. The first African American student enrolled a year after the state university system was integrated. Today it is the most ethnically diverse university in the state and one of the top awarders of degrees to African American, Latino, and Asian students within the state. At the time of the study, there were over 50,000 students enrolled in more than two hundred-degree programs within eight academic colleges. According to the university, most of these attendees were traditional full-time students.

There was a noticeable critical stance throughout the university and College of Education (INT#4). This school prided itself on training high quality culturally responsive teachers, and there were several routes to certification offered from traditional to alternative, from bachelors' level to graduate school. The college itself reported 97% of students passed the state-required proficiency test, and 99% passed the EdTPA required in 30 states. Seventy-six percent of teachers certified in this department were still teaching after four years.

The UTEP program (INT#2) was housed in the College of Education, early childhood education department (INT#4). The college of education was opened in 1967 because of several local school administrators appealing to the university for more locally trained educators. In 1972, the UTEP program became accredited to grant certification to teachers. The UTEP program was considered an alternative teacher certification program serving students interested in teaching grades K-6, specifically in urban schools. It was a marketed post-baccalaureate

program as a fifth year to certification.

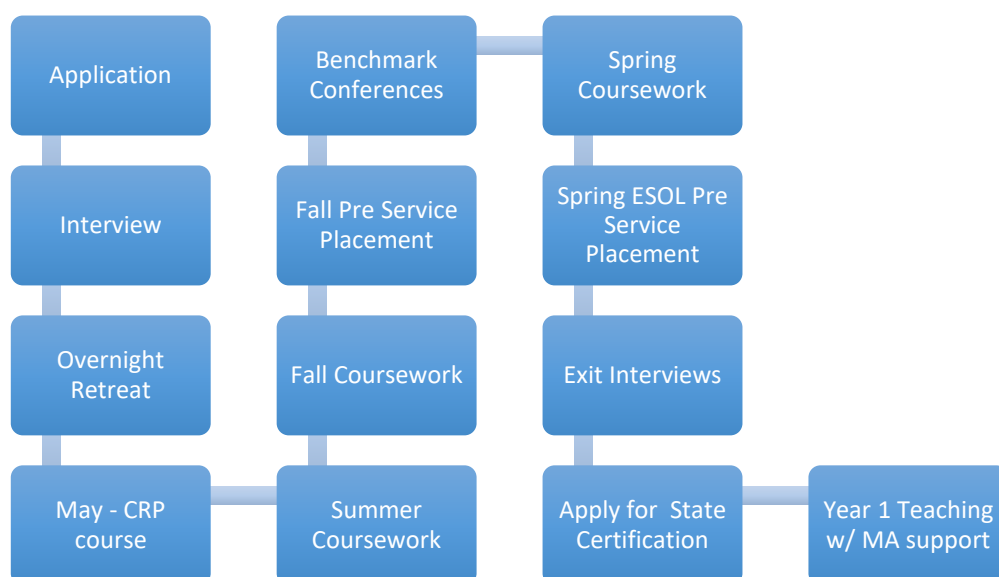
The program was also marketed toward nontraditional career changers. The program provided a full-time offering certification and ESOL endorsement in the first year and an optional master's degree in the second year. This study analyzed courses offered in the program for certification, ESOL, and Masters. The program was grounded in Ladson-Billings' (1996) culturally relevant teaching components: high academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness. UTEP built its program philosophy around three fundamental principles as evidenced in its mission as a "Rigorous program that seeks to promote the success of elementary students schooled in urban contexts through the development of pedagogically competent, equity-oriented, caring, empowered teachers who are change agents inside and outside the classroom."

Admission to the UTEP program was highly selective. Each year there were roughly 60-100 applicants, and on average, between the years of 2014 and 2015, 30 preservice teachers were accepted (UTEP grant document). The state required all people considering the field of teaching to have at least a 2.5 grade point average. The program's minimum GPA was 2.75. Additionally, applicants must have taken the graduate records exam (GRE) with no minimum score requirements. Potential students were also required to take the state preservice teacher competence test for basic skills/program admissions. If they scored at least 1000 on the SAT, 43 on the ACT, or 1030 on the old format GRE and 297 on the new formatted GRE, they were exempt from the state basic skills/program admissions test. Most recently, in 2018, the GRE requirement was waived. Additionally, applicants were required to take the state ethics exam and register with the Professional Standards Commission as a preservice teacher.

Upon meeting both university and college entrance requirements, potential candidates were interviewed by program personnel (faculty, staff, school partners) using an interview protocol focused on issues such as poverty, race, social class, institutional and systemic racism, and commitment to education. Applicants were also given a timed writing prompt. Admission happened once a year, and coursework began immediately in the summer with a course in culturally relevant pedagogy and fieldwork with community camps and ESOL students. Figure 5 illustrates the UTEP program as a pathway to certification and completion.

**Figure 5**

*UTEP Program*



Courses are taken in a cohort model beginning with the Spring semester, May and Summer coursework, Fall and Spring. The first course concerned culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP), and the rest of the courses referred to CRP as the theoretic foundation. Students then took courses in classroom management, literacy, and math during the May and Summer term, coupled with a summer literacy camp tutoring/student teaching residency experience. In the Fall, they

took another literacy course with a focus on cultural and linguistic diversity, math, and Child development with an urban focus. During this semester of course work they were participating in student teaching using the co-teacher model at local Title I schools, prescreened, preselected, and pre-trained by the program to continue in the spirit of CRP. During the spring semester, preservice teachers took courses in responsive practices again with an urban education focus, more coursework in literacy to culturally and linguistically diverse learners, math, science, and social studies all with a special focus on urban education.

The program was also partnership driven. Through community, local districts, and school partnerships, preservice teachers were given classroom experience and the opportunity to learn then immediately put what they had learned to work through tutoring or co-teaching. UTEP used the co-teacher method for student teaching.

### **Research Questions**

The qualitative case study answered the following research questions:

1. How is African American English (AAE) addressed in an urban teacher preparation program?
2. To what extent does CRP support an understanding of language variation for urban classroom practice?

### **Data Sources**

There were two data sources: documents and focus group interviews. This section provides the rationale for these data sources. Documents served as the primary data source for analysis in this case study and were drawn from various sources that represented both inside and outside influences. The study was framed first by access to documents. Next, the focus group was used



to explain places in the syllabi where I may have overlooked the presence of AAE. This section also details the focus group data collection.

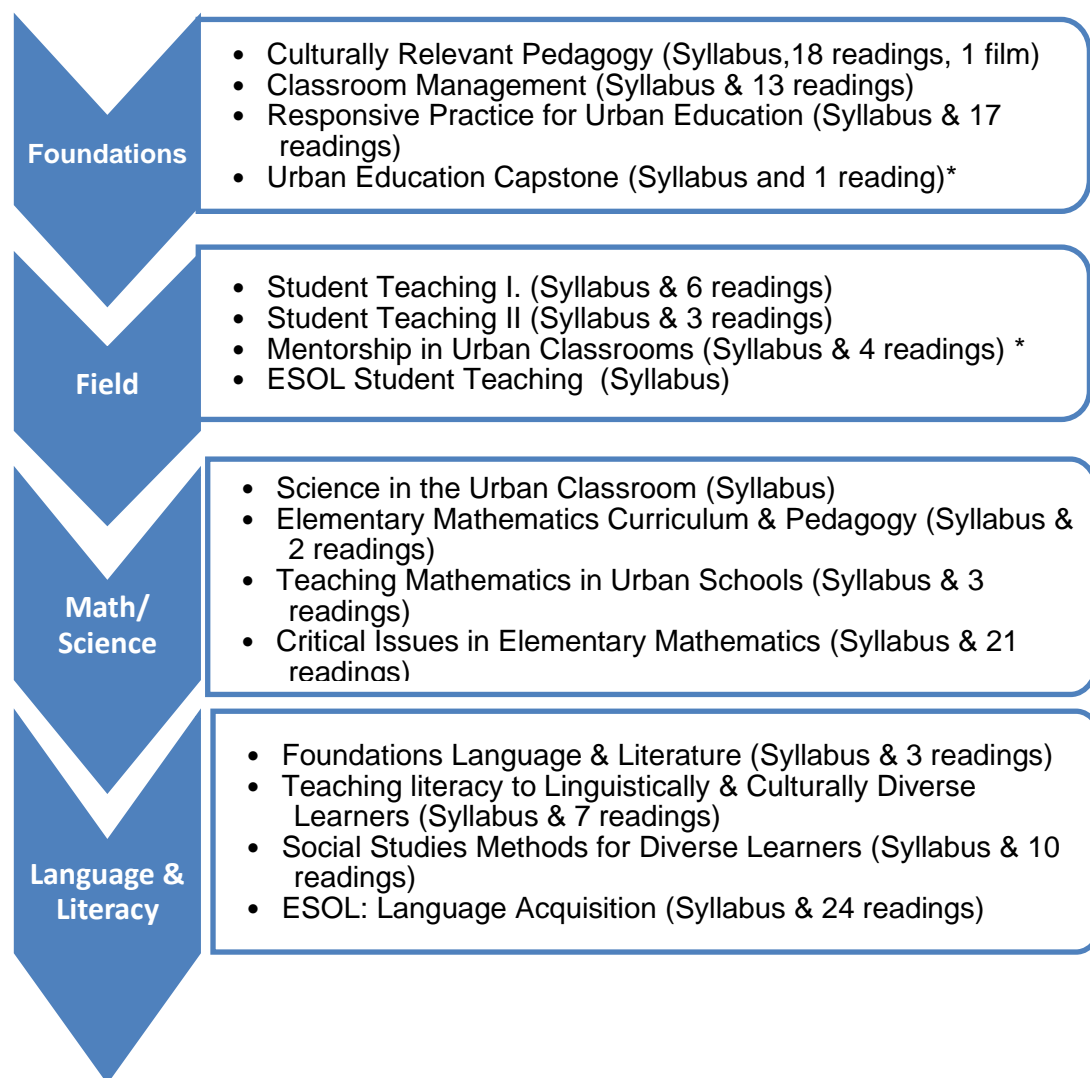
### ***Documents: Inside and Outside Influences***

I wanted to consider the perspective of a preservice teacher in examining how a program addressed AAE. If I were a potential preservice teacher candidate, could I research this program's written communication to determine if English language variation was included in the program's definition of diversity? Documents provided the main source of information that potential students had to guide them in choosing a program. Documents also assisted in identifying how an idea was framed. Through this initial document collection process, I captured where AAE was approached directly or more subtly.

Documents as a source of data covered a wide variety of examples. Documents may include meeting notes and agendas, attendance registers, maps and charts, newspapers articles, press releases and protocols, applications, radio ad scripts, reports, scrapbooks, and photo albums (Bowen, 2009). Examining language concepts is most effective when research is qualitative, open, and flexible (Chambers et al., 2002). For this study, documents were initially grouped as internal (labeled INT) and external (labeled EXT) documents. Internal documents included courses with potential instruction that identified and deconstructed deficit thinking related to language. However, it also took some digging through the overt policies and actions and unseen guidelines hidden from plain sight (referred to as *outside systems*) to understand and portray a comprehensive view of what was included and why in an urban teacher education program. Appendix A details all documents used in this study.

In this study, internal documents included course syllabi, readings, and associated assignments (e.g., lesson plan requirements) representing the program's pathway to certification

during the 2019/2020 academic year. Some courses culminated with research projects, other classes required portfolios, and others entailed fieldwork evaluations. Fieldwork represented a substantial portion of the preparation in this program. Students also had formal conferences at the end of each semester with practice interviews and progress checks. The internal documents for analysis also included all the reading assignments associated courses that were listed in the syllabus (e.g., 24 readings are listed in the ESOL course syllabi). These readings ranged from individual articles to entire books. Some course syllabi did not list course readings. Videos and websites listed in the course syllabi were also included in the internal documents group for analysis. Additional documents associated with fieldwork, such as lesson plan format and rubrics used during observations, were included in the analysis. This process allowed me to find direct evidence of AAE or support of AAE through language variation. Figure 6 lists courses and the associated internal documents. Courses marked with an asterisk are Masters level.

**Figure 6***Courses Used in Document Selection*

External documents were also reviewed from regulating institutions that were designed as “outside systems.” Outside systems represented those institutions that influenced the process of urban education and teaching. For example, outside system documents consisted of coordinating bodies and accreditation board materials, university policies, and mission statements. Available standards and public resources were part of the document review process.

Included in the document review were documents from the state professional standards commission or PSC(EXT#5). The PSC's job was to assist in certifying teachers throughout the state. Preservice teachers applied for teacher certification from the PSC after attending an approved teacher education program. Documents related to the EdTPA(EXT#3) as a performance based assessment was initially screened. The EdTPA was required for teacher certification when I began this research. However, it was no longer used as a requirement for teacher certification in this program and therefore was not included in the study.

The UTEP program was also guided by CAEP standards (EXT#14) during the program and course development. Documents were included from the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and the accreditation board, Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). The accreditation board, CAEP had a set of standards that some teacher education programs were supposed to follow. The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) (2013) also created an Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium or InTASC (EXT#1) that developed and published standards in: *Model Core Teaching Standards and Learning Progressions for Teachers, 1.0*.

UTEP was governed through the InTASC standards. InTASC standards addressed specific areas designated for professional responsibility and context. In addition, these standards addressed the fact that urban students have different backgrounds, life experiences, language, culture, and beliefs than suburban or rural students. These differences required teachers to develop other strategies. For example, InTASC standards (2019) mention the need for lessons appropriate for diverse learners. InTASC standards numbers 1 and 4 called for preservice teachers to identify the demands of an urban classroom. InTASC Standard 5 was recently updated in 2011, and now includes "personalized learning for diverse learners" as a standard (p.

3). Other governing bodies like the National Board Certification Generalist Standards (NBPTS, 2022) (EXT#7) required teachers to think systematically about practice as it related to cultural competence and understanding the lens through which they see their students.

This set of model core teaching standards were relevant to the examination of course and syllabi document reviews. Each document was examined and selected for information on AAE, English language variation, and its relation to CRP. An overview of the documents used in the analysis is provided in Appendix A.

### ***Focus Groups***

Focus groups are efficient ways to clarify and explore other areas of inquiry (Powell, 2016). Focus groups require members to have existing knowledge of the subject, should be supplemental to another data source, and assist in allowing the researcher to narrow down variables.

The criterion for focus group participation was the individual's connection to the UTEP program. Although the study's data collection limitation was one year (2020,  $N=1$  year), each participant was linked to the program for at least three years before this study. Seven faculty were invited to participate in the focus group. Of the seven requested, three participated. After recruitment and before data collection, each participant gave informed consent to participate in the focus group (See Appendix B). Each focus group lasted approximately 60 minutes and was audiotaped and transcribed. Participants were assigned code names (see Table 3). Four participants identified as female and one participant identified as male.

The focus groups were divided into two groups because of the different roles each group played in the preparation on preservice teachers. Faculty teach theory to influence teaching methods, while supervisors monitor the implementation of methods into practice. Thus, each

group consisted of participants with similar, each distinct roles in the process of educating preservice teachers.

The first focus group comprised three faculty. Professors designed the syllabi to align with the program and department goals as well as meeting certification and accreditation standards. Some of the faculty participants also assisted in writing the program mission. The second focus group consisted of two field supervisors. Fieldwork supervisors did not design the syllabi, but they mentored students and guided them through fieldwork, paying special attention to certification and accreditation standards.

**Table 3***Focus Group Participants and Pseudonyms*

<b>Participant Code</b>	<b>Focus Group No.</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Role</b>
Participant #1 – Jo	1	Female	Professor/Program Director
Participant #2 - Brad	1	Male	Professor
Participant #3 - Sonali	1	Female	Professor
Participant #4 - Nora	2	Female	Supervisor/Mentor
Participant #5 - Joni	2	Female	Supervisor

During the focus group, faculty and supervisors associated with urban education with cultural and linguistic diversity and community connections were asked for their insights and knowledge about CRP and the UTEP program (see Appendix C). The two focus groups allowed me to gather additional information on how AAE was represented in the program in some of the more implicit, not easily seen ways. Focus groups occurred after the document analysis but before the final theme generation.

**Data Analysis Process**

Data were analyzed using strategies specific to the source of data. Document analysis was used to analyze the documents. Grounded theory was used to analyze the focus group transcripts. Saldaña's (2009) deductive values coding structure was used to structure the coding process. The focus group assisted in triangulation of the data, thereby adding credibility to reduce bias and

support findings. While documents were fixed and allowed me to look at the program from an outsiders eyes, the two focus groups allowed me to learn about the program from the inside. The steps for both types of analysis are described below.

### ***Document Analysis***

Document analysis is a carefully planned procedure for gathering, examining, and evaluating printed and electronic documents (Bowen, 2009; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Rapley, 2007). Document analysis was applicable for a qualitative case study that described a single phenomenon within a single organization (Bowen, 2009; Stakes, 1995; Yin, 2017). Atkinson and Coffey (2003) called the information gained from documents “social facts” (p.47). Document analysis also provided a deeper understanding to text interpretation (Bowen, 2009). In this study, both text and visual images were examined.

Document analysis required step-by-step, detailed, well-planned data collection. The initial analysis process of document analysis involved skimming, reading, and interpretation (Bowen, 2009). During this step, documents were identified that were relevant to the study. The second step was to code, take notes, know the research questions, and formulate follow-up questions for revisiting earlier documents reviewed with new lens. The third step was to combine, condense and summarize analysis in relation to research questions making sure that any findings drawn were based on multiple data sources and had evidence to support conclusions drawn. Each step in the document analysis process is detailed next.

**Step one.** The development of the document corpus was the first step in the document analysis process. Review of relevant external and internal documents involved both scanning and noting the importance, or not, of the document to the study. Documents to include for analysis were collected, labeled by course subject and electronically stored with the exception of whole



texts and books. A master list was created. This early collection also involved sorting documents by their influences (external and internal). Syllabi and specific course materials, such as text, articles and all supplemental documents (links to electronic resources such as videos, websites) were gathered. During this step, it became important to group course documents into four content streams: math/science, field experience, foundation courses, and language and literacy (see Figure 6). During the initial review of these internal documents it became apparent that the presence of language variation appeared differently depending on the purpose of the course and activity. Sociolinguistic theory guiding the study directed that analysis of language needed to consider the context (e.g., a course devoted to language versus a student teaching experience). Grouping course documents in this way allowed me to be sensitive to the context (intention), the explicit versus implicit nature of language, and the connection to CRP. These groupings were treated separately for analysis beginning with external documents. A total of 165 documents were analyzed for this research.

