The Power of Context, Teacher Preparation, Standards, and Dispositions on the Student-teaching Experience

Xuchys Perez

University of Miami, x.perez1@umiami.edu

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THE POWER OF CONTEXT, TEACHER PREPARATION, STANDARDS, AND DISPOSITIONS ON THE STUDENT-TEACHING EXPERIENCE

By

Xuchys Perez

A DISSERTATION

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THE POWER OF CONTEXT, TEACHER PREPARATION, STANDARDS, AND DISPOSITIONS ON THE STUDENT-TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Xuchys Perez

Approved:

Elizabeth Harry, Ph.D.
Professor, Teaching and Learning

Wendy Cavendish, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Teaching and Learning

Batya Elbaum, Ph.D.
Professor, Teaching and Learning

Miriam Lipsky, Ph.D.
Sr. Coordinator, Teaching and Learning

Jomills Henry Braddock II, Ph.D.
Professor, Sociology

M. Brian Blake, Ph.D.
Dean of the Graduate School
Despite the reform efforts and progress of teacher education programs to better equip teachers to teach in urban settings, research continues to report a pressing need for high quality teachers who understand the need for culturally responsive teaching. Faced with the tremendous structural forces working against historically underserved students, scholars and researchers expect teacher education to address inequalities through the promotion of multicultural education coursework and student-teaching placements in urban settings where student-teachers can gain experience with culturally diverse students. This qualitative study used interviews and observations to trace study four participants’ perceptions about their student-teaching experience as it unfolded in inclusive, urban classrooms and their opportunities to learn within this context. Qualitative methods using inductive and deductive approaches were used to analyze the data. The inductive aspects were investigated using a grounded theory approach. Darling-Hammond and Bransford’s (2005) model was used as a frame for exploring the role that the student-teaching experience has in preparing student-teachers to become change agents, equipped to work with diverse students, in urban, high-needs schools. The Darling-Hammond framework was also used for the deductive analysis of the data. The
inductive and deductive analysis revealed the strengths and challenges of the student-teachers experience in navigating the constraints of their urban, high-needs school.
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Isabel Leon, whose struggle as an immigrant single mother showed me how love for your children can make you persevere in the face of some otherwise unbearable challenges.
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Often time people speak of and think about a doctoral program as a survival period meant to test your intellect, resolve and strength: My experience has been no different. Were it not for the wonderful people who supported me throughout this arduous yet incredibly gratifying process, I certainly wouldn’t have made it. Although fully expressing how I feel about these people will be difficult to do here, I will nonetheless give it a try.

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Chapter I: Introduction

The current national debate over education reform can be traced back to *A Nation at Risk* (1983), a report produced by the Regan administration’s National Commission on Excellence in Education. Similar to Moynihan (1965) and Coleman (1966) and other commissioned reports meant to examine the condition of the national educational system, the authors, cited severe systemic problems with the educational system and pronounced that “the educational foundations of our society” were “being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity” (National Commission for Excellence in Education, 1983). In support of their claims, the commissioners offered numerous indicators of risk, including high levels of functional illiteracy among U.S. adults and concluded that at the time of the report “about 13 percent of all 17-year-olds in the United States” were considered “functionally illiterate” (p. 1). The report also underscored that minority students’ “functional illiteracy” could be as “high as 40 percent” (p. 2). In addition, the commissioners cited a decline in standardized test scores and students’ poor academic performance when compared to other industrialized nations as evidence of “mediocre educational performance” (p. 2). The commissioners’ call for increased educational excellence, defined as setting “high expectations and goals for all learners,” coupled with their critique of a failing educational system where “more and more young people emerge from high school ready neither for college nor for work” (p. 2), led to a myriad of controversial reform efforts aimed at improving education. Of particular significance to this study, a focus on teacher quality provided one way to ensure excellence in education.

Reforms that have been taking place for a quarter century in response to the commissioned report include a call for a larger, high-quality teacher workforce. This
increased attention to, and demand for, high-quality teachers has in turn led policymakers, educators, and citizens to campaign for the reform of teacher preparation (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Research provides evidence that not only do schools make distinguishable contributions to what students learn, but teachers play an integral role in student learning (Ferguson & Ladd, 1996; Gay, 2002; Greenwald Hedges & Laine, 1996). Empirical research has found that the disparity in school achievement between more and less advantaged students can be traced, in particular, to their greatly unequal access to high-quality teachers and teaching (Barr & Dreeben, 1983; Betts, Rueben, & Danenber, 2000; Dreeben & Gamoran, 1986). Teacher quality has thus emerged as a prominent issue supported by research that confirms teachers are a critical factor that influences PK-12 students’ achievement (Rowan, Correnti, & Miller, 2002; Sanders & Rivers, 1996). Teacher education reform has heeded the call to improve student outcomes by better preparing teachers to meet the needs of less advantaged students. Some of these reform programs include in their objectives preparing urban teachers or preparing teachers to work for social justice while others offer coursework that combines both theoretical and concrete dimensions of teaching diverse students (Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2012).

Despite these reform efforts in teacher education, equitable teaching in U.S. schools, where all children are truly given the opportunities to learn, is seen as an overwhelming challenge and for good reason (Darling-Hammond, 2006). New teachers face ever-growing difficulties as they are called upon to teach under current accountability systems where schools, particularly low performing schools, spend inordinate amounts of time teaching to the test (Pedulla, Abrams, Madaus, Russell,
Ramos, & Miao, 2003), which not only contradicts the high-quality teaching promoted in schools of education (Artiles, 2011) but may actually dilute reform efforts. In addition, given today’s public school population, new teachers are likely to face classrooms where 25% of the students live in poverty, 10% to 20% are being served under special education services, 15% are English language learners, and about 40% belong to racial/ethnic minority groups (Darling-Hammond, 2006). The growing population of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students has been well documented (Causey, Thomas, & Armento, 2000; McCall, 1995; Ross & Smith, 1992; Taylor & Sobel, 2001; Torok & Aguilar, 2000). The trend in increased numbers of CLD students, accompanied by disconcerting numbers of minority students who are disproportionately failing and who are disproportionately represented in the special education system (Donovan & Cross, 2002) make it necessary for teachers to be better prepared to teach students from diverse backgrounds.