**Step two.** Document analysis protocols were designed to use in initial coding of the documents and followed the study design (see Appendix D). Each document was read initially in its entirety to identify units for coding. These units ranged in size from single words to intact sections (e.g., activity description). Color coding was used to highlight the presence of language variation and CRP. Coded excerpts from documents were extracted and placed in charts based on evidence of language variation, AAE specifically, and the three CRP key areas identified by the program: Academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness. It was also important to this study to explore the implicit versus explicit nature of the presence of language variation. If language variation was noted, then a secondary analysis occurred to identify evident methods (explicit) versus obscure methods (implicit). Evident methods were defined as direct

teaching about AAE patterns, vocabulary, iconic features and history and evolution of the language. These methods could occur during lessons on grammar and phonics or in courses where preservice teachers learned about language and literacy. In these cases, practical, tangible, direct, almost technical knowledge of the English language that assisted in writing and speaking was identifiable. For example, these evident methods could appear in classroom lessons on grammar and phonological differences between AAE and Academic English. Evident methods could have also been used in ESOL instruction where preservice teachers were given oral language instruction on how to assist students with some of the sounds omitted or added between languages.

Obscure methods were indirect, more subtle, ways program documents showed power, politics, and the influence of language. In these instances, instruction highlighting language variation and pedagogical strategies to assist teachers in respecting and affirming home language while supporting and encouraging academic language in schools might be presented. For example, coursework in the program used culturally relevant pedagogy that asked questions about student's personal linguistic history, as well as how they felt about English and nonstandard forms of English. Another example was that instruction on relationships with parents also served as implicit ways to develop nonstandard linguistic awareness in preservice teachers.

Finally, during this step in the process analytic notes were created for each document analyzed. These tools served several purposes including creating current and accurate descriptions of the context where language might have appeared (course intention) and to provide a place for developing ideas and connections across courses. It also directed me to other sources. An example of an analytic note/memo is provided in Table 4.

**Table 4***Example of Analytic Memo for One Course*

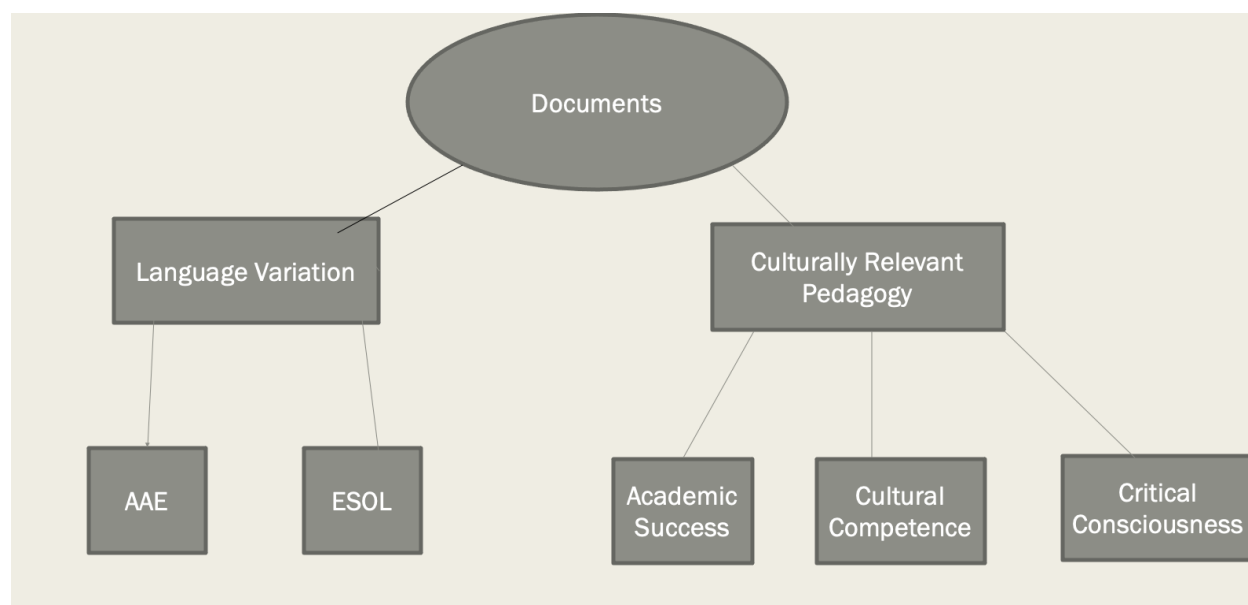
<p>Teaching Literacy to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners I</p>	<p>The title of this course highlights how this program specializes in preparing teachers to serve in urban areas as they describe urban as (look this up again). The title of the course is Teaching Literacy to Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Learners. This is a literacy course specifically for students who speak English as an additional language. Students also learn about language acquisition. All of the courses require a C or higher to count toward the degree and certification. This syllabus has the unit and program mission statement. Also, standards for PEF, InTASC, TESOL and NCATE are included.</p> <p>Analytical Note— - Students are graded on class participation. Class participation is explained as actively being part of the class discussion, completing course readings, book club participation, and a lot of copious notes. There is also a linguistics/phonics test for this course that is repeatable until student achieves at least 90%.</p> <p>They also have Wedex book club meetings. There are 4 during the semester. It is structured and students are asked the following: “At least three quotes (sentences or paragraphs) that stood out to you, Ideas in the text you agree or disagree with, Questions about the text (clarifying questions, wonders, questions for your book club members), How you might implement the ideas from the text , How the reading connects to the experiences you had in schools (as a student and in practicum), Consider how the ideas and strategies proposed in the text support student literacy development”</p> <p>The final is a response to a reading reflecting on learning and how the theory will be put into practice.</p> <p>I think the readings picked by the instructor and students are what will tell me the most about this class and how or if African American English is addressed. It is obvious that language variation is addressed as well as CRP. Course readings are really important. It is the connection of theory to practice. Assignments in this class closely mirror the literacy course before this one. There are some additions. Guided reading observation – they watch 2 YouTube videos and critique the guided reading lessons. The last big assignment is a CRP library. Students identify 10 books where the author is part of the community they are writing about. Books should vary in language and culture. Students need to be aware of stereotypes, deficit thinking and bias. This assignment can deal with varied Englishes. And specifically, AAE if students choose books that feature it.</p>
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These notes later served as a way to generate summaries that were compared resulting in meta-summaries in step 3.

**Step three.** Review of the identification of language variation in the documents involved making connections using theories in this study. Figure 7 illustrates the analysis chain that was used with categories that emerged from step 2.

**Figure 7**

*Document Analysis Chain*



Once categories were identified (e.g., CRP) additional analytic memos were generated with a focus on that category that teased out expectations and nuances in relation to the research questions. Figure 8 is an example of an analytic note/memo specific to CRP presence in one data source. Highlighted text in each memo represented key words and evidence connecting to initial coding. The green section represented a summary for this source. These summaries were later combined across sources (including focus groups) to generate themes in step 3.

**Figure 8***Analytical Notes for CRP in Math/Science Course*

**Analytical Notes** - This syllabus specifically mentions integrating math into family and community, culturally relevant math instruction. The math course philosophy is aligned with the philosophy of the philosophy of the university and department, both agree that learning and teaching must adapt to society, learning is active, and the words “Inform, empower, commit, and engage” are on all the syllabi. The readings and syllabi point to social justice, cultural responsiveness, the ability to connect math instruction to the lives of students and fostering an atmosphere of trust care in the classroom define quality teaching (Haberman, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Leonard, Napp, & Adeleke, 2009; Martin, 2007). There is a ton of ideas offered to assist pre-service teachers in making their classes culturally relevant. Multicultural books are used as a context for learning math in the math methods course. Teaching and learning mathematics best practices are connected to the culture and lived experiences of children (Bartell 2012; Gutstein 2006; Leonard et al. 2010; Matthews 2009; Nasir 2005; Tate 2008; Young 2014). That falls in the area of cultural competence. Teachers using CRP use critical consciousness through lesson planning, empowered students by using investing and buying into cultural experiences. One of the fundamental philosophies of the second math course is Freire’s problem posing pedagogy. This is a belief that teachers and students teach each other. Teachers learn to question and answer. “people teach each other.” One article stressed learning about (African American) students, not just about them. There is a lot about what students gain from teachers getting an understanding of the community. I would like to see more about the things teachers gain. Another focus for teachers is content knowledge. Academic success is part of CRP. Lesson ideas can contribute to a teacher’s strong knowledge of the subject “Candidates will develop culturally responsive pedagogical skills for teaching mathematics in elementary urban contexts.”

Another central piece to the readings and syllabi that aligns with CRP is looking at teachers as change agents. That is critical consciousness. Communities of practice reflect social histories. It is a group of people, stake holders with a common goal. Teachers are constantly negotiating their identity within the community. Part of CRP is very introspective. It is teachers coming to terms with their own upbringing and belief system and being hyper aware of how that mingles with that of the community you serve.

CRP is apparent in both syllabi and readings. Readings focus pre-service teachers investigating the culture of the students in the communities they serve. Cultural competence and critical consciousness are present. (Math/science)

Notes and researcher responses were made to summarize each layer of analysis. All summaries were then analyzed and compared, and the results were synthesized into meta-summaries used to develop categories and subcategories. These groupings were again compared and analyzed resulting in central themes. Final analysis and refinement of themes took place in order to reduce redundancies. Although document analysis has clearly defined steps, it was not linear in nature and instead represented an iterative process. Analysis of new documents often

generated other ways of considering what was evident, or not, which meant returning to earlier analyzed data. Focus groups provided another way to discover the role of language variation in preparing teachers for urban settings.

### ***Grounded Theory***

Focus group transcripts were analyzed using grounded theory. Grounded theory techniques ask *how*, *what*, and *why* when analyzing the data (Charmaz, 2002) and uses an inductive process that allows codes, themes, patterns to emerge directly from the data.

Focus groups were conducted virtually via Zoom (following research guidelines for COVID-19), audio-recorded, and transcribed. Transcriptions were done by the researcher using the intelligent verbatim method. This method required the researcher to listen to the recorded focus group audios and transcribe the recordings almost verbatim, leaving out repeated words or vocal fillers.

First, the coding process began with an open coding process. The focus group transcripts were read several times. During the reading process I used analytic memoing to understand codes and emerging categories. These memos helped to solve problems such as varied definitions of terms. The memos also helped identify major codes, such as “Urban Education.” This code evolved to include a code for preservice teacher education. Additional codes emerged during this process that were also captured and defined further. Reflective memos captured that process.

During open coding of the two focus groups, transcripts were studied for recurring themes. In the first round of analysis, each focus group was studied separately. First, transcripts were broken down by keywords and phrases and coded accordingly by language or CRP. The second round of coding moved to axial coding. According to Saldaña (2009), axial coding involved

relating codes to each other and arranging them into categories. The axial coding process also described a category's properties and dimensions through those relationships (Saldaña, 2009). Axial coding was used to answer the questions of who, what, why, when, and how. The focus groups' data captured less obvious ways AAE addressed and offered commentary relevant to nuances not apparent in the document analysis.

### **Trustworthiness**

The trustworthiness of the data was established through the use of several strategies. These strategies were designed to establish credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability of the collected data. These measures helped the reader understand the phenomenon being studied. First, credibility was established by triangulating the data from several sources. There are several strategies for triangulating data. Yin (1994) suggested interviews, participant observation, or physical artifacts to triangulate the data. In this study, the data was triangulated using three sources: internal documents, external documents, and data from the focus group. Second, the study's credibility was established through the research questions that were examined across different data sources, from documents to focus groups. Third, credibility was established by collecting thick, rich data (Tracy, 2010). I used thick descriptions to capture the program and the outside bodies that influenced it. Analytic notes and memos included these descriptions to help maintain context accuracy. Dependability was created by documenting each step of the data collection and analysis process, thus rendering the data more reliable (Golafshani, 2003). In addition, I used analytic memos during the process to minimize bias and forced propositions. In order to establish an audit trail for the analysis, I also used a coding protocol that was clear and traceable as a requirement for dependability and document analysis (See Appendix D.) This helped me search each document using the same criteria.

Efforts were made to render the study relevant to the field of education and other researchers. Transferability was evoked when the reader felt a connection to the presented material (Tracy, 2010). Confirmability was also established through the collection of thick, rich data (Tracy, 2010). Confirmability was established by keeping a reflexive journal (Tracy, 2010). The researcher journal was used daily after each analysis sessions. The strategy that I used was to document what was happening and exactly how and why it was being handled the way it was. This documentation helped me to become aware of my biases. These four crucial elements established as part of the research process allowed the study to be just, accurate, and beneficial to the education field.



## 4 FINDINGS

In this case study, the organization representing the case was an urban teacher education program (UTEP) at a large southeastern university located at the center of a highly populated urban city. This case study examined how this UTEP educated preservice teachers about English language variation, specifically African American English (AAE). This program was chosen because of its emphasis on urban education and culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP).

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How is African American English (AAE) addressed in an urban teacher preparation program?
2. To what extent does culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) support an understanding of language variation for urban classroom practice?

This chapter concerned the findings from the document analysis and focus groups. The themes that emerged from the analysis were organized first by the context of the case study site, then by the central concerns posed through the research questions. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of these findings across these categories.

Six themes emerged from this study. The first group of themes addressed the UTEP program and its role in providing a teaching platform for preservice teachers. Two themes directly addressed the UTEP context as the framework for teaching AAE. The first theme concerned how urban schools are presented. The second theme concerned the intentionality of

the urban-centered program (UTEP) to represent urban teaching and learning in a non-deficit way.

Two themes answered the first research question. Theme three, the study's most significant theme, was the minimal lack of explicit recognition or standards for African American English (AAE) in documents and materials relating to urban education. Theme four addressed the critical need to combat bias and legitimize language variation in addressing the need to teach AAE.

Two themes answered the second research question. Theme five addressed the standards for academic rigor and high expectations for CRP teaching and practices. The final theme, theme six, addressed the foundation created by CRP to address power through language variation.

Table 5 summarizes the themes for the case study and research questions.

**Table 5**

*Themes related to the Case Study and Research Questions*

<b>Research Area</b>	<b>Themes</b>
Case Study Context	<p><b>Theme 1.</b> The urban center program (UTEP) intentionally represents urban teaching and learning in a non-deficit way.</p> <p><b>Theme 2.</b> The UTEP program promotes cultural competence and critical consciousness through CRP.</p>
<b>RQ1:</b> How is African American English (AAE) addressed in an urban teacher preparation program?	<p><b>Theme 3.</b> AAE is addressed in the UTEP program primarily through CRP and ELL pedagogy.</p> <p><b>Theme 4.</b> Combating bias and legitimizing language are critical for addressing AAE.</p>
<b>RQ2:</b> To what extent does culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) support an understanding of language variation for urban classroom practice?	<p><b>Theme 5.</b> The CRP standards of academic rigor and high expectations serve as a mechanism to support instruction in language variation teaching and practices.</p> <p><b>Theme 6.</b> CRP provides a foundation for understanding power through variation in language.</p>

### **UTEP Case Study Context as a Framework for Teaching AAE**

Two themes emerged that directly addressed the UTEP case study context and concerned the underlying values as unifying forces for the program's focus. The first theme concerned the intentional representation of urban teaching and learning in a non-deficit way. The second theme concerned the unifying promotion of *cultural competence* and *critical consciousness* through

culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). First, a summary of the findings of the case study content is presented. Then, the two themes are presented along with their supporting findings.

### ***UTEP Case Study Context***

Urban teacher education provided the context for this study. The UTEP program was specifically chosen for this study because of its focus on urban teacher education. The urban setting was specific to the UTEP program. It was characterized as a densely populated, culturally, and linguistically diverse area with high poverty rates, immigrants, and marginalized populations who have been historically underserved and underfunded. In addition, the program was housed in a university that is described as an urban research university with a mission to collaborate with diverse metropolitan schools.

### ***UTEP Program Overview***

The program that was the subject of this case study is physically located in a large, diverse southeastern city rich in US history and the civil rights movement history. The UTEP program focused on preparing preservice teachers to serve in urban schools. Urban schools are characterized by servicing culturally and linguistically diverse students. Therefore, the program intentionally used CRP as its foundation. In doing so, it valued the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students and their communities and how those students were supported through CRP (Ladson Billings, 1994).

The UTEP program was considered an alternative teacher certification program serving students interested in teaching grades K-6, specifically in urban schools. It was positioned as a post-baccalaureate program marketed as a fifth year to certification and sixth year masters. The program was also marketed toward nontraditional career changers. The program provided certification and ESOL endorsement in the first year and an optional master's degree in the

second year. The documents analyzed for this UTEP included the program website(INT#2), the program's structure, the courses, and the individual elements of the classes.

**Mission Statements.** Urban education was featured in the program and department mission statements. Equity was aligned with the department, university, and program goals. The theme of empowerment and change started in the program mission and trickled down to course readings and assignments.

The program's mission statement pledged that "The [UTEP] is a rigorous program that seeks to promote the success of elementary students schooled in urban contexts through the development of pedagogically competent, equity-oriented, caring, empowered teachers who are change agents inside and outside the classroom." The program stood on a mission to ensure "Teachers have the ability and power to provide experiences in which students succeed, which subsequently provides the confidence and competence for students to continue creating their own success."

The university's professional education faculty (PEF) standard 1.4 (INT#1) focused on preservice teachers' analysis of policies and practices that affected learners in a "metropolitan context." Metropolitan schools are in cities with significant populations, while urban schools are also in highly populated cities, often with an added socio-economic element (Anyon, 2014).

**Program Website (INT#2).** Potential students could click a tab that asked if urban education was for them on the program website. This tab took them to a page with a giant word cloud (<https://www.wordclouds.com>) boldly displaying the words “Urban,” “Teacher “Children,” “Culture,” “ESOL,” and “Experiences.” Below the word cloud was an overview of how to qualify for admissions to the program. The page also reviewed what differentiates this program from other preservice teacher training programs. The program’s website listed main goals, including dedication to culturally relevant pedagogy and a commitment to “lay the foundation for preparing teachers to promote the success of elementary students schooled in urban contexts” (<https://uacm.education.gsu.edu/is-our-urban-education-program-for-you>). Field experience syllabi covered the practical application of theory in an urban environment and acknowledged that pedagogy was not a one-size-fits-all practice.

**Overview of Courses.** The UTEP program of study (INT#2) consisted of 16 courses. Fourteen courses were counted toward the certification and ESOL endorsement and the other two courses were the first courses toward the masters. All 16 courses mentioned urban education in the course description. Twelve of the 16 courses had assignments or readings that defined an urban context and what skills, and resources were needed to support learning in urban schools. Of the 16 courses analyzed, four used the word *urban* in the course title. These four courses were *Mentorship in Urban Classrooms*, *Responsive Practice for Urban Education*, *Science in the Urban Classroom*, and *Teaching Mathematics in Urban Schools*. Also included in each syllabus was the word “metropolitan.” In this context, metropolitan was used interchangeably with urban (Milner, 2012). The program utilized lectures and discussions, simulations, activities, projects, active studies, and fieldwork as significant contributors to merging theory and practice.

**Capstone Course.** Several assignments provided additional support for how urban education was presented. One example came from the capstone course, which served as a culminating experience. The capstone aimed to show preservice teachers' understanding of empowered educators, practice within family and community, and learning differentiation. The action research assignment preservice teachers conducted during the capstone experience asked them to examine their educational practices based on their fieldwork experience in local urban schools. Preservice teachers synthesized and reflected at the end of coursework during the program, including developing and implementing the action research project related to urban education's critical issues and trends. The capstone course also required a problem solution project asking students to examine personal bias. This assignment aimed "To develop effective teachers who make learning meaningful by drawing on real/authentic experiences integrated across the curriculum that empower students." This course laid the foundation for understanding urban schools while promoting deep self-examination by preservice teachers. Understanding bias was key to promoting non-deficit thinking about urban schools.

**Readings and Assignments.** Program faculty comment that teachers need extensive training in serving the needs of urban schools, and UTEP makes space for learning to support those needs. This learning support is not limited to one course but is woven throughout the program in readings, assignments, and activities. All courses support this philosophy. Further evidence comes from observations conducted by program supervisors while in the field and benchmark conference meetings where preservice teachers reflect on and set professional growth goals. Preservice teachers work with field supervisors to continue the scholarly activity critical to the urban school context.

**Simulation Training.** Given the importance of language and culture in CRP, program faculty found creative ways to teach and reinforce language variation. One of those ways was through classroom activities. An example could be found in the simulation, *Bafa Bafa* (Shirts, 2009) that was played as an early training activity in the CRP course, aimed at increasing cultural competence and reflection. This simulation assisted in preparing preservice teachers to work with other cultures, deal with organizational change, and gain perspective on other groups perceived differently. In this simulation, preservice teachers experienced how uncertainty and unfamiliarity could breed negative connotations when neither group examines and understands cultural misconceptions. *BaFa BaFA* was also used to address AAE language inequities:

That simulation really gets them to question how they value language when having this lecture on African American English, in particular, we can make the connections like what did you learn, what influences how you judge languages and the legitimacy of languages,” says Sonali, Participant #3 in the faculty focus group.

Vastly different and opposing linguistic and cultural differences can create harmful misunderstandings and create perceptions that ruin classroom culture. The end goal of this activity was a safe, inclusive, productive classroom culture that embraced diversity as an asset (Shirts, 2009). It was an opportunity to have a fresh and raw intercultural conflict that elicited emotional, analytical, and cognitive reactions. From a linguistics perspective, this activity stimulated conversations about the connection between language and culture.

This activity started with two groups (Alpha and Beta) that represented cultures. Alpha and Beta cultures have certain behaviors, which correspond to implicit cultural codes. Each group moved into an area in the room where members were taught the values, expectations, and customs of their new culture without knowing anything about the other culture. Group A, Alphas



represented a collectivist, family-oriented, high-context culture. High-context cultures believe in the goals of the group over the individual. People within this type of culture care more about the group than their individual needs and wants. They communicate in implicit and non-direct ways. High context cultures rely heavily on nonverbal communication. Thus, physical touch and intimate close personal space were norms for high-context cultures and Group A, Alphas. Alphas were described as cooperative and not competitive.

In contrast, Group B represented a low-context, individualistic, task-oriented culture. Group B individuals were very direct in their communication style and got straight to their goals. Communication was explicit and precise. They were highly competitive, and with success came merit. They valued negotiation, and their language was based on their trading system.

The first group, Alphas, had a leader. They always greeted one another with a grab below the right elbow and asked about the other person's family. Outsiders were greeted with the left elbow. One of the most important rules was that women could not initiate a conversation with men, only other women. They stood very close and touched a lot. An unspoken meaning to this behavior was that if you did not touch the person, it meant you did not like them. The oldest person began the conversation, and you always talked about family. New people had to wait to be invited into the conversation. They traded and collected paper clips but after conversations were had about family. The point was to acquire paper clips of the same color or style. Alphas discussed their paper clips and wore them with pride. They refused to trade paper clips with visitors who did not follow the rules of their society.

The second group, Betas, were a capitalist society. They greeted each other with a nod and never discussed family or wealth. They discussed work. They did not stand close or touch. It was insulting to touch someone's shoulder. If an outsider touched someone's shoulder, no one

would do business with them. Status was attached to how well someone worked despite never discussing wealth. They were interested in trading with the Alphas. They had a particular trading language. The main language used for their trade with the Beta culture was an insult in the Alpha culture. The simulation was followed by discussion and reflection. Sonali, Participant #3 in the faculty focus group, said of this simulation,

That simulation really gets them to question how they value language when having this lecture on African American English. In particular, we can make the connections like what did you learn, what influences how you judge languages, and the legitimacy of languages,

This simulation activity was an example of how culture drives language and language drives culture. The *Bafa Bafa* simulation (Shirts, 2009) was an obscure method that did not explicitly teach AAE. However, it brought concepts like cultural competence and intercultural communication to the forefront. Cultural competence is one of the significant components of CRP and one of the biggest takeaways from this simulation. It meant participants could communicate effectively with people from other cultures and design and plan lessons that benefited from the diverse linguistic and cultural representation within the group.

Another benefit of this simulation and where it occurred in the program was that it began the open and honest reflection on bias and stereotypes many participants might not have recognized before the closing activity discussion. It established a safe space where diversity was valued, and inequity and marginalization were challenged. This simulation activity would fall under the heading of learning critical consciousness in CRP. In addition to making preservice teachers aware of the power of culture and language, they could also recognize the possible destruction of stereotypes, low expectations, and misconceptions. This simulation went to a

deeper level of understanding by addressing the classroom culture established by its members who were different from the dominant culture, and provided a combination of input from all students.

**Theme 1. The urban-centered program (UTEP) intentionally represents urban teaching and learning in a non-deficit way.**

Findings from this study reveal that the UTEP program recognizes the importance of challenging deficit thinking involving urban schools. This challenge to deficit thinking can be communicated in two primary ways. First, the UTEP program concisely defines CRP making it easier to integrate into each program sector. Thus, CRP serves as a primary mechanism for challenging deficit views of urban schools and fostering the rich resources that urban schools offer for teaching and learning. Second, the UTEP challenges deficit thinking. This challenge appears in the admission process, as well as the readings and assignments. Further, there is an emphasis on developing teachers through teaching strategies that challenge preservice teacher thinking and show them a way to challenge others as future educators.

**Admission.** Preservice teachers are challenged to think about urban schools and their roles beginning from day one. The application process for program entrance is multi-phased. Students who meet basic eligibility requirements are invited to participate in an interview with program faculty and supervisors. During the interview, preservice teacher candidates are asked direct questions about urban education and provided scenarios to gauge possible biases and deficit thinking. The importance of recognizing personal prejudices and attitudes toward diverse communities is an essential aspect of this program. The UTEP program is intentional about addressing biases and stresses a non-deficit message across the program and coursework.

Focus group participants also mention the importance of introspective learning to examine attitudes and understandings of urban schools and communities. These reflections are a catalyst to change in relation to language philosophies and beliefs and play a key role in reducing deficit thinking.

**Teaching Strategies.** Teaching strategies to preservice teachers is the core mission of the UTEP program. According to data gathered from the website and the syllabi, and further supported by the two focus groups, CRP is the core framework underlying teaching strategies, and is intertwined into every class. This approach guides how preservice teachers learn to manage classrooms and present information to their students.

This teaching stance is evident on the UTEP program website (INT#2). The communication and culture tab reads, “Every aspect of the [UTEP] program (e.g., curriculum and instruction, classroom management) is guided by a pedagogical approach in which teachers are responsive to their students by incorporating elements of their students’ culture in their teaching”(source masked). The application of cultural relevance is evident by integrating cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse learners to make learning more appropriate and effective for them. Culturally relevant instruction also incorporates a wide variety of instructional strategies connected to different approaches to learning. Every course has some element of CRP incorporated into it, and CRP was explicitly mentioned in 15 out of 16 courses as illustrated in Appendix E.

The UTEP program is dedicated to challenging deficit perspectives of urban schools by developing teaching strategies and responsive classrooms. This is apparent from the analysis of several sources. Literacy syllabi list TESOL/NCATE Program Standards (EXT #15), which ask teachers to recognize cultural and linguistic bias in testing that may be detrimental to English

learners. Math courses call for a multicultural library, and literacy courses require preservice teachers to create a library specific to CRP. Multicultural and bilingual literature are defined and modeled in another course, thereby supplying preservice teachers with an understanding of authentic representation in literature.

**Creating a Responsive Classroom.** A textbook on creating a responsive classroom is required in five of the sixteen courses. A responsive classroom is a classroom that is interested in every aspect of learning from academics to the social-emotional skills. It is a classroom *aware and welcoming* of the cultural and linguistic diversity in schools and savvy enough to navigate a space that can be underfunded and is described in classes and readings in each area and responsive to community and students' backgrounds. According to the readings, a responsive classroom leads to improved academic success and behavioral growth (Bondy et al., 2007). Readings and assignments reiterate why awareness of bias and stereotypes helps present urban schools as positive environments.

**Readings and Assignments.** Faculty synchronize their syllabi to reinforce program philosophies. During the focus group, professors spoke of a complimentary overlap on topics of extreme importance to teaching in the urban context. For example, in one of the literacy classes, preservice teachers write a reflective blog where they are encouraged to challenge ways of thinking that influence how they think about urban education and schools.

Another example of explicitly promoting non-deficit thinking of urban schools is found in the foundation courses. A daily news assignment that promotes preservice teachers being "actively aware" or critically conscious, asks preservice teachers to write, present, and discuss issues that directly affect urban schools. In the field-based practicum, preservice teachers write a piece called, "about the author" in their portfolio. It explains who they are and why they want to

teach. In addition, it further develops their teaching portfolio and position as someone who understands what attributes make up a successful teacher in urban schools. The assignments and discussions expose personal and societal biases and help preservice teachers to recognize deficit models of communities, families, and students. Additional examples of assignments in this program that challenge deficit views of urban schooling are provided in Appendix F.

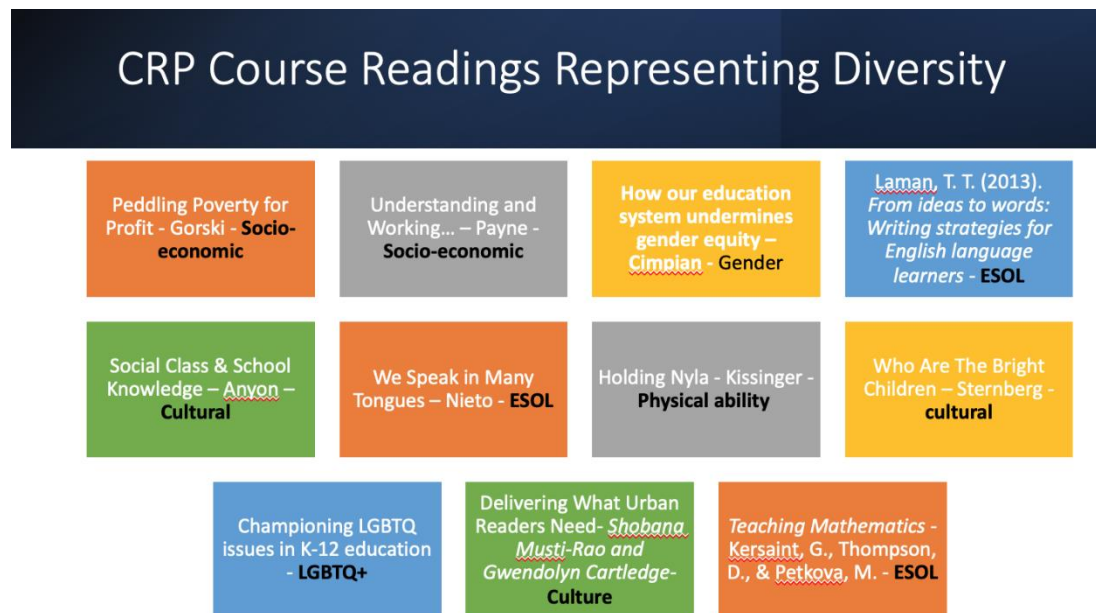
Specific readings and assignments across all courses provide a focus on challenging deficit thinking. These readings and assignments challenge deficit perspectives by allowing students to see themselves in books and introduce students to images of themselves and others beyond monolithic stereotypes. The reflective assignments require readings that support non-deficit approaches to urban education. One of the math courses assigns multiple readings with opposing views of urban education. Preservice teachers juxtapose the program's philosophy with alternative deficit views of urban schools and communities. One of the readings, used in several courses, focuses on how teachers use language and how that affects learning. Language has content, but it also bears information about the speaker and how they view the listener and their assumed relationship. These assignments teach preservice teachers to be aware of choosing "texts that are stereotypical, deficit, or bias" (Literacy course syllabus).

**Diversity Courses.** In defining urban schools, diversity is a major characterization. There were several places in the data where preservice teachers read about diverse communities. Some classes featured readings and activities that study diversity of abilities, looking at physical, intellectual, and socio-emotional variations in students, while others focused on gender, race, ethnicity, language, or cultural differences. The CRP course has several readings that introduce preservice teachers to possible types of diversity present in their classrooms or the school community (See Figure 9). The university notes its efforts to recruit and encourage a diverse

demographic and an emphasis on teaching and learning in an urban context. Therefore, this program has a diverse pool of preservice teacher applicants. Some preservice teachers come in familiar with AAE and speak it at home, while others speak other variations of English. Both AAE speakers and nonspeakers come in with limited knowledge of its structured system, history, and social, political, and cultural value in it for students and community building.

**Figure 9**

*CRP Course Readings Representing Diversity*



Students benefitted from learning to respect and honor their heritage and one another's cultural heritage and lived realities (Ladson-Billings, 1996a). In the Critical Issues in Math course, African American girlhood and scholastic identity related to math were addressed. For example, Gholson and Martin's (2014) *Smart girls, Black girls, mean girls, and bullies: At the intersection of identities and the mediating role of young girls' social network in mathematical communities of practice*, was assigned reading in the Critical Issues in Math course. This text

provided preservice teachers obtained a glimpse into the world of African American girlhood through depictions of traditions, values, and beliefs associated with third and fourth-grade African American girls. Learning about the experiences of different groups enhanced a teachers' ability to plan appropriate lessons by taking full advantage of students' background knowledge and culture. Another example came from creating CRP libraries and multicultural literature that embodied the language and customs of the community being served as a resource. This resource allowed preservice teachers a look into *critical windows* to see other cultures and into mirrors to see themselves (Bishop, 1990).

Several courses required preservice teachers to conduct in-depth studies of the students they serve, including culture and language. For example, in the classroom management course, preservice teachers chose a student to focus on to understand a particular student's community, family, and habits. They researched the community, school, and classroom culture and became more aware of their cultural nuances.

**Discourse Circles.** Faculty and supervisors discussed these assignments to develop an awareness of the importance of power in urban schools and used teaching to challenge deficit thinking and promote positive teaching practices in urban schools. "It's more of a discussion because in my class we do a lot of discourse circles and morning meetings, so it's more about unpacking issues of power" (Jo, Participant #1, faculty focus group).

Discourse circles and morning meetings increased academic success exemplifying the three central CRP tenets adopted by UTEP. These tenets are academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness. First, discourse circles allowed space for critical consciousness through peer and teacher exchanging ideas and were a culturally competent activity because students could express ideas freely, controlling how and what was being shared.



Second, discourse circles challenged deficit thinking through modeling learning as an exchange of ideas from student to teacher and teacher to student. Third, releasing control and allowing students to exchange ideas took trust from the teacher and respect for what students brought into the classroom to contribute to the overall learning environment.

Participant #1, Jo, is a professor and program director. Jo used discourse circles and morning meetings to allow preservice teachers to exchange ideas with other preservice teachers freely. Preservice teachers also provided written, and oral reflections in the syllabus activities, participated in class discussions, presented in morning meetings, and critiqued lessons to provide further evidence of how this program challenged deficit thinking.

**Field Experience.** Developing an educational philosophy that included urban schools' needs was apparent in several field experience courses. According to the course description in field courses, field experiences took place in linguistically and culturally diverse urban schools. The program website (INT#2) also provided information about field sites described as "high-needs urban elementary schools in the metro area." The field experiences were described as an intense linking of theory to practice with CRP as the cornerstone.

In the field experience, preservice teachers were paired with a supervisor who worked for the program and mentored at the school site. The mentor teachers at the school sites were selected and guided to critique and assess preservice teachers' performance in the field. In addition, the website featured a testimonial from a former preservice teacher in the program, now a school site mentor.

**Theme 2. The UTEP program promotes cultural competence and critical consciousness through CRP.**

The UTEP program modeled what was expected in the classroom when preservice teachers took over their classes. CRP appeared in the first foundational course, and the material was then integrated into other classes. Four critical constructs of the CRP training resulting from the UTEP program were related to developing cultural competence and critical consciousness. These four key constructs, awareness of *self* and *others*, promoting social justice, instilling equity, and becoming a change agent through CRP, were central in course syllabi, readings, and assignments. Knowledge of *self* and *others* was a crucial learning category for cultural competence. Social justice, equity, and becoming a change agent were key learning categories for critical consciousness. These propositions were visible to potential students' first interests in the program.

**Knowledge of Self and Other.** Cultural competence is a standard for CRP teaching and practices. CRP and cultural competence called for teachers to have a knowledge of self and learn about the communities they served. Exploring the meaning of culture on the *self* and the *other* centered the cultures of both preservice teachers and students.

The concepts of the *self* and the *other* relate to identity, norms, social groups, and networks that support identity within a culture. The awareness of the other and the influence of culture and context on teaching and learning guide a teacher's approach to presenting the material. This approach included an understanding of the community along with student histories and knowledge. This included the use of home language.

During the supervisors' focus group, the participants felt that this awareness of *self and other* helped to strengthen the connection between teachers and students in their class as

important parts of CRP. Focus group participant Jo confirmed, “Inclusion of language and culture and family is a part of CRP and emphasized in lesson plans.” According to Participant #2, Brad, “[w]e’re trying to model what culturally responsive teachers do. I think accepting work or creating spaces for your students to write in their home languages is important, and so we do that in our class as well.”

During the faculty focus group, faculty members discussed CRP strategies and how they employed these strategies in their classes with preservice teachers. First, the faculty modeled what accepting and affirming students' home language would look like through assignments, activities, and community-building with the cohort of learners. Next, the program faculty tried to model what preservice teachers could expect in their classrooms. Through this process, CRP was modeled as more than just a theory. It became a lived practice.

Assignments in field and foundations courses explored preservice teachers' cultural competence for dealing with others through self-knowledge. In addition, preservice teachers explored their upbringing and identity as a precursor to exploring the background and identities of students and the community around them.