Research has demonstrated that many CLD students are educated in urban schools (Elmesky & Tobin, 2004) and are taught predominantly by White teachers (Burnstein & Cabello, 1989; Grant & Sleeter, 1999). Research into this “demographic divide,” also referred to in the literature as cultural mismatch, highlights the need for teacher preparation to help bridge the divide between the predominantly White teaching force and minority students (Gay & Howard, 2001). Studies that have explored the demographic divide between White teachers of suburban backgrounds and the diverse students they teach have found that cultural mismatch can negatively impact student learning (Au & Mason, 1981; Erickson, 1987; Taylor & Sobel, 2001; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Research has found that inequalities in student achievement can in part be
explained by teachers’ biases (Gamoran, 2006) and by the overall fewer interactions between teachers and their minority students (Garibaldi, 1992; Guerra, Attar, & Weisberg, 1997). The disparity between low-income urban and high-income suburban schools exposed by Jonothan Kozol’s (1991) study of “savage inequalities” and his more recent work (Kozol, 2005), depict the unequal education of minority students. Kozol (2005) juxtaposed practices in school systems that perpetuate structural inequalities through teaching-to-the-test practices for poorer students, while these same school systems promote higher order thinking and advanced learning for students in wealthier schools (Apple, 2004).

Unequal opportunity in schooling, the demographic divide, and lack of proper incorporation of cultural reciprocity have contributed to restricted access to high-quality curriculum for minority students and students with disabilities (Ladson-Billings & Brown, 2008). As Ferguson and Mehta (2004) aptly suggest, irrespective of why students end up in particular schools, the reality of the matter is that the interactions that they have with their individual teachers can serve as buffers against an oppressive system by the bridging of knowledge that allows diverse students to improve their educational outcomes. As a response to the unequal schooling of diverse students, teachers are called upon to be culturally responsive in order to effectively meet the needs of CLD students and students with disabilities in urban settings (Ambe, 2006).

**Equity Pedagogy**

Faced with the structural forces working against historically underserved students (Artiles, Harris-Murri, & Rostenberg, 2006), scholars and researchers expect teacher education to address inequalities through the promotion of multicultural education
coursework and student-teaching placements in urban settings (Vavrus, 2002) where student-teachers can gain experience with culturally diverse students (Donaldson, 2009; Schaffer, 2012). The goal of many reformed teacher education programs is to help preservice teachers develop greater cultural competence. Cultural competence asks that teachers recognize themselves as cultural beings first in order to value and validate their students’ cultures. Cultural competence, when used in reference to students, is seen as the ability for minority students to navigate academic pressures and metanarrative expectations without, however, losing or suppressing their own cultural values. Summed up eloquently by Bernstein, “If the culture of the teacher is to become part of the consciousness of the child, then the culture of the child must first be in the consciousness of the teacher” (as cited in Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005, p. 49). Studies have found that teachers who have confidence and an affirming attitude about their students’ abilities convey this by exposing students to an intellectually rigorous curriculum, monitoring students’ thinking and teaching students how to monitor their own learning, and building on students’ strengths and their cultural resources. Research has found that these strategies become the basis for student-teacher relationships built on respect and have favorable academic results (Gay, 2000; Irvine, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

A number of teacher education programs have been developed with the goal of best preparing student-teachers to implement equitable practices in their new classrooms. For example, the teacher training program at the University of California-Los Angeles, promises the following in their teacher information website: “embod[ies] a social justice agenda” to “construct extraordinarily high-quality education for all children” (Center X, 2006). Another example includes the Lynch School of Education at Boston College and
its stated commitment in their teacher information section: “to [be] a model of education that serves the goals of social justice (Lynch School, 2006). Throughout this paper, I refer to these programs as equity-minded. Equity-minded teacher education programs, like the one in this study, aim to produce teachers who are change agents entrusted to boost the academic achievement of minority students (Stillman, 2012).

Research examining multicultural courses within reformed teacher education programs has been inconclusive. Some research in teacher education highlights improved racial attitudes (Delany-Barmann & Minner, 1997; Ross & Smith, 1992), yet others have reported that exposure to multicultural coursework either led to very few changes or even produced negative changes in teachers’ attitudes (Bollin & Finkel, 1995; Cannela & Reif, 1994; Haberman & Post, 1990; McDiarmid & Price, 1993; Zeichner et al., 1998). More recent research has found promise in the student-teaching experience to bridge the more theoretical concepts in multicultural coursework with the realities of the classroom by putting coursework in action during the student-teaching experience (Stillman & Anderson, 2010).

**Tensions in High-Stakes Accountability Settings**

Teacher preparation research in the era of high-stakes accountability illustrates a disconnect between the focus on developmental learning theories, emphasized in traditional teacher preparation programs, and the realities of top-down standardized instructional practice present in many low performing schools (e.g., Brown & Goldstein, 2013). Sleeter and Stillman’s (2005) content analysis of California state standards found that the language of the standards and “compliance with the standards,” which was
“enforced mainly through testing and textbooks” (p. 39), led to problematic curriculum standardization. As cited by the authors:

Because of the theoretical contradictions present throughout all three reading/language arts documents, a teacher may be given the impression that he or she can implement a literature-based and linguistically responsive reading/language arts program, but then be limited from doing so simply because of a lack of available instructional time, and/or state and district pressure to teach to the test. (p. 39)

Curriculum standardization in a diverse state like California was cited as particularly troubling because “compliance” with the standards was “to be enforced mainly in schools that score[d] low on standardized tests, and with students designated as having special needs” (Sleeter & Stillman, 2005, p. 39). Thus minority students, who are typically taught in low performing schools, stand to receive the type of scripted instruction found to have negative effects on their achievement.

Costigan (2008) corroborates Sleeter and Stillman’s (2005) findings. Of particular importance to the current study, Costigan found that novice teachers in high-stakes accountability settings experienced discontinuities between theory and pedagogy concerning notions of instructional practice. Rather than learning how to provide authentic opportunities for learning, teachers learned how to teach to standardized assessment measures (Costigan, 2008). As noted by Costigan, the curricular mandates and “questionable mixture of contradictory practice” in high-stakes schools coupled with “the daily realities of teaching” seemed to ‘wash out’ the theories and practices learned in college coursework” (p. 97); thus novice teachers abandoned their own pedagogical stance toward education and adopted the one imposed by the standards and the school.

Praxis shock, which has been documented by Smagorinsky, Gibson, Moore, Bickmore, and Cook (2004), relates to the type of discontinuity mentioned above. As
argued by Smagorinsky et al., (2004) early career teachers, like the co-author of his study, struggle with how to balance the conflicting traditions between the theoretical constructs in teacher preparation vs. the reality of the classroom. This type of incoherence (Smagorinsky et al., 2004) is even more pronounced in schools under more stringent accountability systems (Sleeter & Stillman, 2005). Thus, Anderson and Stillman (2011) suggest that teacher educators and teacher mentors need to provide explicit support to assist novices and student-teachers in navigating the “discrepancies between teacher education program expectations and student-teaching realities” (p. 34). Examining how student-teachers navigate praxis shock during the student-teaching experience in a high-needs, urban school with high stakes standards promises to better inform reform efforts and teacher preparation (Cavendish, Mahotiere, Perez, 2014).

Teachers are charged with the responsibility of working within stratified and racialized school systems (Artiles, Harris-Murri, & Rostenberg, 2006). Thus, they are expected to have a prerequisite knowledge of standardization practices that are often antithetical to the very same principles of democracy that they are simultaneously expected to uphold and instill in their students (Bransford & Darling-Hammond, 2005). Moreover, because underperforming schools are often sites for increased curriculum standardization, teachers who work in high-needs schools are most likely to experience teaching constraints firsthand (Sleeter & Stillman, 2005). In fact, studies that have explored adherence to standards in the context of high-stakes testing have found that teachers in these settings are given strict expectations about what to teach and how to teach (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Sleeter & Stillman, 2007). Thus, they have little opportunity to practice or uphold the tenets of equity minded education reform.
Teacher education reforms that follow multicultural education frameworks (Banks, 1993) expect teachers to act as change agents who teach in ways that uphold democratic values (Bransford & Darling-Hammond, 2005). By challenging democratic rhetoric to eliminate educational disparities, teachers, even first-year teachers, are charged with the responsibility for the many purposes of schooling as outlined by John Goodlad (1984). Goodlad posited that the function of schooling includes the social function of schools (to prepare people to be citizens) and the personal function of schools (to emphasize the development of the individual). New teachers are expected to be aware of the social purposes of education in supporting and developing a more equitable society by gaining knowledge of policy and school cultures in order to fulfill both the social function and the personal function of schooling for diverse students. However, multicultural coursework aimed at preparing teachers to act as change agents should also consider significant findings in teacher preparation research, which highlights that teaching constricted by strict standardization expectations tends to obstruct the tenets of multicultural coursework (Sleeter & Stillman, 2005).

The student-teaching experience has been regarded as an invaluable element in teacher preparation (Everston, 1990) and charged to serve as a bridge between the theoretical tenets of teacher preparation and the reality of being in the classroom. Praxis shock research highlights that the student-teaching experience is often less about opportunities for new teachers to learn and more about the replication of clinical teachers’ (CTs) behavior and a form of uncritical on-the-job training. Student-teaching, when relegated to on-the-job training may lead student-teachers to acquiesce to the status quo instead of being reflective about their practice as learners. Although there is an ever-
growing call for teachers to be placed in diverse settings (Ladson-Billings, 2002), there is a dearth of research examining the student-teaching experience, and even less research that studies how the student-teaching experience affects student-teacher learning. Equally as concerning, is that much of the research assumes that placement in diverse settings inevitably means benefit to both student-teachers and their students (Anderson & Stillman, 2013). Additionally, as argued by Anderson and Stillman (2013b), student-teaching studies should question the “moral quagmire presented by repeatedly sending [student-teachers] with deficit views into schools” (p. 47) and investigate student-teacher beliefs while they carry out their student-teaching experience and how university personnel address such issues in their roles as mentors and supervisors.

**Theoretical Framework and Analytic Model**

Given the need to study how the student-teaching experience contributes to student-teacher learning, this study used Bransford and Darling-Hammond’s (2005) model of understanding teaching and learning as a way to organize and analyze the data collected from interviews and observations with student-teachers. Additionally, this study is undergirded by sociocultural theory and by Anderson and Stillman’s (2013b) sociocultural review of student-teaching, which questions the assumption that student-teachers will unvaryingly benefit from being placed in urban settings, warns against reductionist views of race, and calls attention to needed research on how placements in these settings contribute to the development of student-teachers’ pedagogical knowledge.

As noted by Tharpe (1997), sociocultural theory has been widely accepted as a dominant paradigm in education and has promoted recognition that culture is indelibly tied to learning. The vitality of Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural theory, developed in the
late 19th century, is evidenced by its sustained use in educational research (Cochran-Smith, 1984; Dyson, 1993). Vygotsky’s theory is grounded in human development but differs from other developmental theories by looking at human development as deeply imbedded within society (i.e., the individual does not stand in isolation but rather one’s experience with others is tied to the mediating factors that lead to cognitive development). The endurance of Vygotsky’s theory lies in its ability to develop an “approach that connects social and mental processes and describes the essential mechanisms of the socialization and development of the human being” (Gindis, 1999, p. 333). Because Vygotsky viewed learning “as a shared-joint process in a responsive social context” (Gindis, 1999, p. 333), using a sociocultural lens helped frame this study as an investigation of student-teacher learning and student-teachers’ necessary understanding, and development, of sociocultural consciousness. Research in sociocultural consciousness has found that teachers’ attitudes and beliefs about students, including teachers’ respect for their students and confidence in their students’ ability to learn, leads to more effective teaching (Gay, 2000, Ivine & Armento, 2001; Murrel, 2002; Tharp, Estrada, Dalton, & Uamguchi, 1999).

Conceptualizations of Vygotsky’s theory and its use in educational research have led to important and nuanced understandings of how people learn (Cole, 1990; Tharpe & Gallimore, 1998). As defined by Valenzuela (1998), “sociocultural theory attempts to provide a complex description of the dynamic contexts in which, and the process through which, learning and development take place” (p. 280). Although this study does not allow for a thorough discussion of the epistemological and ontological debates surrounding the use and interpretation of sociocultural theory (for more on this see Trent, Artiles, &
Englert, 1998), some consensus regarding its practice has been reached. Cooperative learning, peer mediated instruction, and the need to evaluate student performance within the context of the instructional setting are widely accepted as beneficial in improving student learning (Valenzuela, 1998). Sociocultural theorists foreground their work in the belief that “cultural practices and resources powerfully mediate the development of thinking” (p. 5) whereby learners are seen as active participants in the learning process (Anderson & Stillman, 2013). Moreover, theorists such as Cole (1985) and Kozulin (1986) have addressed the importance of the “activity setting” as an integral dimension in understanding social systems and cultural practices. In using a sociocultural lens, this study attempts to situate student-teaching within the activity setting of learning to teach in an urban context. As such, sociocultural theory takes into account the complexity inherent in student-teaching and allows for a vision of “teachers as cultural historical beings that work in politically charged contexts” (Hoffman-Kipp, Artilles, & Lopez-Rorees, 2010, p. 253). A sociocultural lens accounts for student-teacher interaction with students, CTs, and the school culture and views these interactions as tools that affect student-teaching. For the purpose of this study, sociocultural theory served to guide the analysis of how the student-teaching experience facilitated or hindered student-teacher learning.