In the capstone course, knowledge of self was addressed through the action research project. The CRP course description described that this class was designed to “explore the meaning of culture and its influence on the ‘self’ and the ‘other,’ as well as the influence of culture and context on teaching and learning.” Thus, preservice teachers systematically examined their personal educational practice and created a research proposal to be carried out in their classroom to improve classroom practice and help reflect on how teaching, changes in behavior, and classroom policies affect students. Table 6 illustrates how cultural competence is addressed in the program.



**Table 6***Abbreviated Example of Features of Cultural Competence as Knowledge of Self and Others*

Course	Evidence	CRP
Classroom Management	Portfolio that includes an inspiration page, community statement, classroom organization, classroom procedure, classroom management plan, greetings, and group activities	Cultural Competence— - Knowledge of others and self
Admissions interview	Scenario questions	Cultural Competence— - Knowledge of others
Field Courses	Professional portfolio is a classroom community statement	Cultural Competence— - Knowledge of others
Critical Issues in Math	Article on Black girlhood and scholastic identity give actual title	Cultural Competence— - Knowledge of others
Classroom Management	Preservice teacher to focus on to gain a deep understanding of a particular students' community, family, and habits.	Cultural Competence— - Knowledge of others
Capstone	Action Research - preservice teachers examine their personal educational practice systematically and create a research proposal to be carried out in their classroom to improve classroom practice and help reflect on how teaching, changes in behavior, and classroom policies affect students.	Cultural Competence— - Knowledge of Self and others
CRP	Synthesis papers or reflection assignments	Cultural Competence— - Knowledge of Self

**Social Justice.** Social justice is part of critical consciousness. At the same time, social justice is a belief in the pursuit of equality in economics, politics, and social opportunities. The UTEP program emphasized equity to elevate the training of preservice teachers going into urban schools and districts.

When analyzing the document data, social justice appeared when preservice teachers looked at education's local and global issues. In the UTEP program, preservice teachers were first introduced to Nieto in their first foundation course in the unit on language. Sonia Nieto's (2009), *We Speak in Many Tongues*, pushes back on ideas that a student's failure to speak SAE is the cause of urban school problems, including students access to economic and social mobility, racism, and underfunding. According to Nieto (2009), multicultural education is a critical antiracist approach to education with a commitment to social justice designed for English-only students, including African Americans. These concepts are similar to fostering a goal that builds on students strengths, an essential component of CRP.

In *We Speak Many Tongues*, Nieto (2009) introduced the concept of *linguicism*. Linguicism is a social justice concept that addresses linguistically charged racism as the more significant factor in racism and lack of access. Nieto (2009) also reinforced the importance of language and culture and the role of preservice teachers in the classroom "Effective teaching is based on the fact that learning builds on prior knowledge and experiences" (Nieto, 2009, p.16).

Nieto (2009) proposed more inclusive preservice teacher training for teachers serving minority students. Nieto's book illustrated what CRP looks like in a linguistically diverse space as she addressed ELLs and varied Englishes like AAE. Teachers were characterized as the bridges connecting home and school (Nieto, 2009). Nieto (2009) used this bridge metaphor because this allowed for two very different spaces to connect: home and school. Both sides are

crucial. Nieto likens rejecting and neglecting home language to burning a bridge and losing access to one of the spaces. This reading helped preservice teachers see the contextual nature of language.

In the Capstone course, the problem-solution project addressed social justice through a combination of service-learning and critical pedagogy. First year teachers (year 2 in the program) drew on “authentic experiences integrated across the curriculum” to empower students and lead them in solving a school, community, environmental, or world problem (course syllabus). Engaging students in critical service-learning work was related to critical consciousness because it allowed for an active deeper understanding of the social and political world.

The Critical Issues in Mathematics course recommended lessons from *Rethinking Mathematics: Teaching Social Justice by the Numbers* (Peterson & Gutstein, 2013). This resource had math plans and a curriculum with social justice issues as its foundation. Weeks 9-11 were dedicated to teaching math with social justice integrated into the curriculum. Esmonde and Caswell (2010) introduced preservice teachers to collaborative inquiry projects designed with students’ cultural and community knowledge in mind in this same math course. This assignment was an example of critical consciousness because preservice teachers directly examined issues in relation to communities, policy, and inequity after being introduced to social justice through math instruction.

The daily news assignment found in the CRP course was another strong example. This assignment aimed to assist preservice teachers into socially responsible citizens by attending to and analyzing public news of schools and education. Preservice teachers learned to recognize inequity and how to challenge political and social constructs detrimental to urban schools.

Urging these new educators to become aware and stay aware of new policies and practices aligned with the program mission and CRP framework.

**Equity-Oriented.** Social justice and equity related because one is a byproduct of the other. Equity is students having equal access to resources. Equity in education increases opportunities and assures fairness, inclusion, and a chance at success without barriers. Thus, teachers are conduits of equity through CRP. For equity to happen, teachers need to be aware of pedagogical techniques and other resources to expand access to all students.

A UTEP program goal was to educate confident, competent preservice teachers who advocated for students and fair, equitable education. In the document data, equity was expressed through instruction on inclusive language and classroom culture and readings and assignments on inequity within the school system. This approach supported language as representational with the power to establish, create realities, and invite identities (Freire, 1971/2009; Giroux, 2010; Janks, 2010). In addition, CRP made equity possible by expanding access to students in diverse communities.

Equity had a lot of faces in this program. In the CRP course, preservice teachers were introduced to equity related to gender in Cimpian's (2018) article titled, How our education system undermines gender equity. This article explained what equity in education looked like, how the current culture supported inequity, and how to revamp classroom and school culture to a more welcoming place for all. This reading continued the conversation on bias and stereotypes.

In the Critical Issues in Mathematics course, Rubel (2017) wrote about equity-directed instructional practices. Equity-directed instructional practices allowed for preservice teachers to adjust pedagogy to meet the needs of students. This article looked at standardized test preparation, remediation, and drills that took place in urban schools. Rubel (2017) described



urban schools as being hyper-segregated and ruled by deficit views. This article helped preservice teachers understand equity from a systemic point of view. The centering of Whiteness, limited access to higher-level courses for minority students, and the link between those courses and income disparities were also addressed in that article. Thus, the UTEP program opened space for conversations and readings that promoted non-deficit views of urban education.

The focus on nurturing preservice teachers as equity-oriented change agents by promoting social justice is a CRP practice. Those values varied voices in the classroom and opened the door to AAE as an asset. As previously described, the UTEP program promoted social justice and equity through its CRP foundation as the case study context. Additional evidence for the prevalence of critical consciousness actions (promoting social justice and equity) is provided in Table 7.

**Table 7***Readings on Critical Consciousness as Equity and Social Justice*

<b>Critical Consciousness Course</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>CRP Aspect Addressed</b>
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy	Cimpian (2018), <i>How our education system undermines gender equity.</i>	Critical Consciousness- Equity
Critical Issues in Math	Rubel (2017) writes about equity-directed instructional practices	Critical Consciousness- Equity
Critical Issues in Math	Koestler, C. (2012). Beyond apples, puppy dogs, and ice cream: Preparing teachers to teach mathematics for equity and social justice. In A. A. Wager & D. W. Stinson (Eds.), In A. A.	Critical Consciousness- Equity
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy – Synthesis Paper	An important part of being a good teacher is being able to reflect on your learning and growth. The purpose of this assignment is for you to reflect upon and synthesize what you have learned throughout the course regarding issues of diversity, equity, privilege, language, access and opportunity in U.S. schooling, and critical and culturally responsive pedagogy	Critical Consciousness- Equity
Program Website	Teachers have the ability and power to provide experiences in which students succeed, which subsequently provides the confidence and competence for students to continue creating their own success.”	Critical Consciousness- Social Justice
Critical Issues in Math	<i>Rethinking Mathematics: Teaching Social justice by the numbers</i>	Critical Consciousness- Social Justice
Critical Issues in Math	Weeks 9-11	Critical Consciousness- Social Justice
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy	daily news assignment	Critical Consciousness- Social Justice
Responsive Classroom	create a brochure that highlights talents and skills to present a teaching philosophy	Critical Consciousness- Social Justice

Critical Consciousness Course	Evidence	CRP Aspect Addressed
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy	An activity done by a teacher where she purposely challenged students' nature to assist something in trouble against rules set by her.	Critical Consciousness- Social Justice
Capstone	Problem Solution projec- - Preservice teachers lead their students in solving a school, community, environmental, or world problem. They then reflect on the experience as a way of empowering and engaging students in future project-based lessons.	Critical Consciousness- Social Justice

**Change Agents.** Social justice instruction allows preservice teachers to push back on policies and procedures that they feel are not conducive to teaching and learning. They can spot the problems and now have ways to work within the system to push back. As change agents, preservice teachers resist policies and procedures that do not serve students and the community.

Preservice teachers in the UTEP program were prepared to effectively challenge the status quo through extensive readings on effective teaching strategies versus system-wide programs, laws, and curricular choices. According to the UTEP website, the program's mission is to "educate pedagogically competent, equity-oriented, caring, empowered teachers." This mission is aligned with CRP and the needs of urban schools, as reported by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). In addition to creating opportunities that challenged deficit thinking, the program encouraged others to continue the work through agency.

The university's mission statement sets a goal of matriculating informed, reflective, committed, empowered change agents in local and global spaces. The university is invested in supporting the creation of what Cochran-Smith (1999) identified as the *educator activist* who teaches against the grain. Preservice teachers are introduced to education reform and committed

to students, equity, communities, and social justice over policies and tradition. This idea was reinforced by the university's mission to support urban education excellence and trickled down to the college of education, department, and program. An example came from one syllabus which listed course objectives as:

(1) understanding of the history of issues related to education in a culturally and linguistically diverse society; (2) knowledge of contemporary perspectives on these issues as they pertain to the United States educational system, and (3) understanding of their role, responsibility, and power as teachers in the 21st Century. (UTEP program syllabus)

The Story of Rachel and Sadie, by S.J. Childs (2001), was a reading in the CRP class.

This reading is about an activity facilitated by a teacher trying to show students how important it is to push back against things they know are not right. In the exercise, the teacher purposely challenged students' nature to assist with a fish which, in this case, was the class pet. However, to help the class fish, students must go against rules set by the teacher. The exercise began after researching how long a fish could stay out of water. Then, based on this research, the teacher in the story took one of the class goldfish and flopped her on the table, telling students not to move or say anything about it. The students struggled and were faced with a dilemma. The students must either confront the teacher about killing the beloved fish or get detention for not complying with the teacher's rule to sit down and not say a word. In the end, the fish lived, and the children were able to discuss issues worth going against the grain. The story was a thought-provoking read that was placed early in a certification program. The story and exercise helped teachers create environments where students are competent and can take compassionate stands against authority.

Another article informed preservice teachers of how much power they possess as change agents. This article likened their refusal to adhere to specific policies and rules as the *Rosa Parks effect*. Another syllabus referred to “deep, meaningful learning” through authentic purpose collaboratively constructed by learners and instructors. These curriculum examples provided a sense of critical consciousness. Specifically, these examples illustrated the role of a change agent through shared power and responsibility. These examples showed how teachers and students could change the current system into a more equitable place to teach and learn.

**Theme 3. AAE is addressed in the UTEP program primarily through CRP and ELL pedagogy.**

While ELL instruction was found in all 16 courses analyzed, AAE was not directly mentioned in any syllabi. Instead, AAE appeared in limited data sources, such as reading assignments, while CRP and ELL built a foundation for AAE’s presence in urban teacher education through courses to topics, themes, and strategies. Both the faculty and supervisor focus groups indicated that AAE instruction was intentionally addressed in the CRP course, although not explicitly mentioned in the course description, readings, or activities in the syllabus. Sonali, in the faculty focus group, explained the layering of information used to address AAE.

There is a lecture on African American English, particularly phonics. You wouldn’t ever see (AAE) on a syllabus. There is no reading that says anything about African American English. There is a lead-in text on language, which is by Sonia Nieto on language and power, and including language as part of teaching critical and culturally responsive pedagogy.

As this faculty member stated, AAE was indeed not directly addressed in any of the 16 syllabi analyzed. However, it did appear through obscure methods within courses, specifically as

it related to ELL and/or elements of CRP. Although these instances were few, they were important to include in order to illustrate how one program could infuse it. For example, in the CRP course, AAE was introduced in Unit 2, titled Language and Linguistic Diversity. In this unit, there were three assignments: a blog, reading response, and daily news. The linguistic diversity unit addressed ESOL as well as varied forms of English according to the readings and assignments assigned in that unit. This unit was mentioned during the focus group as the lead in to discussions on AAE. The required reading response followed a template, and reflection questions asked preservice teachers to explore how readings impact students they serve. The reflective blog assignment was also a reaction to the week's reading and class discussion.

The second place AAE was explicit was in a later ELL course in the program, the ESOL Language Acquisition course. In this course, Baker-Bell's (2020), *Linguistic Justice: Black Language, Literacy, Identity and Pedagogy*, was an assigned reading for preservice teachers. In chapter 4, titled Scoff No More, Baker-Bell (2020) focused on changing attitudes toward home language. An autoethnographic vignette was assigned with a goal to unlearn assumptions about language. The reading centered on AAE as its focus and discussed other languages and language policies in relation to AAE. This reading supported the idea that there was no language hierarchy based on linguistics. The reading provided preservice teachers some background on AAE and situated it in the historic and political context.

Given the absence of explicit methods for addressing AAE, focus group participants were asked if there is a place for AAE instruction in this program. Another participant in the faculty focus group said,

This is the language that is spoken by many of the students and the parents and the communities from which our students are preparing teachers to teach in those classrooms

where that language is spoken. It makes sense for them to incorporate their students' home language into their teaching, into their pedagogy, into their classroom community. Sonali, Participant #3, stated that establishing AAE as a valid language allowed students to turn in their blog or reading response written in AAE.

'We've accepted student work that's written in African American English. There are students that say, 'Oh well, you've now told me that what I speak is a language, so I'm going to write in my language, and we accept work that is written in African American English.' Students who speak African American English don't count it as a second language. By the end of class, when we asked the question again, we have far more hands raised. There's a different kind of pride in speaking two languages,' [and] the fact that I can navigate between them.

Thus, preservice teachers examined assumptions and beliefs about language and language learning through recalling and interrogating their linguistic socialization. These examinations of bias were critical for addressing AAE. These biases are represented in theme 4.

#### **Theme 4. Combating bias and legitimizing language are critical for addressing AAE.**

A major keystone of CRP, ELL, and AAE is language bias. Language bias is the belief that some languages are superior to others. Language bias is also known as standard language ideology. Standard language ideology is a bias toward an abstracted, idealized, non-varying spoken language (Lippi-Green, 2012). Linguistic bias in teachers coupled with written and oral language differences in AAE and SAE significantly influences academic achievement in African American students (Charity et al., 2004). For example, focus group participants observed students insisting that AAE was simply broken English. "They come to the program with false ideas about African American English." In addition, faculty reported being met with resistance

when introducing language variation as different and not Standard Academic English as the only valued form of English.

The program was designed to have students question if they were raised to believe there is a language hierarchy. The curriculum focused on a critical approach to language and its importance to children, parents, and communities. The result was that preservice teachers question some of the things they have heard or how they were taught to use academic English. From the program standpoint, Sonali, Participant #3, reported “a lot of intention with regards to creating cognitive dissonance for preservice teachers.” This intention in the UTEP program appeared in the time spent examining how students think about standard academic English and AAE.

Refuting issues of language hierarchy and that AAE is broken or incorrect can lead to discussions and provide a historical context for the language and the people who speak it. Faculty focus group participants discussed bias through the lens of linguistic prejudice and white supremacy. They challenged beliefs that only African American people spoke other Englishes or that all African American people speak AAE.

“We address it specifically; we actually talk through all the different titles this language has been given and what qualifies it as a language. We talk about the rules, grammar, syntax, lexicon that are involved in the language. We also talked about history and how it is connected to white superiority and white supremacy.” (Sonali, faculty focus group)

The faculty reported that initially, a preservice teacher might resist AAE as a valid language. Early in their process of becoming culturally relevant teachers, preservice teachers might not recognize how marginalizing students' home language, culture, and community could be problematic in serving in urban schools. “From a lecture perspective, they can understand in



theory, but actually really embracing the idea is really difficult to understand in their consciousness.” (Participant #2, Brad)

Faculty focus group participants recalled some preservice teachers were uncomfortable discussing AAE. In addition, faculty focus group participants experienced apprehension from preservice teachers in discussions on language variation outside of ELL. Language variation must be explained. “‘It's just a new way of thinking about language and how we use language, reconsidering power and history and how languages create, develop, and are dynamic” (Jo, Participant #1).

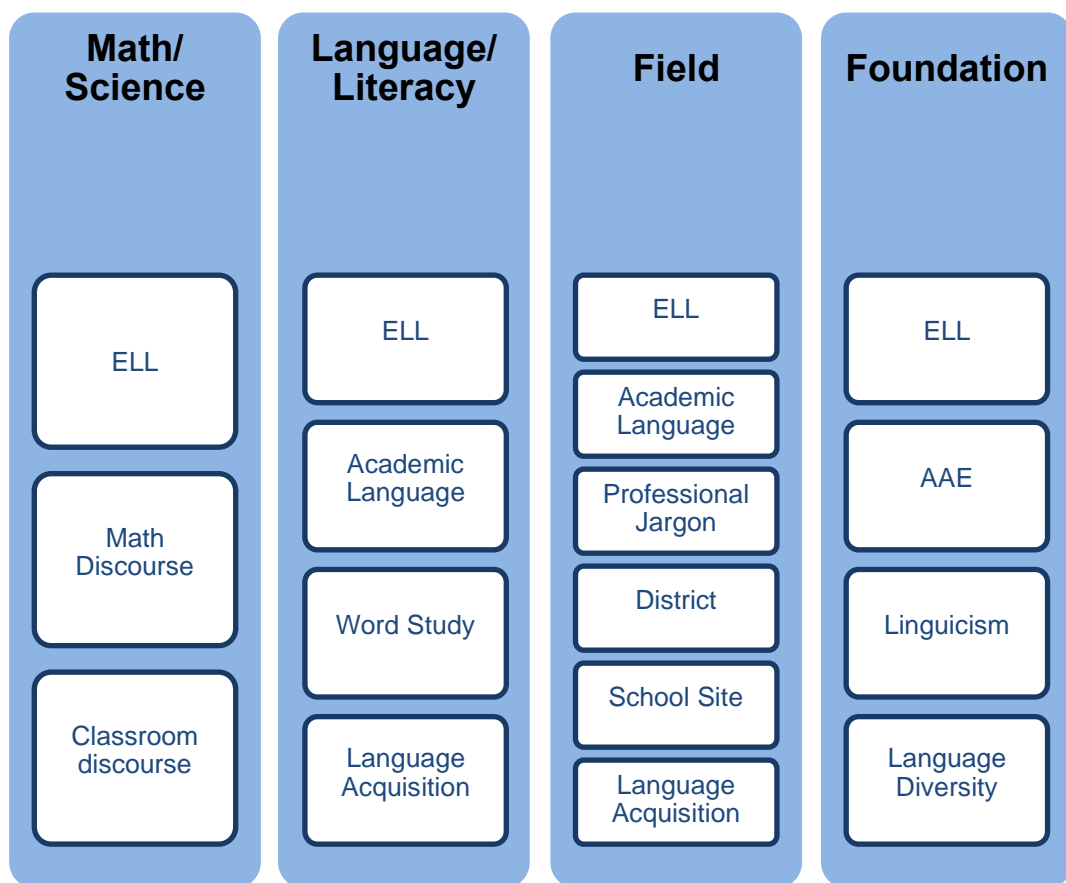
Faculty talked about being intentional but not explicit so that preservice teachers could come to their own notions on what language was and how to invite, accept, respect, and incorporate student’s languages and cultures into the classroom. Brad, Participant #2, “What’if I d’n’t speak, Ebonics, AAE? Should I like trying to fake it? That doesn’t seem authentic, so how do I use it in the classroom if ‘I’m not a native speaker?’” Participant #2 continued,

I always respond to that question by saying, all right. So swap out AAE and put in Spanish or French and ask the question again. What if I’m not a native Spanish speaker, but I’m teaching kids that speak Spanish. How do I incorporate their language into the classroom? They immediately come up with all these ways to do it. And I say to them part of what you’re struggling with is you still don’t see this as a legitimate language. When you put in a language that you see as legitimate, suddenly, you see ways to incorporate it into the classroom. Talking about it and presenting about it is one thing, but getting students to really embrace it, really understand it, really shift their consciousness is different.