**Darling-Hammond and Bransford’s Model.**

The model by Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) builds on the framework adopted by the National Academy of Education Committee on Teacher Education and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and is based on four decades of research. The aim of the model is to provide a framework for preparing teachers for a
changing world by using evidence from empirical studies about teachers’ prerequisite knowledge and by using the findings from best-practices research to describe effective teaching. I used the domains of the model (i.e., knowledge of learners and their development in social contexts, knowledge of subject matter and curriculum goals, and knowledge of teaching) to inform the collection and analysis of my data (see Figure 1).

1. Knowledge of learners and their development in social contexts (learning, human development, and language),

2. Knowledge of subject matter and curriculum goals (educational goals and purposes for skills, content, and subject matter), and

3. Knowledge of teaching (content plus content pedagogy, teaching diverse learners, assessment, and classroom management)

---

**Figure 1.**
Learning in a democracy and teaching as a profession are important conditions for practice that frame the interactions referenced above (Darling-Hammond, 2006). The model defines democracy by accepting that democracy is an aspirational construct and acknowledges that the purposes of schooling have often been antithetical to democratic tenets by serving to perpetuate inequality (Bourdieu, 1977). Thus, for teachers to develop a democratic classroom they need to model and create opportunities that do not lead to the classroom as a social reproduction of the inequitable status quo. The model represents the three general areas of knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed by all teachers but which are particularly useful in examining new teacher preparation (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

**Intersectionality of the model.** As seen in Figure 1, three overlapping domains represent the model. The teacher can be seen as the agent whose vision of *professional practice* as well as commitment to *learning in a democracy* connects the intersecting areas. Teachers are thus expected to have *knowledge of learners* and their development in social contexts (domain 1). This knowledge of the thinking and learning process and how best to use that knowledge to help students learn allows the teacher to use learner knowledge and apply it to *knowledge of subject matter and curriculum goals* (domain 2). Knowing about how people learn and about childhood development acts as the foundation to *knowledge of the subject matter, educational goals and the broader purposes of schooling* (domain 2)—meaning that a teacher operating within the model is expected to create curriculum that meets the standards of the subject matter through appropriate planning. Appropriate planning keeps the greater purposes for schooling as broad but essential goals. Teachers would apply their *knowledge of learners* (domain 1)
and their knowledge of the curriculum (domain 2) to how they teach by combining content plus content pedagogy with a culturally responsive classroom management style that holds the learner, particularly diverse learners, at the center and uses teaching strategies and knowledge of assessments to create access to challenging curriculum (domain 3). As represented by the overlapping circles in the figure, this is not a linear process but rather a reciprocal process with reflection as the connecting force.

**Learning in a democracy and teaching as a profession.** As seen in Figure 1, learning and teaching in a democracy is central to the framework and asks that we accept the basic assumption that teaching should support democracy by striving to “eliminate disparities in educational opportunities” (p. 233) and, equally important, by preparing students to be active participants in a democratic system (Banks et al., 2005). According to Merryfield (2002), preparing students for democracy can also be defined as global education. Merryfield explored how “global educators affect the lives of students” and found that teachers who encouraged students to think about, and gave students practice in, multiple perspectives helped students learn by “developing open-mindedness, anticipation of complexity, and resistance to stereotyping” (p. 2). Research examining educational outcomes has found that teachers who use their knowledge about students’ cultural and language backgrounds when planning lessons and in their teaching increase students’ academic achievement (Gandara, 2002; Garcia, 1993; Lee, 1995). Thus, prospective teachers need knowledge of students’ cultures, but even more importantly, teachers need to know their students and link pedagogical decisions to their students’ experiences (Banks et al., 2005). Developing a sociocultural consciousness helps teachers appreciate and better understand how “life experiences, gender, race, ethnicity, and
social-class background” play a role in how people learn and in “their belief about themselves and what school means to them” (Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & Le Page, 2005, p. 31).

The model is also framed by the concept of teaching as a profession, which means that teaching has “certain moral and technical expectations,” specifically the “expectation that teachers working collaboratively will acquire, use, and continue to develop shared knowledge on behalf of students” (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 4). In delineating what it means to be a professional, Bransford et al. (2005) borrowed from Shulman (1998) the following six commonalities shared by all professions:

1. service to society that implies an ethical and moral commitment to clients,

2. a body of scholarly knowledge that forms the basis of the entitlement to practice,

3. engagement in practical action that involves enacting knowledge in practice,

4. uncertainty caused by the different needs of clients and the nonroutine nature of problems that results in the need to develop judgment in applying knowledge,

5. the importance of experience in developing practice that results in the need to learn by reflecting on one’s practice and its outcomes, and

6. the development of a professional community that aggregates and shares knowledge and develops professional standards.
Under theegis of *learning in a democracy* and *teaching as a profession*, Darling-Hammond & Bransford (2005) specified three overlapping domains—(a) knowledge of learners and their development in social contexts (learning, human development, and language), (b) knowledge of subject matter and curriculum goals (educational goals and purposes for skills, content, and subject matter), and (c) knowledge of teaching (content plus content pedagogy, teaching diverse learners, assessment, and classroom management) necessary for teachers to develop a “view of professional practice” (p. 11). Key to the model is the preparation of teachers as adaptive experts who develop the ability to navigate what Fullan (2001) and Valli (1996) have termed a “whitewater world”—that is teachers use their expertise to adapt to the constant change of the classroom.

**Knowledge of learners and their development in social contexts.** Research based on sociocultural principles has found that teachers who build on “funds of knowledge” (Lee, 1995; Moll & Gonzalez, 2004), reflect on their assumptions (e.g., assumptions about the malleability of intelligence) (Shwartz & Bransford, 1998), and are learner-centered (Bransford et al., 2005) are more effective teachers. Having knowledge of learners enables teachers to make “more grounded judgments about what [is going on in the classroom] and what strategies may be helpful, while maintaining what is best for the child at the center of their decision making” (Bransford et al., 2005, p. 2).

**Knowledge of subject matter and curriculum goals: Educational goals and purposes for skills, content, and subject matter.** The second domain in the model focuses on teachers’ understanding of what to teach and why to teach it (Bransford et al., 2005). Because teaching is heavily influenced by national, state, and local standards,
teachers need to know how to use those standards in ways that still adhere to students’ needs (Bransford et al., 2005). Teachers should understand “learning and learners as they intersect with educational goals and purposes” (Bransford et al., 2005, p. 32), and how to shape curriculum through an understanding of effective teaching options, which also means that teachers understand their responsibility of teaching within the democratic vision already mentioned above. The three key concepts that contribute to teacher effectiveness follow the How People Learn Framework (National Research Council, 2000) and include (a) learner-centered, (b) knowledge-centered, and (c) community-centered as informed by the National Academy of Sciences reports (Donovan, Bransford, & Pellegrino, 1999; National Research Council, 2000).

Effective teachers are knowledge-centered and understand the importance of how best to teach the topics they have chosen and are able to make predictions about areas where students might experience misunderstandings without, however, using biased assumptions about students to make such predictions. For example, teachers who assume that inner-city kids have not seen a thermometer and thus make that part of their lesson plan, might be working from a deficit perspective that is actually not knowledge-centered but bias-centered (Anderson & Stillman, 2012). Effective teachers should have thorough content area knowledge that facilitates thinking on the spot and leads to greater ability to respond to students’ questions and needs. Studies that have examined expert knowledge versus novice knowledge have found that experts, unlike novices, identify specific features of problems and circumstances (Chi, Feltovitch, & Glasser, 1981).

Finally, effective teaching requires an understanding that learning is community-centered and mediated by culture. Thus, effective teachers should know how to create
environments where students can learn from each other and which foster a
communitarian approach to learning (Bransford et al., 2005).

Tied to a teacher’s curricular vision is necessary knowledge of assessing learning and
managing classrooms. Teachers use their curricular understanding to formulate different
forms of assessments that tap into students’ thinking and teachers must have a “large
repertoire of formative assessment strategies” (Bransford et al., 2005, p. 37). Managing
classrooms, which also falls under the knowledge of subject matter and curriculum goals
domain, is aligned with curriculum since providing students with engaging curriculum
that takes into account their diverse learning needs is the first step to managing behavior.
Teachers, who confuse classroom management with rules, fail to see that behavior
management is much more about knowing how to properly structure activities that keep
learners engaged and motivated. Notwithstanding, teachers are expected to have
knowledge of behavioral strategies that they can use to redirect behavior in a respectful
way and that hold students accountable.

**Knowledge of teaching: Content plus content pedagogy, teaching diverse
learners, assessment, and classroom management.** The third domain of the model
stresses the need for effective teachers to “connect knowledge with learners” through
appropriate assessments used to “make students’ thinking visible” and which provides
them with feedback about their performance” (Bransford et al., 2005, p. 33).

As illustrated by Banks et al. (2005), effective teachers employ a wide variety of
strategies that provide students with multiple opportunities to access information more
easily. These strategies include, but are not limited to, helping students visualize text,
using role-play to help students answer questions, and knowing which pedagogical
choices hold greater promise for meeting instructional goals for their group of students (Banks et al., 2005). In addition to a comprehensive repertoire, an effective teacher has strong knowledge of assessments and uses that knowledge to identify where students are and where they need to go (Banks et al., 2005). Teachers who use the knowledge gained from fair assessments organize the learning environment in ways that facilitate their learners’ academic achievement (Au, 1980; Mehan, Villanueva, Hubbard, & Lintz, 1996; Tharp, 1982).

Knowledge of teaching also relates to a teacher’s knowledge of diverse learners, and, therefore, follows the tenets of culturally responsive teaching environments. Research in Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) offers insights into the strategies employed by culturally responsive teachers and how they think about learners and their strengths. Some observable features of a culturally responsive teaching environment include “reciprocal and interactive” (Banks et al., 2005, p. 247) practice where students and teachers work collaboratively, and teachers engage in authentic dialogues that seek to bridge students’ home experiences with their classroom learning.

Although more difficult to observe than the use of strategies, a teacher’s sociocultural consciousness, defined as teachers’ beliefs and attitudes about students and toward students’ abilities to learn, has been seen as imperative for teachers to be effective with all students (Banks et al., 2005). We can work toward exposing the more observable features of sociocultural consciousness by investigating teachers’ beliefs through their actions toward students. Such beliefs may manifest themselves through teachers’ “respect for all learners and their experiences, confidence in students’ abilities to learn, and a teachers willingness to questions one’s practice and assumptions” (Banks et al., p. 253).
Because recent research demonstrates that teachers who develop a sociocultural consciousness tend to develop more encouraging and positive attitudes toward students (Banks et al., 2005), the enactment of such attitudes permeates all three domains of the model. Teachers who have greater understanding of sociocultural consciousness center their planning, text selection, use of strategies, and assessments to build on, and better understand, their students’ strengths.

**Purpose of the Study**

The student-teaching experience has been a staple of teacher preparation and more recently, has been seen by equity minded teacher preparation programs as an opportunity to make education more successful for all students. Furthermore, the student-teaching experience has been credited as an important element in preparing novices for teaching in urban settings. However, little research has looked into the actual teaching experience—beyond the use of self-report data—and into how the student-teaching experience helps to develop the knowledge and disposition outlined by the model. Because many reformed teacher education programs are vested in placing student-teachers in urban schools that challenge them to navigate the many facets of teaching within the context of urban classrooms, the effectiveness of such placements warrant further investigation. Research in teacher education has found that effective teaching requires a certain level of prerequisite foundational knowledge in areas of student learning and performance (Bransford & Darling-Hammond, 2005). In addition, effective teaching requires the ability to reflect, evaluate, and learn from teaching (Hatano & Ignaki, 1992). This means that teachers can help students learn by creating dialogical classrooms where students are given opportunities to “restructure their prior knowledge
based on everyday experience and lay culture” (Vosnaidou, 2007, p. 47). In line with Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005), student-teaching experiences should provide opportunities whereby student-teachers can become reflective of their placements and can learn from such placements.

This qualitative study explored how secondary student-teachers perceived the effectiveness of their student-teaching experience in preparing them for teaching in urban settings and how their view of their roles as teachers developed during the student-teaching period. The study also addresses how student-teachers developed and/or enacted these understandings in their student-teaching practicum by investigating the following questions:

1) How does student-teachers’ pedagogical knowledge develop in the context of urban, high needs schools?

2) How do student-teachers’ perceptions of teaching in an urban context develop as a result of their student-teaching experience?