**UTEP Courses Combating Bias and Legitimizing Language.** The foundation to accept AAE and the disposition to know it was needed began in the CRP course. Considerations of language variations, including ELL instruction, are part of CRP. Because CRP drove the UTEP program, the importance of language variation was addressed. This study found that language variation was mentioned in four course streams (see Figure 10).

**Figure 10**

*The Ways Language Variation Is Addressed in Four Course Streams*



In addition, the acceptance of AAE was introduced as preservice teachers subscribed more to CRP and ELL strategies. Through discussions, assignments, and readings, preservice teachers developed more knowledge of CRP and appreciation for language variations such as AAE. Thus,

the program approach created an environment where biases have been addressed, language and culture are legitimized, and CRP was accepted.

Although AAE did not appear in many courses, ELL appeared in ten of 16 courses as a subject. Language variation appeared more frequently in the readings than explicitly in syllabi. Although this construct appeared in course lessons, the focus group shared that language variation was more like an individual discovery for each preservice teacher to explore, recognize, and respond accordingly. For example, preservice teachers discussed and examined how they felt about language based on their upbringing and education in the CRP course. They explored all those preconceived notions of good English versus bad and broken English. Focus group participants talked about “legitimizing languages” like AAE and looked at more than just ESOL instruction for language variation. Although most courses had some information on ELL, only two classes, ESOL Language Acquisition and Teaching Literacy to Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Learners, focused on ELL. In addition, there was a field experience course and a ESOL Student Teaching course dedicated to serving ELL. Examination of the documents revealed that ELL instruction covered a multitude of areas. These documents are listed in Table 8.

**Table 8***Reading Emphasis on ELL*

<b>Syllabus</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
Student Teaching I	Gorski, P. <i>Seven Key Characteristics of a Multicultural Education Curriculum</i> . <a href="http://www.edchange.org/multicultural">http://www.edchange.org/multicultural</a>
Student Teaching II	Gorski, P. <i>Seven Key Characteristics of a Multicultural Education Curriculum</i> . <a href="http://www.edchange.org/multicultural">http://www.edchange.org/multicultural</a>
ESOL Student Teaching	ESOL FIELD EXPERIENCE CHECKLIST & JOURNAL
Teaching literacy to Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Learners	Laman, T. T. (2013). <i>From ideas to words: Writing strategies for English language learners</i> . Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann  Five Standards of Effective Pedagogy – Article
Social Studies methods for diverse learners	Buhrow, B., & Garcia, A. U. (2006). <i>Ladybugs, tornadoes, and swirling galaxies: English language learners discover their world through inquiry</i> . Portsmouth, NH: Stenhouse Publishers.
Language Acquisition: Creating Linguistically Sustaining Classrooms	Wright, W. (2019). <i>Foundations for Teaching English Language Learners: Research, Theory, Policy and Practice</i>  Baker-Bell, A. (2020). <i>Linguistic Justice: Black Language, Literacy, Identity and Pedagogy</i>  Markos, A., & Himmel, J. (2016). <i>Using Sheltered Instruction to Support English Learners</i> . Center for Applied Linguistics Washington, DC 20016-1859.  Anzaldúa, G. (1987). <i>Borderlands: The new mestiza = La frontera</i> . San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute.  de Oliveira, L.C., & Shoffner, M. (2017). Courageous literacy: Linguistically responsive teaching with English Language Learners. <i>Voices from the Middle</i> , 24(3), 44-47.
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy	Unit – - Language & Linguistic Diversity  Nieto, S. (2009). <i>We speak in many tongues</i> . In <i>Language, culture and teaching</i> (2 <sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 112-132). New York: Routledge
Elementary Mathematics Curriculum and Pedagogy	Van de Walle, J., Karp, K., & Bay-Williams, J. (2019). <i>Elementary and Middle School Mathematics: Teaching Developmentally</i> (10 <sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Pearson.  Ch. – - 6. Teaching Mathematics Equitably to All Students

**Table 8 Continued**

<b>Syllabus</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
Teaching Mathematics in Urban Schools	Kersaint, G., Thompson, D., & Petkova, M. (2013). <i>Teaching Mathematics to English, Language Learners</i> (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge
Critical Issues in Elementary Mathematics	Moschkovich, J. (2002). A situated and sociocultural perspective on bilingual mathematics learners. <i>Mathematical thinking and learning</i> , 4(2&3), 189–212.  Esmonde, I., & Caswell, B. (2010). Teaching mathematics for social justice in multicultural, multilingual elementary classrooms. <i>Canadian Journal of Science, Mathematics and Technology Education</i> , 10(3), 244–254.

CRP creates a supportive platform for language variation. UTEP dedicated several activities, readings, and assignments to breaking deficit views of language and providing actual pedagogical assistance in teaching English learners. Urban education, CRP, and language variation set the base for introducing preservice teachers to the importance of AAE.

Also assigned in another literacy course was a book called *Foundations for Teaching English Language Learners: Research, Theory, Policy and Practice* (Wright, 2019). Language acquisition and academic needs of ELL, from a socio-political perspective, introduced the importance of classroom practices and planning for ELL. The rights of ELL to a fair and full education were examined as well as the impact of placing limits on students' native language usage. This book also examined the diversity within ELL populations. CRP required preservice teachers to advocate for ELL and all students' rights to fair and full education through critical consciousness.

The CRP course drew on English Language Learners' literature and made a correlation with AAE. At the end of the semester, preservice teachers in the CRP course were assigned a synthesis paper calling for them to be reflective about "diversity, equity, privilege, language, access, critical and culturally responsive pedagogy, and opportunity." This course set the scene

for both the CRP grounded culture of the program as well as steps toward developing preservice teachers attitudes and approaches to language variation and AAE. The *BaFa BaFa* exercise (Shirts (2009) was an example of this process that guided preservice teachers to realize how negative traits are placed on different or misunderstood things.

In the course, Teaching Literacy to Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Learners, reading, writing, and speaking for culturally and linguistically diverse students was the focus. The syllabus referred to “deep meaningful learning” through authentic purpose collaboratively constructed by learners and instructors. A learning outcome from the syllabus was to “unlearn dominant notions of linguistic legitimacy and to center teaching practice around linguistic identities and communities of students.” Unlearning dominant notions of linguistic legitimacy was about abolishing linguistic bias in preservice teachers.

Looking at language variations as *linguistically diverse* as opposed to *linguistically disadvantaged* was aligned with the program philosophy. Language Acquisition: Creating Linguistically Sustaining Classrooms was a literacy foundation course specifically designed for serving ELLs. The “unlearning of dominant notions of linguistic legitimacy” was crucial in establishing validity for a variety of forms of English, such as AAE. In this course, preservice teachers learned about the groundbreaking language variation cases such as *Mendez v. Westminster* (Valencia, 2005) and read about how to be linguistically responsive to English learners. Linguistic identity and legitimacy were addressed in this course, centering students as the normative group. Bennett-Armistead et al.’s (2005) book titled *Literacy and the Youngest Learner* was required reading for the this foundational class. The authors insisted that literacy built language, knowledge, and vocabulary that began at birth. Although this text did not

explicitly mention AAE or language variation, it did provide evidence for the connection between oral language and literacy learning.

In the math/science courses, language variation was also discussed concerning ELL. For example, in Critical Issues in Elementary Mathematics, preservice teachers were encouraged to see themselves as change agents and catalysts for educational reforms. Books and articles used in this course discussed the changing landscape of urban schools, including issues of linguistic diversity. “If mathematics reforms are to include language-minority students, research needs to address the relation between language and mathematics learning from a perspective that combines current perspectives of mathematics learning with current perspectives of language, bilingualism, and classroom discourse” (Moschkovich, 2002, p. 190; mathematics course reading). In the spirit of sociolinguistics and CRP, math instruction required grounding in students’ native language and cultural experiences.

Integrating math into students’ cultural and linguistic practices made lessons practical and supported students’ mathematical identity development. In another article by Rubel (2017), language variation was directly addressed. This article called for preservice teachers to take an authentic interest in students “everyday activities, heritage, and home language” (p.8). This article used two examples of teachers connecting with students through language variation. The first example described the use of Spanish to communicate with students and parents. In contrast, the second example illustrated a teacher’s use of “youth language.” Using a student’s language was considered an equity-directed practice that merged school mathematics and out-of-school language. Language variation in this text was described as an asset.

### **UTEP Assignments Combating Bias and Legitimizing Language.**

The autoethnographic assignment from the course, Language Acquisition: Creating Linguistically Sustaining Classrooms worked to combat bias by recognizing unfair and unwarranted views of language. Preservice teachers examined assumptions and beliefs about language and language teaching and learning. The preservice teachers recalled, then questioned how their linguistic and cultural upbringing intertwined. They then looked at how this discovery influenced their teaching and assumptions about language and students.

In addition, Brad, Participant #2, discussed bringing language bias to preservice teachers' attention.

There are two pieces. One is to teach how to effectively utilize your students' language in your teaching, but the other pieces, specifically when it comes to African American English is to diminish some of the negative ideals, they have that are connected to that language.

Language subordination minimizes the people who speak that language. One literacy course in the program acknowledged that to break deficit notions, one must help preservice teachers use their student's home language and community knowledge as the foundation for planning teaching and learning. One of the ESOL assignments called for "Centering teaching practice around linguistic identities and communities of students" and was grounded in CRP's academic success and cultural competence.

The more familiar preservice teachers are with students' home language, the more information they have for planning for students' success. Legitimizing home language came through in lessons that reinforced respecting and honoring the language and culture of the school community. It also happened by allowing students space to speak and write in their home



language, as seen in the CRP course and utilizing literature with community ties through language as done in the CRP literacy library assignment.

In the CRP class students read Nieto's (2009) work on linguicism and were introduced to linguistic discrimination during a unit on Language and Linguistic Diversity. This unit was described by faculty as the catalyst to extensive conversations on English language variation and the political, social, and academic implications of teaching various forms of English (focus group).

**Theme 5. The CRP standards of academic rigor and high expectations serve as a mechanism to support instruction in language variation teaching and practices.**

Within the UTEP program, high expectations and academic rigor were grounded in CRP practices. These CRP practices are supported by regulating bodies and the student success that resulted. These standards and practices also set the stage for high service by preservice teachers who were preparing to serve and affected how, why, and what they taught. Although these standards did not specifically address AAE speakers and their needs, several standards provided strong underlying support for language variation teaching and practices.

**Academic Rigor as Standards.** Academic rigor standards were fundamental to the mission of the UTEP program. UTEP built its program philosophy around this mission: a “Rigorous program that seeks to promote the success of elementary students schooled in urban contexts through the development of pedagogically competent, equity-oriented, caring, empowered teachers who are change agents inside and outside the classroom.” As part of this mission, the first tenet the UTEP program addressed was academic success by emphasizing rigor or high expectations for learners in urban schools.

The UTEP program infused rigor and high expectations into the curriculum to prepare preservice teachers to become culturally relevant teachers. In the document data, academic rigor was used to describe assignments given to preservice teachers from UTEP. The document data supported preservice teachers' academic rigor, which contributed to high expectations for their students. Preservice teachers using this model of CRP concentrate on how something is taught in correlation to students' mastery of the concept. Through this learning process, utilizing students' funds of knowledge makes rigorous concepts more attainable.

For example, rigor was mentioned in the seventh instructional standard, planning instruction in the math curriculum, and pedagogy courses. This standard calls for teachers to plan rigorous learning goals drawing upon content knowledge, curriculum, and pedagogy. This concept of rigor has three components: conceptual understanding, procedural skills and fluency, and application (Wagner, 2008). Thus, academic rigor is the result of training for preservice teachers that results in these high expectations.

Rigor is modeled by program faculty when preservice teachers are asked to align and synthesize ideas across courses, create thematic units, and develop authentic assessments that consider students' various learning styles and needs. CRP does not encourage remediation but

insists teachers shift their point of view so that students can learn from lessons designed for their strengths and experiences. This viewpoint is modeled in the UTEP program coursework by faculty differentiating instruction and scaffolding lessons from the strong community built with preservice teachers.

**Academic Rigor as Student Success.** Academic success is the first pillar of Ladson-Billings' (1994) CRP framework. The goal is intellectual rigor in their classrooms (Delpit, 1992; Irvine & Armento, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1997). Students' academic success is achieved through the development of academic rigor in teaching materials and teaching approaches. Intellectual rigor is the antithesis of the low expectations aligned with rote memorization, drills, and a one-note remedial curriculum that does not consider the students being served. Students are aware when their ways of being and feeling are detached and displaced from the education process (King et al., 2013; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2016). Intellectual rigor assumes students are competent and able to grasp all concepts given quality instruction that values the knowledge they bring from home and families. "Intellectual rigor is achieved by carefully "scaffold[ing] instruction and build[ing] bridges between the cultural experiences" (Gay, 2002, p. 44). Weiss and Wodak (2007) connect intellectual rigor to the constructive criticism, discussion, and challenge of ideas.

The CRP practice of academic success is conceptualized through intellectual rigor. It is modeled through analysis and evaluation, according to Weiss and Wodak (2007). Examples of rigor are Socratic seminars found in math courses or literature circles in classroom management courses. Specifically, in the UTEP program, academic rigor is defined as culturally appropriate ways teachers yield the most success from students.

Many document data sources from the program represented academic success associated with rigor. The first course in this program focused solely on CRP as described by Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994) in her seminal text *The Dream-Keepers: Successful teaching for African American students*. This program modeled CRP in courses for preservice teachers using tactics they could take into field experiences and eventually into their classrooms.

One tactic was to create classroom discussions and opportunities for students to share and connect material and their lived experiences. The tactic was often used in preservice teacher courses, and the practice then was carried by these preservice teachers into their classrooms. The ritual of “morning meeting” was one of the ways this was modeled. Preservice teachers conducted ice breakers and lesson introductions that opened the door to the material and thinking beyond and outside the given standard. Thus, CRP promotes rigor through a curriculum that affirms students’ identity and lived experiences. The UETP program supports this approach of using identity and lived experiences through multicultural literature and assignments that allow preservice teachers to explore some of their beliefs, values, and traditions.

Table 9 lists the courses that feature academic achievement through rigor and high expectations.

**Table 9***Features Academic Achievement as Rigor and High Expectations*

<b>Course</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
Math Curriculum and pedagogy	Instructional standard planning instruction calls for teachers to plan rigorous learning goals drawing upon content knowledge, curriculum, and pedagogy.
CRP	Synthesis papers, lesson plans, portfolios, or activities that merge ideas across assignments and courses
Student Teaching I & II	
* Mentorship	
Classroom Mgmt.	
Critical issues in Math	Socratic Seminars
Science Urban Classroom	“I Wonder” list assignment– - preservice teachers begin with what they know and branch out to what they wonder.
*Capstone	Problem solution project and digital storytelling
Classroom Management	Focus Child Project- choose a child with some sort of behavior challenge from their fieldwork experience. They observe and learn all about the child’s home life and classroom behavior. Academic Achievement is in designing a plan to meet the needs of the student based on information from observation.
Responsive Practice for Urban Education	Metacognitive Strategy assignment– - choose one or more metacognitive strategies to implement and reflect upon regarding how a student or group of students demonstrate metacognition to support their learning.
Responsive Practice for Urban Education	Community discourse analysis assignment– - look closely at language to determine themes that emerge in interaction and bring to the surface what might not be obvious.
Student Teaching I Foundations Literacy	Tutoring plan and tutoring

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\*Denotes Masters level coursework

Academic success represented by intellectual rigor supports preservice teachers' ability to explore academic English and home languages. It is the more profound understanding of language as more than just a means to communicate, but what it means to students to hear and see their language in books or represented in course materials. Table 10 presents three significant assignments in that course and how they align with rigor components. Introducing preservice teachers to rigor and high expectations promotes them to change curricular choices and explore different teaching methods to assist students instead of remediation. All the assignments that show rigor and high expectations set the culture of believing students can succeed given instruction tailored to their needs.