Scope of the Study

This study was part of a teacher preparation program aimed at engaging candidates in a better understanding of "the complexities of teachers' actions and interactions with students and contexts" (Blanton, Bremme, Gallego, & Nonon, 2003, p. 7) and at teaching students how to modify delivery of content. As part of the teacher education program, university professors and mentors collaborated with professional development schools where students were placed for field experiences and for student-teaching in their final semester. Appointed university mentors conducted observations and met with candidates on a regular basis. Candidates were also expected to participate
in reflective activities to link coursework theories and research-based knowledge with practical applications in the field. Student-teachers were placed in professional development schools for at least 15 weeks during their last semester. The professional development schools had high percentages of students who received free or reduced price lunch and reflected the ethnic diversity of the area.
Chapter II: Literature Review

Because the literature on teacher preparation is vast, I limited this study to the following areas: culturally responsive teaching, student-teaching experiences and preparation for urban settings, tensions in high-stakes accountability settings, the urban setting as context, and preparation for teaching in inclusive classrooms. To review the literature pertinent to my study, I conducted a search of journals indexed in ERIC and PsychINFO. To address student-teaching in urban settings, I used the keywords student-teaching* combined independently with urban, culturally and linguistically diverse, inclusive settings, and special education and used 2000 as a cutoff date. I conducted another search using terms like teacher preparation for urban settings* and teacher preparation combined with urban, inclusive settings. In order to address culturally responsive teaching, I conducted a search using culturally responsive teaching* with teacher preparation, urban, inclusive settings, and linguistically diverse students. I also consulted established reviews on teacher preparation and student-teaching (Anderson & Stillman, 2013; Sleeter, 2000), as well as conducted a hand search through teacher education journals and handbooks in search of articles focused on the student-teaching experience in urban schools and with culturally and linguistically diverse students (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). I then reviewed the abstracts of the articles and selected those that were pertinent. Additionally, I consulted the reference section in these articles for sources that met my criteria.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

The National Education Association (NEA), in adopting Diller and Moule’s (2005) definition, describes cultural competence as:
“the ability to successfully teach students who come from cultures other than our own. It entails developing certain personal and interpersonal awareness and sensitivities, developing certain bodies of cultural knowledge, and mastering a set of skills that, taken together, underlie effective cross-cultural teaching” (NEA, 2008, p. 1).

Gay’s (2010) discussion of the pervasive and often problematic presence of “racial, ethnic, and cultural attitudes and beliefs” (p. 143) builds on findings from studies by Cochran-Smith (2000) and Stuart and Thurlow (2000), which document how biased beliefs profoundly shape teaching conceptions and actions. For this reason, helping teachers develop cultural competence, also referred to as sociocultural consciousness, has become part of many reformed teacher preparation programs that promote and prepare students within a culturally responsive teaching (CRT) framework.

**Defining and enacting cultural competence.** Cultural competence, as defined by Lisa Delpit, (1995) requires that “educators . . . have knowledge of children’s lives outside of school so as to recognize their strengths” (p. 172); and equally important, is that they use that knowledge to inform how they select text within heavily scripted high-stakes schools and how they use their knowledge of students’ strengths as they begin to develop their teaching repertoire. Also important to note in teacher development, Delpit views culturally responsive teaching as a way to navigate the “culture of power” in order to overthrow oppressive school systems (p.100). In other words, teachers use the culture of power in a way that fosters cultural competence in their students while at the same time becoming more culturally competent themselves (Delpit, 1988, p. 100). Gay (2002) adds to this definition by defining CRT as using the “cultural characteristics, experiences,
and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching” (p. 106). In
delineating a CRT approach, Gay (2010) calls for a multifaceted model, which includes
the validation of students’ culture through transformative and empowering practice that is
as much empowering as it is emancipatory.

Although there is a long and rich history of teacher preparatory literature (Banks,
2001; Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1994), current educational programs have had
questionable success in preparing teachers to adequately meet the needs of minority
students (Watson et al., 2006). Studies examining student-teacher interactions
substantiate the need for better teacher preparation (Nasir, 2008; Shaunessy & McHatton,
2009; Tyler et al., 2010, Watson 2011) by highlighting that teachers rarely question their
beliefs and possible biases about student race and exit education programs ill-prepared to
teach in diverse settings.

Cultural congruence research has been particularly influential in leading the way
on this topic. Specifically, Au and Kawakami’s (1994) important review of research in
cultural congruence, which is now referred to in the literature as cultural competence,
suggests improved academic achievement for students who were taught by using their
own cultural experiences. Au and Kawakami’s review included studies that investigated
dialectical speakers, participation structures, narrative and questioning styles, and peer
groups. Particularly salient to the present study, studies that have investigated
participation structures focusing on student-teacher interactions illustrate that teachers
who created more opportunities for dialogue with minority students were more successful
in helping them learn (Au & Kawakami, 1994). For example, Au and Mason’s (1994)
study of two Hawaiian teachers, one with more successful experience teaching Hawaiian
students and one with less experience, illustrates how differing communication styles can affect student learning. In Au and Mason’s study (1994), the teacher with previous experience teaching Hawaiian students was more effective at providing access to important instructional information because she organized the classroom discussion by using the patterns and styles of her students. The teacher with less experience used a more traditional style of conventional recitation, meaning that only one student was given the right to monopolize classroom dialogue at a time. Au and Mason (1994) found that the students who were allowed to negotiate and take turns during reading lessons gave more reading related responses and were overall more “concentrated in academic work” (p. 14). Au and Mason (1981, 1983) concluded that teachers who organize classroom discussion by using the patterns and styles of their students are more effective.

Research in CRT has demonstrated that teachers who follow the CRT framework produce more favorable outcomes for their minority students. Ladson-Billings’ (1994) ethnographic 3-year study of effective teachers of African American students is considered foundational in the CRT literature and found that teachers who practice culturally relevant teaching methods can be identified by the way they see themselves and others, the ways in which they structure their interactions, and by their notions of knowledge. For Ladson-Billings, culturally competent teachers “use student culture as a basis for learning” and “promote the flexible use of students’ local and global culture” (p. 98). Ladson-Billings views culture as fundamental, since it not only dictates the way students communicate and receive information but it determines how information is processed. Culturally responsive teaching acts as a bridge between minority students’
experiences and the mainstream culture and also seeks to empower minority students
with knowledge that will help them subvert hegemonic belief systems.

Community-based learning entails that teachers and preservice teachers live or
actively participate in the communities in which they teach. Sleeter’s (1998) research in
teacher education programs that include active participation in the community through
cultural-immersion experiences suggests that these cultural-immersion programs have
been successful in teaching preservice teachers about cultures different than their own.
Although there is a paucity of research on community-based learning, studies have found
that exposing teachers to cultural-immersion experiences led to more reflective
perspectives of their own cultural identity and the way that others respond to them

Cooper’s (2007) study of 42 preservice teachers who participated in six diversity
activities strengthens the argument for community-centered immersion in teacher
education. These six activities, which included “Walking a Mile in Another’s Shoes,
placed participants in real-life scenarios that involved providing preservice teachers with
experiences in which their students’ “families might engage” (Cooper, 2007, p. 248).
Thus, each participant was given a scenario that could range from using public
transportation to “applying for an hourly wage job” (Cooper, 2007, p. 248). Cooper found
that these cultural-immersion experiences helped to “challenge preservice teachers’ prior
beliefs and stereotypes about the students they teach, their students’ families, and the
locations of their home communities” (2007, p. 253). The findings reported by Cooper,
however, are somewhat problematic since some of the activities could seemingly add to
deficit views. For example, two activities under Walking a Mile in Another’s Shoes (i.e.,
a police car ride and going to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting) could potentially add
to stereotypes of students. Other activities, such as the bio-poem, demonstrate how some
student-teachers reflected on their own privilege. One student-teacher, for example,
described the activity in the following way: “At times, as I stepped further and further
back, I felt guilty and wished to be in the middle not the front, as guilt would also result
from extreme privilege” (Cooper, 2007, p. 250). Other participants who reflected on their
experience seemed to have come away with a deeper commitment to teaching in diverse
settings. For example one student said, “Now I see that I need to go a little further if I
want to really know how my students live day to day” (Cooper, 2007, p. 249). This same
student went on to say, “Going into their communities is a good way to do that” (Cooper,
2007, p. 249). The participant’s acknowledgement that she needed to know more about
her students is important since it corroborates findings that highlight the need for
firsthand knowledge vs. secondhand knowledge of minority students and their families
(Harry, Sturges, & Klingner, 2005)Furthermore, the participants’ awareness that doing so
firsthand by going into the community suggests that the exposure to the above mentioned
activities did in fact lead to an improved knowledge of teaching in diverse settings.

However, as will be discussed in more detail later, preservice teacher research like
Cooper’s (2007) study reflects the necessity for more student teaching research since the
findings offer a fragmented picture. On the one hand, some of the activities in the study
may have added to stereotypes, while others seemed to foster more reflective practice
among preservice teachers. Even teachers trained for urban settings, however, hold
notions of race that continue to categorize some students as too urban and therefore, less
likely to benefit from their instruction (Watson, 2011). Research on effective teaching in
urban settings highlights another important misconception. Haberman’s (2003) study of teachers who stayed in urban settings found that these teachers stayed because they firmly believed that they were in it for their students. Haberman cautions against the proposition that teachers stay in urban education because they want to function as “educational change agents, community organizers or system reformers” (p. 21). As a response to this lack of growth, schools of education have heeded the call for teachers to be culturally responsive in order to effectively meet the needs of diverse students (Ambe, 2006).

Teacher expectations have been an important area in research on CRT. Recent studies add to our understanding of how school disparities affect minority students by providing us with evidence that teachers have lower expectations for them than they do for their White peers (DeCuir-Gunby, 2009) and that minority students are keenly aware of racial tensions and what teachers may think about them and their abilities to learn (Howard, 2003). Jussim and Harbor’s (2005) review of 35 years of research on teacher expectations helps shed light on how self-fulfilling prophecies affect student achievement. Although the authors caution that much of this research has had mixed findings, they do cite that teachers’ differential treatment, particularly for low performing students, had negative academic outcomes (Jussim & Harbor, 2005). Teachers are “typically emotionally warmer and more supportive to their high expectancy students, provide them clearer and more positive feedback, teach them more and more difficult material, and give them more opportunities to demonstrate mastery” (Jussim & Harbor, 2005, p. 142); students, therefore, who are denied positive treatment also experience less success. The increased awareness afforded by these studies of inequities and paradigm
shifts away from deficits agendas, have led to research that explores teachers’ expectations and practices (Jussim & Harber, 2005). This rejection of the idea of inherent deficits within students and attention to the need for effective teaching of urban youth has resulted in research that increasingly attempts to inform pedagogy about characteristics and practices necessary to be effective in urban settings (Ladson-Billings, 2002). The research reviewed in this section describes the contributions of CRT in highlighting how pervasive teacher biases are, how teachers’ expectations influence student learning, and how overcoming stereotypes via funds of knowledge approaches and community-centered practices can lead to more favorable outcomes for minority students.

**Student-Teaching Experiences as Preparation for Urban Settings**

Because development of cultural competence that would improve pedagogical choices is not a clear-cut process, it is important to push against the oversimplification of cultural competence, which assumes that cross cultural placements alone can work toward developing culturally competent teachers. Some studies, which have investigated the development of culturally competent teachers, claim that participants have gained competence to teach in diverse settings but report contradictory information in their findings (Anderson & Stillman, 2013). One such case study investigating a White, pre-service teacher’s road toward cultural competence, evidenced student-teacher growth in self-efficacy and better understanding of inner-city students by the student-teacher’s reflections on off-task student behavior as stemming from:

“‘Their minds [being] elsewhere, maybe focused on the person they saw slain the night before. Maybe they are too tired because they have been kept up by
gunshots or they were sexually abused the night before. This doesn't happen to a few, it's most of the class. The few are the lucky” (Rushton, 2001, p. 151).

Contrary to what the researcher saw as growth, the student-teacher’s reflections, taken at the end of the student-teaching experience, evidenced racialized assumptions about minority students. The study did not report on what evidence the student-teacher based her reflections.

As noted by Anderson and Stillman (2013b), much of the research on student-teaching experience not only oversimplifies the experience but also fails to highlight how issues of race are understood and grappled with by student-teachers. Because many researchers and educators advocate for change in student-teachers’ beliefs, they therefore see student-teaching as a viable opportunity for this change to take place and often gloss over statements by student-teachers that actually highlight deficit beliefs about student race and ability even after cross cultural placements. As mentioned above, authors who report on student-teachers’ surprise in noting that students in urban classrooms do want to learn and that students are indeed intellectually curious, misinterpret “impoverished views of culture” as growth (Anderson & Stillman, 2012, p. 47). The misinterpretation of deficit views as growth in student-teachers clearly calls for investigations that problematize the student-teaching experience, as the present study aims to do, so that deficit thinking is exposed instead of glossed over. A second aim of the present study is to call attention to the responsibility that schools of education have in properly recognizing student-teachers’ deficit perspectives and the need to address deficit beliefs during the student-teaching practicum.
Tensions in High-Stakes Accountability Settings

Educational policy often dictates school culture, testing practices, curriculum, and student expectations (Cohen & Hill, 2001; Stillman, 2011 as cited in Anderson & Stillman, 2013); yet research in student-teaching that attempts to analyze the role of policy in pre-service teacher education and in student-teaching contexts is all but nonexistent. As mentioned in Chapter I, Sleeter and Stillman’s (2005) content analysis provides compelling evidence of how adherence to standards can shape and narrow instruction. High-stakes tests are certainly supported by researchers who promote standards (Fuller & Johnson, 2001) and are cited as providing necessary accountability systems, which have resulted in increased minority student achievement. For example, Fuller and Johnson (2001) have argued for the importance of accountability systems in “driving their (school district) efforts to improve the learning of all students, especially children of color and children from low-income homes” (p. 281). Sheppard and Dougherty’s (1991) research in standards-based testing, which included open-ended tasks, found that teachers reported having students write more and more meaningfully because of new state standards.