**Table 10***Evidence of Rigor Related to Assignments*

<b>Course -</b>	<b>Conceptual Understanding -</b>	<b>Procedural Skills and Fluency -</b>	<b>Application -</b>
Elementary Mathematics Curriculum and Pedagogy-	understanding concepts, operations, and relations, more than knowing isolated facts and methods. Students should be able to make sense of why an idea is important and the kinds of contexts in which it is useful. It also allows students to connect prior knowledge to new ideas and concepts.	ability to apply procedures accurately, efficiently, and flexibly, requires speed and accuracy. Students' ability to solve more complex application tasks is dependent on procedural skill and fluency.	provides valuable context for learning and the opportunity to solve problems in a relevant and a meaningful way. Through real-world application students learn efficient methods to find a solution, determine whether the solution makes sense by reasoning, and develop critical thinking skills.
Reading Responses & Sharing Resources	Think critically as you search for resources. You want to make sure that the resource you select is more than "cute" or "fun."		<p>Present the resource and explain what it is</p> <p>Discuss what purpose it serves and why you are recommending it</p> <p>How you think you might use it in your classroom</p> <p>Criticism of the resource (is there something you think is less useful)</p>

<b>Course -</b>	<b>Conceptual Understanding -</b>	<b>Procedural Skills and Fluency -</b>	<b>Application -</b>
Follow the Concept	You need to become familiar with the math standards and concepts for each grade level and to practice matching problems/tasks to standards (not everything is a good problem/task!). For each strand (algebra, geometry, measurement, data & analysis), you will:	Choose a concept and look at it across grade levels  Find/create/modify a task/problem for each grade K-6 (you can use parts of problems)	Explain why you selected each problem (what the goal/purpose is for each) and how you think each problem would help meet that goal  Describe what you notice about the progression of the overall concept and what students will learn about it throughout elementary school.
Lesson Plan	You are to write a detailed math lesson. You will be given a lesson plan template to use for your planning.	Choose a primary standard. Then choose standards for the other two lessons that support the primary standard; these standards can come from the other strands or the same strand.	You will need to think about manipulatives that need to be available and how you will incorporate them into your lesson.

This data stressed the importance of content knowledge and teaching and emphasized learning to apply, analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and create. Knowing how to synthesize ideas was an example of an elevated understanding of concepts—synthesizing ideas meant being able to look at concepts with flexibility, calling on prior knowledge, and relating it to an enlarged or more profound concept. One example in the program was assignments requiring reflections or synthesis across courses. Eleven of sixteen courses had reflection activities that merged ideas across assignments and courses.



One example of academic success through rigor was addressed in the problem-solution project and digital storytelling in the Capstone course. This course used three interrelated assignments to achieve rigor, and each assignment was grounded in the student's life and experiences. These assignments are meant to develop effective preservice teachers through intense student and community studies. For example, preservice teachers chose a problem through critical analysis and proposed a solution that they then implemented. The syllabus described this assignment as a combination of service-learning and critical pedagogy. The problem-solution project was an active way preservice teachers could put theory to practice by looking into how students' home lives and class experiences collided. See Table 112.

**Table 11***Courses Related to Rigor that Use Student's Life Experiences*

<b>Course</b>	<b>Conceptual Understanding</b>	<b>Procedural Skills and Fluency</b>	<b>Application</b>
Capstone	Understanding concepts, operations, and relations, more than knowing isolated facts and methods. Students should be able to make sense of why an idea is important and the kinds of contexts in which it is useful. It also allows students to connect prior knowledge to new ideas and concepts.	Ability to apply procedures accurately, efficiently, and flexibly, requires speed and accuracy. Students' ability to solve more complex application tasks is dependent on procedural skill and fluency.	Provides valuable context for learning and the opportunity to solve problems in a relevant and a meaningful way. Through real-world application, students learn efficient methods to find a solution, determine whether the solution makes sense by reasoning, and develop critical thinking skills.
Action Research Project	Upon completion of this project, students will demonstrate knowledge of the fundamental principles of action research.	Critically reflect on their teaching practice through inquiry.	Conduct an action research project using an appropriate research method.
Problem-Solution Project	Combines service learning with critical pedagogy.	As a class (student-led), decide on a school, community, world, or environmental problem your students want to work towards a solution. Some form of action must be taken during the semester. At the end of the project, you will write a reflection on the process. The reflection will include: (a) your thoughts on the decision-making and implementation processes, (b) what you think you and your students accomplished, (c) the usefulness of the PSP as a tool for empowering and engaging learners, and (d) suggestions for how you might implement project-based service-learning into your future pedagogy.	Final outcomes include empowering the learner to consider the practical implementations of project-based serving learning as a teaching tool

Course	Conceptual Understanding	Procedural Skills and Fluency	Application
Capstone Digital Storytelling Video Project	Upon completion of this project, students will synthesize their practice as it relates to their students' families and communities	Synthesize their practice as it relates to effective differentiation of teaching and learning	Conduct action research to reflect on their teaching practice. Facilitating service-learning (Problem Solution Project) and reflect it as a critical pedagogy approach.

**High Expectations.** Teachers held high academic expectations for students expecting the best and teaching to elevate. CRP prepared students to perform in society by teaching the skills necessary to succeed in the dominant culture. An example of this rigor was found in the classroom management course through one assignment, the Focus Child Project. This assignment operated from a belief that students could succeed with the right lesson approach in place. From their fieldwork experience, preservice teachers chose a student with some sort of behavior challenges. They observed and learned about the student's homelife and classroom behavior. They observed and assessed, then created interventions and reflections on the student's success. The expectations were not lower, but the approach was adjusted to and represented a student-centered perspective.

Using students' language and culture as the base for instruction allowed high expectations to be met. This was done in the CRP and literacy courses when preservice teachers were asked to gather diverse reading resources. This assignment was repeated several times. In addition, in classroom management and ESOL literacy courses, preservice teachers were assigned student or community studies. These assignments made them more familiar with students, opening the opportunity and knowledge to create quality lessons.

**Theme 6. CRP provides a foundation for understanding power through variation in language.**

In this UTEP program, CRP provided a solid foundation to support instruction in language variation. Language variation in this program covered ELL and language as it related to power. Language's relationship to power and status and larger systems beyond classrooms appeared in several data sources. The readings and assignments supported language and power in three ways. First, by allowing student voices, power was shared in classrooms. The second way was through the power of the preservice teacher's language. The third way power was discussed was through what was included and excluded in teacher education and how it was approached.

"Social Studies, Literacy, and Social Justice," by Stenhouse et al. (2014), was required reading for the social studies methods course. Power was discussed concerning sharing roles and responsibilities in the classroom. Preservice teachers learned to look critically at how and what they were teaching. The book tackled service-learning and both students' and teachers' roles in education and societal reforms.

**Teacher Language.** The teaching of language and power begins with understanding that language is not neutral (Hanks, 1997). Johnston's (2004) *Choice Words* was required reading in five out of sixteen classes and illustrated how language has power in teaching. "Teachers can position students as competitors or collaborators, and themselves as referees, resources, or judges" (p. 9). Students are establishing classroom identities, and teacher language has a significant impact. Johnston continued by saying, "A teacher's choice of words, phrases, metaphors, and interactions sequences invokes and assumes these and other ways of being a self and of being together in a classroom" (p. 9). Language is a situated social practice grounded in asking and answering questions. How teachers responded to those asking and answering of questions built the classroom culture and power dynamics in the classroom.

Another example of how language is associated with power was the Responsive Practice for Urban Education course, where preservice teachers conducted a community discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is a research method for examining written and spoken language used in real situations. Preservice teachers videotaped themselves teaching and then transcribed the interactions. Next, they chose three to four phrases they believed might have influenced students during the lesson. Finally, using Johnston's Choice Words (2004), preservice teachers analyzed their language and impact on students' identity.

**Student Voices.** CRP promoted student-controlled and academic-related discourse (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Allowing those varied student voices was related to power. Acknowledging that students speak more than just Standard Academic English showed a level of respect for varied Englishes (Chambers & Gopaul, 2008). By centering students' voices in the classroom, power was better balanced. Students assumed a more active role in the education process.

Preservice teachers opened spaces to affirm student voices instead of negating voices by disassociating the classroom from students' personal histories and foundational literacy practices gained before entering school, such as language. Preservice teachers who made space in planning and curriculum for cultural differences were more likely to believe that non-dominant groups can learn – even when ways of thinking, talking, and behaving were different (Bennett, 2015). This value was reinforced in the Critical Issues in Mathematics course. The syllabus called for Freire's (1971/2009) problem-posing pedagogy. Freire's process allowed space for multiple voices to be heard and multiple perspectives to be considered. According to the syllabus, "the teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for the process in which all grow." This approach to teaching represented a shared power in the classroom based on the value of student voices and the ability to express themselves, reflecting their language, experiences, and culture in the classroom. This experience was empowering for both ELL and AAE students.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

The study was designed to examine how AAE is approached in a teacher education program to prepare preservice teachers to enter urban schools. Limitations appear in all research

projects. These limitations represent the possible weaknesses of the study (Simon, 2011). In this study, limitations exist in each methodological choice, including the research methodology, research design, sampling size and strategy, data collection approach, and data analysis.

### ***Limitations***

The purpose of the study was to explore an unknown area. Therefore, I took a qualitative approach that came with some limitations. These limitations are mainly the researcher's use as the instrument of interpretation. However, the information was not readily available and required some work to gather into a more coherent case. Additionally, my resources were limited to examining a single case, one urban teacher education program. Using multiple cases could provide more rigorous support for the initial contentions surrounding AAE and language variations explored in this study. In addition, a cross-case analysis could provide broader insight into the approaches used by different programs and different approaches to the needs of local populations.

Another limitation was the use of documents in this study as the primary data source. I used documents because they were available, cost-effective, and efficient. Further, documents are unchanging and can cover long or short periods. In addition, documents do not depend on people's willingness to participate (Bowen, 2009; Yin, 1994). However, the limitations of documents as a primary data source were that documents often leave out pieces of the story, and their availability determines the selection of documents to be examined (Yin, 1994). Because of these limitations, I conducted focus groups to support the document analysis and reveal missing pieces. In addition, this case was delimited to documents used by the UTEP during one particular year.

The use of grounded theory as the guiding method for collecting and analyzing the focus group data also has limitations. One concern in grounded theory is that large amounts of data can be challenging to manage and messy to organize. In addition, grounded theory analysis focuses on discovering ideas and insights instead of collecting statistically rigorous data. On the other hand, the study aims to uncover unknown themes concerning the issues, and grounded theory supported this application of the research efforts.

Finally, two significant limitations to the study are my close relationships to the topic of African American English and the UTEP program. I grew up in the Oakland public school system during the height of the Ebonics argument. I taught in urban schools in a district that provided professional developments to support AAE for many years. I worked for the UTEP program for eight years. Thus, I approached this study with some knowledge of the issues and the program.

Due to my personal background and the potential for bias, it is vital for me to keep a journal, note what I was thinking, and continuously question whether I was gaining information from the notes or my experience. There are several places where the documents were not as thorough as I had witnessed, but I had to remember this study is based on the documents. The focus groups are meant to clarify any places in the documents that might have been unclear. Thus, this strategy serves to provide further structure and adherence to the methods of the study.

### ***Delimitations***

Two major delimitations were apparent in this study. The study was delimited to a small number of participants that were interviewed during the focus groups. This delimitation was created due to the need for societal interaction limitations created by Covid-19, the study design was adjusted from one larger focus group to accommodate two smaller focus groups with



different participants. These two focus groups consisted of faculty and supervisors who knew the UTEP program and could respond to the interview questions. Unfortunately, this environment also limited the number of participants that might have participated in otherwise normalized conditions. Additional participants may have provided more insights.

Further, the focus group environment was delimited and modified from a face-to-face setting to a technology interfaced environment using Zoom.us communications. This delimitation caused conflicts in scheduling and discomfort with the focus group participants. The study was therefore limited by an environment where spontaneity and the normal process of building on the comments of others were more challenging to achieve. Thus, the societal context and public limitations on gathering were significant limitations in this study. The change from face-to-face to virtual classes may or may not have affected how classes were taught and what was included from content to pedagogy. However, these unknown conditions could have caused other limitations in the research that are not apparent. I choose not to include observation of instruction or interviews with preservice teachers in the research design because the research focus is on how the program addresses AAE. Preservice teacher interviews and observations would look deeper at how it is received, but documents and a focus group with professors looked deeper at the program's focus, culture, and intention.

## **Summary**

This case study was conducted to answer two questions: How is AAE addressed in an urban teacher preparation program, and how does CRP support an understanding of language variation in urban teacher preparation? The case under examination was an urban teacher education program (UTEP) at a large southeastern university located at the center of a highly populated urban city. Two data sources were collected: documents and transcripts from two

focus groups with program faculty and supervisors. These documents included 16-course syllabi, readings, and external documents, such as website information on the program and university, certification, and national standards that guide teacher education accreditation.

CRP was found to impact how AAE was addressed in this teacher preparation program in multiple ways. First, the program intentionally emphasized urban teaching and learning in non-deficit ways (theme 1). Second, the program's commitment to CRP fostered this intentionality. CRP necessitated the building of cultural competence and critical consciousness of preservice teachers (theme 2), which are essential for addressing AAE. AAE was not directly addressed in the program but was implicitly addressed through CRP and an emphasis on ELL (theme 3). The platform for understanding and supporting AAE was established through CRP and a commitment to combating bias and legitimizing language (theme 4). There may be multiple ways that CRP supported an understanding of language variations in practice. Finally, this study found that standards of academic rigor, high expectations (theme 5), and understanding the relationship between power and language (theme 6) were advanced through CRP and strongly connected to AAE.

## 5 DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses significant findings in the case study related to urban teacher education and culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), specifically how CRP needed to be more than one course. I discuss how to deconstruct bias through community building and draw on sociolinguistic (Tsui & Tollefson, 2006) and communication accommodation theories (Giles et al., 2004) to stress the importance of AAE. Opening the door for AAE was detailed through descriptions of combating bias and legitimizing language. Implications for teacher education are provided, along with the need for future research. A final concluding section ends this chapter.

This study revealed that the UTEP program recognized the importance of challenging deficit thinking about urban schools, and this was essential in preparing preservice teachers to serve in urban schools. Urban schools are often depicted as deficit in nature and described as linguistically disadvantaged and culturally impoverished (Rubel, 2017). However, what was seen as language deficient in specific contexts added to the diverse experience of urban teaching and learning in urban schools. From standard English language learners to speakers of varied forms of English, urban teachers used this knowledge as a springboard for scaffolding material. Thus, urban teacher preparation programs must intentionally show preservice teachers the diverse opportunities present in urban classrooms (Hughes et al., 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1991; Matias, 2016).

This research provided me with an idea for specific places where an urban education preservice teacher program can focus on African American English. Program courses attacked a deficit notion of urban schools and communities. The program intentionally challenged deficit thinking through readings, assignments, conversations, and projects. However, this challenge was an ongoing process and not something achieved with just one course.

This study brought bias to the forefront. All people have biases (Wang & Ryan, 2020). Some of this bias was inherent in the demographics of the program. The majority (76% ) of preservice teachers were white, female, and raised in suburban areas, while urban schools serve about 80% of students of color (Da Silva-Iddings, 2016; NCES, 2020; Sable et al., 2010). Therefore, misconceptions of African American students and misunderstanding of the use of AAE by preservice teachers are essential factors to address. The first course in this program centers on CRP and allows preservice teachers to identify what they are thinking and examine why and how this point of view is developed. New teachers enter the profession with implicit bias. The program begins by exposing this bias and then examines it throughout the program. Preservice teachers enter the program knowing there is a focus on urban education. However, they do not know how the subject will be approached. CRP appears in program information several times and is the foundation of all program courses. In this way, CRP becomes an essential source for their identity as a learner and future teacher.

This exposure is a necessary building block to urban teaching and sets the stage for AAE to be respected and contribute to increasing urban education effectiveness. Deficit thinking takes time and experiences to develop, so breaking those beliefs will also take time and experience. This study found that this program examines these perceptions and actively works to change negative views. Challenging deficit thinking lends itself to the recognition of AAE as a valuable tool for preservice teachers (McClendon, 2016) and can be achieved through CRP.

### **CRP is More than a Course**

The data reveals that CRP is carefully woven through this program. CRP is not a one-and-done lesson but an entire process that needs to be taught in several different ways and courses. The program appears to replicate what a culturally responsive class or culturally

responsive teachers do in the preservice teacher curriculum. Assessments and lessons vary to accommodate the different ways students learn added to their varying prior experiences.

Readings describe the acceptance of students' communication patterns and an understanding of African American cultural norms such as mutuality, reciprocity, spirituality, deference, and responsibility (King, 1994). Some courses require presentations, others use research projects, and others use more traditional tests or quizzes. Students are affirmed in their ability to code-switch, accommodating according to context, AAE, and a standard form of English. In addition, the students are supported in the attempts at role-switching between school and home. The study found the presence and influence of CRP throughout the program, which suggests that the program strongly relies on faculty and field supervisors who are knowledgeable in CRP and committed to its use. Therefore, teacher education programs should not only consider infusing CRP throughout a program of study but need to consider how to support faculty who must execute these same practices in their own work.

### ***DeConstructing Bias Through Community***

The practice of developing CRP recognized the importance of teachers' attitudes, expectations, and beliefs of students and communities (Charity et al., 2004). For example, the program begins with preservice teachers learning about their cohort members. Thus, the program begins by modeling the process of building community. The importance of community was further supported by the connection between knowledge of self and knowledge of others. Teachers mediated children's activity and experience and helped them make sense of life, learning, literacy, and themselves. In addition, affirming students' culture, language, and identities was central to their education. Community of Practice (COP) reflected social histories. It supported the CRP tenets of cultural competence and critical consciousness in preservice

teachers. Teachers were constantly negotiating their identity within the community and were considered community stakeholders sharing a common goal with community members. Support for students' home language supported teachers as part of a community of practice.

Effective teachers in urban schools need to go through a process of intense intrapersonal and interpersonal discovery to construct and deconstruct bias. Many of the courses explored cultural competence and critical consciousness, including implicit bias and ideas of self-awareness. I coded these activities as intellectually rigorous that required intense reflection. Many assignments found across courses required the preservice teachers to recall experiences from childhood and examine their personal beliefs, traditions, and values. Going through this process using a cohort-style community of supporters created the type of community CRP supported in classrooms with children.

Teacher preparation programs can benefit from using cohorts to prepare teachers for urban settings. Cohorts allow for idea sharing and encourage a support system and a space for ideas to be shared and improved upon (Seifert & Mandzuk, 2006). Culturally responsive teachers communicate high expectations through intellectually rigorous lessons (Gay, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Cohorts can also lessen the isolation that new teachers may feel, especially if they do not identify with the students they serve. Teamwork and group culture form relationships and shape identities. New teachers can enter the profession with a support team (their cohort members) who share a commitment to know the culture and community of the school. Finally, cohorts allowed programs to organize and administer classes and experiences to allow CRP to thread across a program and not be confined to one course.

## **Importance of AAE**

A socio-emotional toll is taken on children based on the opportunity gaps in schools across the nation. The dilemma of African American English-speaking students becomes one of negotiating the academic demands of school while demonstrating cultural competence at home and throughout the community. These inequities could and should be addressed at a systemic level. Teacher education is a significant component of this broken system. Thus, knowledge of AAE would further enhance teachers' reach with students who speak this English language variation.

AAE was not as explicitly discussed in the data collected for the study. Instead, the UTEP program spent a great deal of time unpacking CRP. Preservice teachers were taught the three principles of CRP in several different ways. It was also modeled in their classes taught by program faculty. With a strong foundation, AAE could have been the next layer of instruction. However, the lack of conspicuous AAE instruction in data signaled problems and barriers. If AAE were explicit, preservice teachers could develop a deeper understanding of English language arts. Written and oral language, literature, and history all play a role in AAE awareness. A program that overtly addresses AAE may assign an entire course to English language variation. This program asked students to dig into their past and current perspectives according to the data. However, the program's curriculum could have been carried to the next level and torn down linguistic bias while building tools for teachers to support AAE. A program with a strong emphasis on AAE would have iconic features listed throughout the syllabus with lessons that approach language as tools that require an understanding of context to know which tools to use. When preservice teachers are trained to consider language, they can look at all lessons

regarding challenges to and benefits of English language variation. They see the bigger picture beyond content in lesson planning.

Communication accommodation theory (CAT) examines the shifting of speech and changing style to fit the person in power. A primary assumption is that people gain favor through similarities (Giles et al., 2004). CAT supports shifting identities. Teachers and students become more aware of Englishes based on speech “shifts”. “Teachers who used language interaction patterns that approximated the students' home cultural patterns were more successful in improving student academic performance. Improved student achievement was also evident among teachers who used ‘mixed’ forms of language” (Giles & Powesland, 1997, p. 117). These mixed language forms present as a combination of Native American and Anglo language interaction patterns. Giles and Powesland (1997) termed this instruction “culturally congruent” (p. 110). In this way, language becomes another way of community building in the classroom.

Language has content, but it also bears information about the speaker, the listener, and their assumed relationship. The field of sociolinguistics is used to investigate systems of social inequality and how they are sustained through language (Ross & Rivers, 2018; Siegel, 2006; Wolfram, 2007). How people within a community speak are social facts, and language rules correspond with social structure (Cazden, 2017; Pateman, 1987). According to critical sociolinguistics, the absence of AAE in curriculum and standards coincides with social structure. Thus, there is power in what we deem worthy of study in a teacher education program and how we approach language differences. Languages are not better or worse, just more and less appropriate for given situations. Preservice teachers are reminded that language is contextual (Cha & Goldenberg, 2015). Academic English is used in some contexts, while other types of English are best for different situations.



CRP supports the existence of English language variation and its addition to preservice teacher education pedagogy. According to Delpit (1992), students learning to manipulate language from their home environment is just as valuable and important as their language in school. Teaching preservice teachers the contextual value of language assists in minimizing the false belief in a language hierarchy.

### **Combating Bias and Legitimizing Language: Opening the Door for AAE**

Cultural deficit theory (Hess & Shipman, 1965) argued that home deficiencies resulted in students entering schools with few skills and knowledge and behavior issues that resulted in poor school performance. Specifically, African American children's intelligence were questioned because of AAE spoken in homes. According to Labov (1972), this view was due to a lack of understanding of AAE. CRP opposes cultural deficit theory by requiring preservice teachers to be culturally competent, including knowing about the students' culture and recognizing AAE as a valid linguistic code. CRP further challenges the assumed hierarchy of a standard academic form of English.

Teachers' lack of knowledge of AAE could hinder students who do not speak Academic English by limiting their lesson delivery exclusive to students with greater command of more standardized registers of English (Wheeler & Swords, 2006). Looking at AAE as error-filled instead of a different linguistic code is untrue and ineffective for teachers. ELL and AAE speakers experience language bias when their language is downgraded, considered a broken form of the standard version, and outlawed in classrooms and communities. Therefore, an emphasis is made during the CRP course addressing components that lead to AAE understanding. Challenging deficit thinking reduces bias and opens the door to English language variation as an asset to the classroom and school community. Getting preservice teachers to value the

knowledge students bring into the classroom, including the languages spoken at home, opens the door for AAE as an asset for teachers. Home language is part of a student's culture. Including students' culture in the classroom validates the students' culture and welcomes that culture to create a robust and inclusive classroom culture.

Attention to academic rigor and high expectations supports language variation (Tomlinson, 2005). Teachers who hold high expectations know that students can grasp command of several different forms of English and understand when and where it is most appropriate to use each (Ferlazzo & Sypniewski, 2018). According to WIDA, World-Class Instructional Design Assessment, a website resource used in the Language Acquisition course, maintaining high expectations involves identifying thinking, determining what students can do, and using prior knowledge to scaffold new information.

## **Implications**

The purpose of this study was to examine how one urban teacher education program prepared teachers in English language variation, specifically AAE. This program was chosen because of its emphasis on urban education and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP). CRP was examined in relationship with African American English (AAE). Awareness of AAE and its value is culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1991, 1992). This study examined various conduits of learning for preservice teachers that included coursework and teaching activities for the presence, role, and function of AAE. The study's findings advanced knowledge and understanding of how awareness and constructs of AAE were developed through studying language variation and using CRP.

Using specific interpersonal and intrapersonal tactics allowed preservice teachers to do the work to find authentic ways to gain cultural competence. Preparing preservice teachers to use

CRP required introspective identity work for these preservice teachers and genuine inquiry about the backgrounds and communities of the students they served. This work helped them gain membership in their learning community of preservice teachers and their student teaching placement community. Language is one way to be culturally relevant. Adopting this approach will require teachers to see all forms of Englishes as accepted and valued forms of communication in their educational practices.

Helping teachers respond in ways that nurture and support English language variation while contrasting patterns of AAE with SAE is a complex undertaking. Teacher education programs need strategic planning resulting in purposeful curricular choices and a targeted program philosophy related to language variation. CRP is the framework that helps preservice teachers recognize and acknowledge language variation and African American English. With an understanding of CRP, preservice teachers can be trained to recognize AAE features they will encounter in their classrooms. This training should include AAE features' background and strategies to guide students into mastering different dialects.

Smitherman (2021) suggests developing a critical language awareness where preservice teachers look at the politics in declaring a standard academic correct form of English over what is spoken in communities and homes. To develop this critical awareness, preservice teachers working with students with diverse language backgrounds should know about language acquisition, effective practice, policy, work with families, and sociocultural knowledge of students from both studying and developed through classroom experience (Nieto, 2017, p.130). Nieto (2017) writes that ESOL and bilingual education training benefit all language variations. She saw multicultural and bilingual education as assets to the school curriculum. Finally, according to Ladson-Billings (1996), teachers need to foster intrinsic reasons for learning, not

grades or test scores. Ladson-Billings asserted that lessons must relate to students' lives, involve choices, varied tasks, and culminate in concrete accomplishments.

Ladson-Billings also confirmed that language connection was essential between teachers and students. Language is a big part of a community and the way one identifies with others. Sociocultural and situated views of both language and mathematics learning assume that cultural beliefs and attitudes affect learning. AAE is a tool for teachers. This tool allows these teachers to gain access to students' home language and their traditions, beliefs, and values. Preservice teachers should know AAE as one of the many variations of English. As such, they should see AAE as a reflection of the heritage grounded in the community. Some preservice teachers may share a similar language background with students. This viewpoint provides them an advantage in forming a strong rapport with parents. They serve as a robust support system for students as peers as they can relate and identify how they can accept and affirm native language while increasing and employing standard academic language in places where it is appropriate.

Articles and books did mention how linguistic differences and ethnic and cultural differences must be addressed together. Also, English learners may be fluent in English but not SAE. Therefore, it is essential to see the connection between ESOL patterns and SAE. This same logic leads to the connection between ESOL and AAE. Urban schools are also characterized by being underfunded and under-resourced.

Given the demographics of teachers and urban schools, having AAE included in teacher preparation is necessary because many teachers will not have experienced the varied forms of Englishes. In addition, those who have this experience may or may not understand that it is not broken English, just different. As with the UTEP program, first-year preservice teachers must examine their backgrounds, biases, and views of language. First, if there are ideas of language

hierarchy or deficit views of AAE, those notions need to be challenged. Next, ways of accepting and affirming AAE should be explored. Following that, preservice teachers need to understand how language is contextual and the benefits of having command of varied Englishes. Finally, understanding the history and evolution of AAE strengthens ELA content knowledge. Preservice teachers are not to teach AAE but be able to recognize iconic features and assist students in understanding when and where to translate AAE to standard academic language.

Teacher innovation is another vital skill urban preservice teachers would find helpful through creative lesson planning and community resources. Ladson-Billings and Tate (2016) and Gay (2010) both included creativity in their descriptions of responsive student-centered teachers. Technology and curriculum updates are two ways to support innovation in urban preservice teachers. Providing teachers with access to learning platforms that explain multicultural and multilingual literature and appeals to varied communication and learning styles could further instruction concerning AAE. Programs that invite the community into the school and establish the school as a valuable resource to the community also assist in accepting and affirming students' home and community languages.

Finally, the study suggests that thinking about language, culture, and community is fostered through CRP and a deeper understanding and perception of what language is and its role in learning. Folk linguistics is essentially the study of language attitudes by people outside of the linguistics field. Niedzielski and Preston (2000) believe that folk linguistics is an undervalued field because it identifies and examines the beliefs of people based on perception as opposed to scientific inquiry. Theoretically positioning teachers as folk linguists will allow them to examine their notions of language. They will be learning tools and processes to recognize and challenge deficit thinking and stereotypes. They are the generalized assumptions made by people based on

language. From group membership to social and ethnic affiliations, from stereotypes at iconic features of dialects, folk language theories provide the foundation of these beliefs.

Positioning teachers as folk linguists could examine how they perceive students, family, and community simply by the way that they speak. Preservice teachers are developing their identity as teachers as they examine some of their core values and beliefs on the self and the students they are preparing to serve. Niedzielski and Preston (2000) called it dangerous and debilitating not to be aware of what real people think of language and its speakers. For teachers, we want to not only identify these beliefs but actively shape them to promote equity and social justice. Language is ever-evolving, and there is no real hierarchical value from one dialect to the next, except what people attach to it based on stereotypes and perceptions. As a result, folk linguistics is often dismissed, which sends a message that essential data on language cannot be garnered from non-linguist. Niedzielski and Preston described linguistic awareness as a degree of consciousness non linguists have in general about language.

The Oakland Unified School System contributed significantly to the broader recognition of AAE by beginning a debate that warranted national attention. The aim of the school district was misinterpreted. They called for awareness and concentrated understanding of AAE by teachers in order to assist students. The assumption that students would be learning AAE was incorrect. This assumption has left a negative impact on resources available for teachers of students who speak AAE. Today, some school districts offer teacher training and workshops on strategies to support AAE. This addition to the curriculum speaks volumes about their regard for the language and people who speak it. It speaks to AAE as a rule-based system over incorrect SAE.

Language acts out culture and is a catalyst for changing minds, thus the idea of identifying language as AAE versus labeling it as incorrect English.

When the language of change becomes available in the common culture, people are better able to name their yearnings for change, to explore them with others, to claim membership in a great movement, and to overcome the disabling effects of feeling isolated and half-mad (Palmer, 1992, p. 8).

This quote speaks to the power language has to unify groups.

### **Future Research**

I saw strong examples of how CRP supported an understanding of AAE in one UTEP program course. However, follow-up studies that examine specific components of CRP will be helpful. One example is critical consciousness. I found it very strong in three courses, but not in others. This pillar of CRP's emphasis on equity is important to AAE acceptance and usage as an instructional tool. A study that targets data on how critical consciousness is fostered is important. Using interviews and observations are critical in this type of study. A study that also explores the effects of CRP on preservice teacher beliefs and attitudes would be important. I would like to find out if preservice teachers notice a change in their personal perspectives toward language and how invested they are in CRP over the duration of the program.

Another area for further exploration is the implicit nature of AAE. I found a few instances where AAE was directly discussed, but most treatment of AAE was done implicitly. This information was gleaned mainly from focus groups. However, the focus group consisted of three of the seven faculty involved in the program. I learned from the faculty how AAE is implied and part of several conversations throughout the semester. I would be interested to know about the courses not represented in the focus group when AAE came up in class discussions. In

addition, I could have had more understanding of indirect ways AAE is introduced and supported.

Another urban-centered teacher education program could easily duplicate this study regarding dependability. In future studies, adding preservice teacher interviews could help determine AAE attitudes before and after the program. I would also like to replicate the study adding observations of the first course dedicated to CRP and the language arts classes. Discussing AAE instruction with preservice teachers after their first year of teaching would also guide the program in curricular and instructional choices.

## **Conclusion**

The teacher certification program I chose to study was a program that focused on teachers who want to serve in urban high need schools. The program's foundation was culturally relevant pedagogy, and the other courses were built around these beliefs. The research found that this teacher education program focused heavily on the urban context while preparing teachers to serve. "Urban high-needs" is the language used on the website and many syllabi to describe the location of the student teaching experiences and affiliated schools and districts. According to the document data, discrediting the prevailing deficit perspectives of urban teaching and learning begins in the first UTEP course and continues through the program. The foundation on which this new perspective was built was through the application of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). The three fundamental principles from the UTEP's mission statement were academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness. Academic achievement was seen in the data as rigor and high expectations. Preservice teachers learned to center students' culture and experiences in rigorous lessons to foster the highest levels of academic achievement. Critical consciousness was seen in the data through equity-oriented instruction and social justice.



Preservice teachers promoted equity through purposeful language and a classroom culture that recognized and respected student knowledge in classrooms. Cultural competence was represented in the data as knowledge of self and others. Finally, there seemed to be an unearthing of preservice teacher's identity as a new teacher and as a citizen, student advocate, and education scholar. Grounding the program in CRP meant having an interest in students' lived experiences, beliefs, traditions, language, and culture as a significant contributor to classroom culture and a basis for lesson planning and curriculum. This study supported the African proverb that knowing students' (linguistic) roots assists in helping them develop wings.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A.

#### Table of Documents

<b><u>Websites and Standards</u></b>	
<b><u>Internal</u></b>	
INT#1	University Website
INT#2	Program Website
INT#3	University Department Website
INT#4	College of Education Website
<b><u>External</u></b>	
EXT#1	InTASC Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium
EXT#2	TAP Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards
EXT#3	edTPA educative” Teacher Performance Assessment.
EXT#4	Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects GaPSC Georgia Professional Standards Commission
EXT#5	Georgia Professional Standards Commission 8 Standards for the Approval of Educator Preparation Providers and Educator Preparation Programs
EXT#6	National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
EXT#7	National Board Certified – Early Childhood Generalist
EXT#8	National Board Certified – Early Childhood Generalist Second edition teacher of students 3-8
EXT#9	National Board Certified – Literacy: Reading- Language Arts Standards Second edition teacher of students 3-8

EXT#10	National Research Council (NRC)
EXT#11	National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
EXT#12	National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)
EXT#13	Head Start Parent, family, and community framework – Promoting family engagement and school readiness from prenatal to age 8 (April, 2018)
<b><u>Courses</u></b>	
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	
Classroom Management and Instruction	
Responsive Practice for Urban Education	
Foundation of Literacy Instruction for Young Children	
Teaching Literacy to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners I	
ESOL: Language Acquisition	
Elementary Mathematics Curriculum and Pedagogy	
Teaching Mathematics in Urban Schools	
Critical Issues in Elementary Mathematics	
Science in the Urban Classroom	
Social Studies Methods for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners	
Opening School Experience	
Student Teaching I	
Student Teaching II	
ESOL Student Teaching	
Mentorship in the Urban Classroom I	
Urban Education Capstone Seminar	

<b><u>Course Readings and Materials</u></b>	
	Anyton,J.,(1981). Social class and school knowledge. <i>Curriculum Inquiry (11) 1.</i>
	<a href="https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2018/04/23/how-our-education-system-undermines-gender-equity/">https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2018/04/23/how-our-education-system-undermines-gender-equity/</a>  <a href="https://www.brookings.edu/research/girls-education-in-climate-strategies/">https://www.brookings.edu/research/girls-education-in-climate-strategies/</a>  Watch: The Mask You Live In <a href="https://gsu.kanopy.com/video/mask-you-live">https://gsu.kanopy.com/video/mask-you-live</a>
	Divided No More – _Palmer  The Story of Rachel and Sadie – _Childs  Watch I Am Not Your Negro (on Kanopy Films: <a href="https://www.kanopy.com/product/i-am-not-your-negro">https://www.kanopy.com/product/i-am-not-your-negro</a>
	Who Are The Bright Children – _Sternberg  Holding Nyla - Kissinger
	Funds of Knowledge – _Moll et al.  Schools, Prisons & the School-To Prison Pipeline  Noguera -- <a href="https://ejj.org">https://ejj.org</a>
	Denton, P. & Kriete, R. (2000). <i>The first six weeks of school</i> . Turners Falls, MA: Northeast Foundation for Children.
	Kriete, R. (2002). <i>The morning meeting</i> . Turners Falls, MA: Northeast Foundation for Children.
	Brady, K., Forton, M. B., Porter, D., & Wood, C. (2003). <i>Rules in school</i> . Turners Falls, MA: Northeast Foundation for Children. (ISBN-10: 1892989425)
	Crowe, C. (2009). <i>Solving thorny behavior problems: How teachers and students can work together</i> . Center for Responsive Schools, Inc.
	Johnston, P. H. (2004). <i>Choice words: How our language affects children's learning</i> . Stenhouse Publishers.

<b><u>Course Readings and Materials</u></b>	
	Bondy, E., Ross, D. D., Gallingane, C., & Hambacher, E. (2007). Creating Environmentsof Success and Resilience. <i>Urban Education</i> ,42(4), 326-348.
	Garrahy, D., Cothran, D., & Hodges Kulinna, P. (2007). Teachers' Perspectives on Classroom Management in Elementary Physical Education. <i>Urban Education</i> ,42(4), 326-348.
	Hoskins Lloyd, M., Kolodziej, N.J., Brashears, K.M. (2016). Classroom discourse; An essential component in building a classroom community. <i>School Community Journal</i> , (26)2, 291-302.
	Kounin, Jacob S. (1970). Discipline and Group Management in Classrooms. New York: Holt, Reinhardt and Winston
	LePage, P., Akar, H., Darling-Hammond, L. (2005). Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do.
	Stigler, J., Hiebert, J. (1999). Best ideas from the world’s teachers for improving education in classrooms. <i>The free press</i>
	Nieto, S. (2009). We speak in many tongues. In Language, culture & teaching (2nd ed., pp. 112-132). New York: Routledge. <a href="https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203872284">https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203872284</a> .
	Denton, P. & Kriete, R. (2000). <i>The first six weeks of school</i> . Turners Falls, MA: Northeast Foundation for Children.
	Kriete, R. (2002). <i>The morning meeting</i> . Turners Falls, MA: Northeast Foundation for Children.
	Brady, K., Forton, M. B., Porter, D., & Wood, C. (2003). <i>Rules in school</i> . Turners Falls, MA: Northeast Foundation for Children.
	Crowe, C. (2009). <i>Solving thorny behavior problems: How teachers and students can work together</i> . Center for Responsive Schools, Inc.

<b><u>Course Readings and Materials</u></b>	
	Johnston, P. H. (2004). <i>Choice words: How our language affects children's learning</i> . Stenhouse Publishers.
	Ladson-Billings, G. (1994—or a later version). <i>Dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American Children</i> . San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass
	Miller, D. (2013). <i>Reading with meaning: Teaching comprehension in the primary grades</i> . Portland, MA: Stenhouse.
	Bennett-Armistead, S. V., Duke, N., & Moses, A. (2005) <i>Literacy and the youngest learner</i> . New York, NY: Scholastic Inc.
	Bear, D. R., Invernizzi, M., Templeton, S., & Johnston, F. (2012). <i>Words their way: Word study for phonics, vocabulary, and spelling instruction</i> (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
	Bear, D. R., Invernizzi, M., Templeton, S., & Johnston, F. (2016). <i>Words Their Way: Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary, and Spelling Instruction</i> (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
	Laman, T. T. (2013). <i>From ideas to words: Writing strategies for English language learners</i> . Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
	Serravallo, J. (2015). <i>The reading strategies book</i> . Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
	Johnston, P. H. (2004). <i>Choice words: How our language affects children's learning</i> . Stenhouse Publishers.
	5 standards of effective pedagogy
	Agarwal-Rangnath, R. (2013). <i>Social studies, literacy, and social justice in the Common Core classroom</i> . A guide for teachers. NY: Teachers College.
	Buhrow, B., & Garcia, A. U. (2006). <i>Ladybugs, tornadoes, and swirling galaxies: English language learners discover their world through inquiry</i> . Portsmouth, NH: Stenhouse Publishers.



<b><u>Course Readings and Materials</u></b>	
	Stenhouse, V. L., Jarrett, O. S., Fernandes-Williams, R. M., & Chilungu, E. N. (2014). <i>In the service of learning and empowerment: Service-learning, critical pedagogy, and the problem-solution</i>
	Campbell, D., Cignetti, P., Melenzyer, B., Nettles, D. & Wyman, R. (2003). <i>How to develop a professional portfolio: A manual for teachers</i> . Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
	Gorski, P. <i>Seven Key Characteristics of a Multicultural Education Curriculum</i> . <a href="http://www.edchange.org/multicultural">http://www.edchange.org/multicultural</a>
	Brady, K., Forton, M. B., & Porter, D. (2010). <i>Rules in School: Teaching Discipline in the Responsive Classroom</i> (2nd ed.). Turners Falls, MA, USA: Center for Responsive Schools, Inc.
	Johnston, P. H. (2004). <i>Choice Words: How Our Language Affects Children's Learning</i> . Portland, Maine, USA: Stenhouse Publishers.
	Kriete, R., & Davis, C. (2017). <i>The Morning Meeting Book</i> (5th ed.). Turners Falls, MA, USA: Center for Responsive Schools, Inc.
	Kriete, R., Denton, P., & Anderson, M. (2017). <i>The First Six Weeks of School</i> (2nd ed.). Turners Falls, MA, USA: Center for Responsive Schools, Inc.

## APPENDIX B

### Informed Consent

Title: Roots and Wings: African American English Language Awareness in an Urban Preservice Teacher Education Program

Principal Investigator: Dr. Diane Truscott

Student Principal Investigator: Nicole Dukes

#### *Purpose:*

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to investigate a single urban teacher education program for evidence of training on African American English. As part of this study you will be asked to participate in two focus groups. During the first focus group you will answer structured and open-ended questions. The second focus group will be a brief review and critique of findings.

#### **Procedures:**

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to join the first focus group of four to six other faculty for a 60 - 90-minute discussion on how language variation and/or African American English is addressed in your course. The second focus group for 30-45 minutes in order to review the findings. The focus groups will take place at Georgia State in a private location and will be audio tape-recorded. The focus groups will be conducted by the student investigator, Nicole Dukes. You will also be asked to verify the course documents selected for analysis and invited to provide any additional documents for review not readily available.

#### I. Risks

In this study, risks are no more than what would happen on an average day of life.

#### II. Benefits

This study will not benefit you personally. However, it is anticipated that this study will provide a level of detailed program information not readily available to you that may help inform future practices and program design. Overall, I hope to gain information regarding language variation and African American English education in the program. There will be light snacks served.

#### III. Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal

Participation in research is voluntary. You don't have to be in the study. If you decide to be in the study and change your mind, you have the right to drop out at any time. You may skip questions or stop participating at any time. Whatever you decide, you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

#### IV. Confidentiality

We will keep your records private to the extent allowed by law. Nicole Dukes and Dr. Truscott will have access to the information you provide. Information may also be shared with those who make sure the study is done correctly (GSU Institutional Review Board, the Office for Human

Research Protection (OHRP). You will be asked to provide a pseudonym that will be used during the focus groups. Signed consent forms, list of pseudonyms and original audiotapes will be kept separate from transcriptions in a locked cabinet. Transcriptions will be stored in a password protected computer.

All hard-copied data will be scanned into electronic format and stored on password and firewall protected computers and shared drives in the College of Education and Human Development on the GSU downtown campus. Although we stress the importance of maintaining confidentiality in what is said in focus groups, we cannot guarantee confidentiality. Data sent over the internet may not be secure. All electronic files will be encrypted, password protected, and we will not collect IP addresses to further protect confidentiality. Your name and other facts that might point to you will not appear when we present this study or publish its results. The findings will be summarized and reported in group form. You will not be identified personally.

#### V. Contact Person

Contact Dr. Diane Truscott at 404-413-8020 or [dmr@gsu.edu](mailto:dmr@gsu.edu) if you have questions, concerns, or complaints about this study. You can also call if you think you have been harmed by the study. Call Susan Vogtner in Georgia State University Office of Research Integrity at 404-413-3513 or [svogtner1@gsu.edu](mailto:svogtner1@gsu.edu) if you want to talk to someone who is not part of the study team. You can talk about questions, concerns, offer input, obtain information, or suggestions about the study. You can also call Susan Vogtner if you have questions or concerns about your rights in this study.

#### VI. Copy of Consent Form to Participant:

We will give you a copy of this consent form to keep.

If you are willing to volunteer for this research and be audio taped, please sign below.

---

Participant

Date

## APPENDIX C

### Focus Group Questions

1. There is some discussion in the field of education about English language variation, specifically AAE, and whether it should be addressed in urban classrooms. Do you think there is a place for English language variations in curriculum? Pedagogy? Teacher education?
2. Tell me your thoughts on language variation.
3. Do you address language variation in your classes? If so, how? English language variation or ESOL?
4. Do you address AAE in your classroom? If so, how?
5. AAE is sometimes described in the literature through the use of Culturally Relevant Practices. What are your thoughts on this?
6. Is language variation part of the CRP emphasis in your course? If so, how?
7. Is the connection between CRP and language variation easier to make in some courses versus others?
8. As I examine different syllabi, will the presence of AAE be explicit or implicit? How so?
9. What influences your decisions regarding the presence of AAE in your courses?
10. What challenges do you see regarding the presence of AAE in your courses? In the program?

## APPENDIX D

### Document Analysis Protocol

Roots and Wings: African American English Language Awareness in a Preservice Teacher Education Program Focused on Preparing Teachers to Serve in Urban Schools

Syllabus	
Term	
Source – Who produced it?	
Why was it created? Motivation	
When is it taken?	

Syllabus	Language Variation - mentioned or implied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- AAE explicit or implied</li><li>- Context/Strategy/Content</li><li>- What is it tied to in terms of content, strategies, context?</li><li>- How is it discussed and by whom?</li><li>- What are the goals of its inclusion</li></ul>	CRP mentioned or implied						
			<table><tr><td>Academic success.</td><td>Cultural Competence</td><td>Critical Consciousness to challenge status quo</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>	Academic success.	Cultural Competence	Critical Consciousness to challenge status quo			
Academic success.	Cultural Competence	Critical Consciousness to challenge status quo							

## APPENDIX E

### Evidence of CRP in UTEP Courses

Syllabus	Type	Evidence
Foundations of Literacy Instruction	<b>Course Description</b>	The focus of this course is to explore a) literacy development during the elementary years, b) theories relevant to learning literacy, c) <b>culturally relevant teaching strategies</b> and skills that contribute to literacy learning, and d) ways that teachers can build on students' culture and prior knowledge to best meet the needs of students in diverse classrooms. The overall goals of this course are to equip you with beginning proficiency with a range of instructional practices and understandings of the theoretically based affordances and limitations to the use of each.
Responsive Practice for Urban Education	<b>Required reading</b>	Ladson-Billings, G. (1994—or a later version). <i><b>Dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American Children</b></i> . San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass
Classroom Management and Instruction	<b>Standard</b>	-Assessment: Classroom Management Portfolio, Reflections, Field Experience  The candidate will develop an effective, <b>culturally responsive classroom management system</b>
	<b>Required reading</b>	Chapter 4 -Ladson-Billings, G. (1994—or a later version). <i><b>Dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American Children</b></i> . San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass
Capstone	<b>Assignment narrative</b>	Empowering education is a critical-democratic pedagogy for self and social change (Shor, 1992, P.15). Thus, education is a process through which teachers and students <b>mutually investigate subject matter related to life issues, social issues, and academic knowledge</b> .
Science in the Urban Classroom	<b>Unit focus -</b>	<b>Culturally Responsive Science Education</b>

Student Teaching I	<b>Course Description</b>	: first of two student teaching field experiences that focuses on the practical application of classroom management, <b>culturally relevant</b> curriculum and instruction, and child development. Candidates will be observed and supervised in an urban school environment.
	<b>Assignment narrative</b>	- Evidence of your application of the <b>culturally responsive</b> philosophy should be apparent in your lesson plans and lessons, your interactions with students, your management plan, and your assessment methods.
Student Teaching II	<b>Course Description</b>	-Student Teaching II. Students must complete the course with a grade of "B" or higher. This is the second of two student teaching field experiences that focuses on the practical application of classroom management, <b>culturally relevant</b> curriculum and instruction, and child development. The candidate is observed and supervised in an urban school environment.
	<b>Course Requirements</b>	Evidence of your application of the <b>culturally responsive</b> philosophy should be apparent in your lesson plans and lessons, your interactions with students, your management plan, and your assessment methods. This includes any adaptations to grade level lesson plans.
	<b>Assignment component</b>	Where are you making, using, and applying <b>culturally responsive pedagogy</b> ?
ESOL Student Teaching		<b>Course Description</b> - Candidates have supervised field placements in ESOL classrooms as well as in non-ESOL classrooms with significant culturally and linguistically diverse student populations. The candidates are observed and supervised in urban school environments in various K-12 grade level placements. This field experience focuses on the practical application of <b>culturally relevant</b> curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Teaching literacy to Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Learners		<p><b>Assignment - Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) Library Text Set-</b> You will identify a text set of 10 picture books where the author is an insider and not an outsider, meaning that the author is part of the community (a community member). Your <b>CRP</b> Text Set should contain a variety of books that detail language and/or culture.</p>
Social Studies methods for diverse learners		<p><b>Course Description</b> - This is the third in a sequence of courses designed to prepare teacher candidates to be successful and reflective reading and writing teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse students in urban classrooms. The focus of this course is to continue to explore a) literacy development during the elementary years, b) theories relevant to learning literacy, c) <b>culturally relevant teaching strategies</b> and skills that contribute to literacy learning, and d) ways that teachers can build on students' culture and prior knowledge to best meet the needs of students in diverse classrooms.</p>
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy	<b>Learning Outcome</b>	<p>Teacher candidates will discuss key concepts and terms <b>relevant to cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity</b>.</p> <p><b>Course Objective</b> - The goal of this course, through independent, small, and whole group learning, is to develop preservice teachers as reflective practitioners who can critically examine, develop, and select and implement curriculum and content pedagogy that provides a quality, equitable and holistic education for all students. Through a process of introspection and application, preservice teachers will better understand the influence of culture, society, history, identity, and bias in teaching and learning while developing an understanding of critical <b>and culturally responsive pedagogy</b>.</p> <p><b>Assignment</b> - An important part of being a good teacher is being able to reflect on your learning and growth. The purpose of this assignment is for you to reflect upon and synthesize what you have learned throughout the course regarding issues of diversity, equity, privilege, language, access and opportunity in U.S. schooling, and critical and <b>culturally responsive pedagogy</b></p>



Elementary Mathematics Curriculum and Pedagogy	<b>Standard</b>	Our candidates use <b>knowledge of students' cultures, experiences, and communities to create and sustain culturally responsive classrooms</b> and schools.
Teaching Mathematics in Urban Schools	<b>Course Description-</b>	Candidates will develop <b>culturally responsive pedagogical skills</b> for teaching mathematics in elementary urban contexts. Candidates will acquire mathematical content knowledge and gain understanding about students as learners of mathematics.
Critical Issues in Elementary Mathematics		<b>Course Description:</b> Candidates will explore critical issues in elementary mathematics and their impact on instructional practice. Candidates will acquire advanced <b>culturally responsive mathematics pedagogical skills</b> , with specific emphasis on integrating instruction, families, and urban communities.
	<b>Assignments</b>	Watch Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings Video - Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). <b>Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy</b> . <i>American Educational Research Journal</i> , 32(3), 465–491.  <b>Reading</b> - Ladson-Billings, G. (2014). Culturally relevant pedagogy 2.0: aka the remix. <i>Harvard Educational Review</i> , 84(1), 74–84.
	<b>Reading</b>	Matthews, L. E. (2003). Babies overboard! The complexities of incorporation <b>culturally relevant teaching</b> into mathematics instruction. <i>Educational Studies in Mathematics</i> , 53(1), 61–82.
	<b>Reading</b>	Gutstein, E., Lipman, P., Hernandez, P., & de los Reyes, R. (1997). <b>Culturally relevant</b> mathematics teaching in a Mexican American context. <i>Journal for Research in Mathematics Education</i> , 28(6), 709–737.
	<b>Assignment</b>	What do I know/understand about.... Situated learning and communities of practice? <b>Culturally relevant pedagogy</b> ? Critical pedagogy and teaching for social justice?

	<b>Assignment</b>	Within each of the units, students will explicitly focus on teacher and student actions/interactions/behaviors that are planned/anticipated with respect to the three pedagogical perspectives explored this semester: situated learning/communities of practice, <b>culturally relevant pedagogy</b> , critical pedagogy/teaching for social justice.
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## APPENDIX F

### Examples of Urban School Deficit View Challenges in UTEP Assignments

Course	Assignment
<b>Culturally Responsive Pedagogy</b>	<b>Reflective Blog Posts:</b> reflections on classroom discussions, reactions to information being presented in the class and through the readings, and/or thoughts on how the course content is influencing the way you think about schooling and education. You should attempt to ferret out and think about those little statements, notions, and ideas that float by or within us all day that we avoid noticing, to write them down, to talk to ourselves about them, and lastly to think about what they mean from within what we learn in this course.
<b>Classroom Management and Instruction</b>	<b>Reading Reflections:</b> The process of reflection is critical to effective teaching. A reflection is more than just answering and describing; it includes careful consideration of the topic and how it affects you, your teaching, and/or your students. Throughout the semester you will be asked to reflect on assigned readings.
<b>Responsive Practice for Urban Education</b>	<b>Brochure:</b> Candidates will create a Professional Brochure highlighting their credentials and ability to be an effective teacher
<b>Foundations of Literacy Instruction</b>	<b>Written Response:</b> Prior to each class period, you will prepare a written response to the assigned reading. These responses should not exceed three double-spaced pages with Summary sections making up no more than one paragraph and the Connections, Puzzles, and Comments sections making up the remainder of pages 2-3.

Course	Assignment
<b>Teaching Literacy to Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Learners</b>	<b>Final Response Paper:</b> What did you learn from reading this book/articles/documentary? Now that you have finished, what do you realize you need to learn more about? How did the ideas in the book/articles/documentary influence your thinking about literacy instruction?
<b>Elementary Mathematics Curriculum and Pedagogy</b>	<b>Reading Responses &amp; Sharing Resources:</b> As a teacher, you will spend time finding various online resources. You will be responsible for finding and sharing ONE resource that you could use for math instruction. This could be anything from teaching strategies to problems you will use in your classroom. There are lots of ideas online, but they are not all good. Your job is to think critically as you search for a resource. You want to make sure that the resource you select is more than “cute” or “fun.” If you choose a resource that has problems, be sure that the problems are Worthwhile Mathematical Tasks.
<b>Teaching Mathematics in Urban Schools</b>	<b>Teaching and Learning Engagements:</b> During the semester students will engage in a range of pedagogical engagements. Engagements may include, but are not limited to, Mini lessons, Field Theory to Practice, Thought Thursday, Math Contextual Anchors, Teacher Tips, Student Empowerment, and Math Teaching and Learning Binder.
<b>Critical Issue in Elementary Mathematics</b>	<b>Summative Response Essays:</b> Write a concise and reflective academic essay of what you learned through the course readings and how it might assist you in your teaching.
<b>Science in the Urban Classroom</b>	<b>Reflective Blog:</b> A blog (short for weblog) is an online journal that blends a person’s individual thoughts and ideas with content on the web. It allows the writer to contribute her/his own voice to the public dialogue. Hence, a blog tends to reflect the unique identity of its writer. Furthermore, because they are published on the web, blogs give others the opportunity to read, learn about, and respond to your perspectives on different topics.

Course	Assignment
<b>Social Studies Methods for Diverse Learners</b>	<b>Reading Responses:</b> Criteria for the responses will be provided and practiced in class. Course readings are an important part of your professional development as an educator. It is expected that you will read and reflect on all required reading assignments as you prepare to actively participate in class discussions and apply learned information.
<b>Student Teaching I – Practicum Field Experience</b>	<b>Philosophy of Education:</b> An outline of your undergirding beliefs concerning teaching and what your philosophy would look like in the classroom.
<b>Student Teaching II</b>	<b>Analysis of Teaching:</b> In-depth reflection on your pedagogy is critical to your development as an effective teacher.
<b>ESOL Student Teaching</b>	<b>ESOL Field Experience Journal:</b> For each group of items you will submit the corresponding artifact, alongside a brief reflection on your learning related to that artifact.
<b>*Mentorship in the Urban Classroom</b>	<b>Opening School Experience Reflection:</b> Submit a one-page reflection critically examining the Opening School Experience’s effectiveness and your understanding of the procedures/knowledge necessary for a positive opening school experience.  <b>Reflective Analysis:</b> The teacher will submit reflective analysis papers twice during the fall semester after each observation.
<b>*Capstone</b>	<b>Reflection Paper:</b> Your reflection should be 3-5 pages and include: your thoughts on the decision-making and implementation processes, what you think you accomplished, the usefulness of the PSP as a tool for empowering and engaging learners, and practical ideas for how you might implement project based/service learning into your future pedagogy based on this experience.

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- Denotes courses taken during the first year of teaching.