Amerin and Berliner (2002) argue that strict dependence on high-stakes tests, however, has also led to a narrowing of curriculum and to teaching that is less focused on imparting deeper, more meaningful knowledge. Although most people would agree that accountability systems are in fact necessary, abusive testing practices, like the ones often found in urban, high-needs schools, have been found to negatively effect minority student achievement (Pedulla et al., 2003). A compelling example in the testing debate received much public attention in Texas, where some policymakers and researchers claimed a
“Texas miracle” took place and credited high-stakes testing with increased student achievement (Skrla & Scheurich 2001). Klein, Hamilton, and Stecher’s (2000) research, however, posits that the district level gains in students’ scores (the “Texas miracle”) was not supported by the students’ scores on the national assessment test.

The literature on testing-effects on teachers has documented that many teachers in high-stakes schools, particularly low-performing schools, feel pressured to teach to the test and often find that teaching test-taking skills supersedes their instructional goals as well as students’ needs (Sleeter, 2001). Because this literature is vast, I will limit this section to studies that have investigated how testing mandated curriculum specifically impacts preservice teachers. Investigations that look into how testing expectations influence preservice teachers are limited but do provide important information about how preservice teachers interpret teaching-to-the test and how this practice affects their student-teaching experience.

**Standardization pressures.** White, Stuartvant, and Dunlap (2003) collected survey and interview data over a 3-year period with preservice teachers and with teachers who had just completed a full year of a student-teaching practicum. Like the teachers in the present study, the preservice teachers in White et al. were placed in a Profession Development Site (PDS) as part of a university and school partnership. The coursework in their teacher education program emphasized a “research based, constructivist approach to teaching and learning” with particular focus on “adaptations for highly diverse student populations” (White et al., 2003, p. 42). Overall, the researchers reported that many of the preservice teachers experienced contradictions between what they learned in their coursework and “instruction in the public school setting” (White et al., 2003, p. 42)-what
has already been discussed as praxis shock. Of particular salience to the current study, preservice teachers also indicated that mandated testing and expectations influenced their instruction. In fact, student-teachers who had been placed in testing grades reported a “seemingly extreme level of additional pressure . . . characterized by tension and in some cases acrimony” among school personnel (White et al., 2003, p. 55).

Studies like Jason Margolis’s (2006) investigation add an important layer to the literature base as the findings reveal how top-down policies affect teachers and student-teachers. Margolis’s study included focus group interviews of student-teachers and the perspectives of CTs as they participated in a support cohort. Margolis found that both the teachers and student-teachers reported being restricted by the high-stakes testing mandates of their school site where what’s on the test dictated what was taught. Although the student-teaching experience should be a time for student-teachers to push boundaries and to practice fostering democratic principles in the classroom, more often than not, student-teachers find it difficult to push back and teach against the grain in classrooms where CTs are already under the stress and pressure of testing mandates.

Castro’s (2010) case study of three non-White student-teachers who actively sought to teach for critical multicultural citizenship during their student-teaching semester analyzed how the constraints imposed by policy- and district-level forces oftentimes thwarted the efforts of student-teachers to carry through with plans for education to foster critical multicultural citizenship. Castro’s case study describes student-teacher placements in schools with culturally and linguistically diverse student populations. Although the three students in the case study were mentored by the researcher during the study on how best to incorporate strategies that would enable them
to follow a critical multicultural instructional model, the findings indicate that the school policies constrained student-teachers from being able to fully carry out their plans (Castro, 2010). The three student-teachers reported being pressed to teach to the high-stakes tests rather than teach in ways that were in line with their pedagogical beliefs that had been advocated in their teacher preparation program. Like veteran teachers who struggle with the high-stakes testing context (Grant & Salina, 2008 as cited in Castro, 2010), student-teachers were likewise constrained by the material they taught and how they taught it.

The specific examples in Castro’s (2010) study are compelling. The study participants were not only expected by the school mandates to teach tasks that were test driven, but they also reported that the standards were “inconsistent with their beliefs or approaches to teaching citizenship” (Castro, 2010, p. 101). One student pointed out that the standards glossed over important issues of diversity and inequalities by downplaying “key issues in cultural diversity” (Castro, 2010, p. 101) and by failing to allow for teaching history through multiple perspectives. Additionally, study participants believed that teaching to the test meant forced, fast-paced coverage of content material that left little opportunity to teach for in-depth understanding. The testing “regime” fostering by constant tests, which included curriculum based assessments in addition to other testing mandates, meant a push for “greater standardization” and not differentiation based on student needs (Castro, 2010, p. 101). Two of the study participants also reported being expected to plan their lessons with a joint school team, which not only resulted in a severe lack of autonomy but in having to plan and teach in ways that forced them to cover material too quickly. Ultimately, the student-teachers in Castro’s study illustrate
the importance of accounting for the contextual constraints often found in high-needs, diverse schools (Castro, 2010). As Castro stated, even when the student-teachers were able to carry out subversive behavior that managed to sneak in relevant and meaningful material, one student teacher still reported having to teach differently because of the forced, department planning. A second student-teacher seemed to give up on the idea of teaching against the grain when she realized that this was simply not her class, thus she just “did it her way” (referring to her cooperating teacher; p. 105). Although Castro described one student-teacher, who seemingly acquiesced to her cooperating teacher’s style, as having the potential and knowledge to follow a critical multicultural instructional model, the fact that she was mostly unable to do so during her student-teaching experience demonstrates the powerful constraints working against her (Castro, 2010). If the student-teaching experience is understood as a time that allows for practice in teaching in ways that foster democratic principles and that correct educational inequity, Castro’s study presents grave reason for concern.

**Disciplinary policy control.** Lloyd’s (2007) case study of a mathematics student-teacher in a low-performing, urban school also highlights cause for trepidation regarding the role of the student-teaching experience and its failure to be a time for developing democratic pedagogical practice. The study included eight observations of student-teaching as well as student-teacher interviews (Lloyd, 2007). The student-teacher in Lloyd’s study described her school site as a “boot camp” of drill-and-kill tactics. Although she was able to enact some meaningful practices that deviated from the worksheet curriculum, she mostly taught and planned as did her cooperating teacher and the other kindergarten teachers at the school; that is to say, that the student-teacher
perpetuated the type of behavior control prevalent in low-performing schools and critiqued by Ladson-Billings and other scholars (e.g., Lloyd, 2007). As noted by Lloyd, in spite of the fact that the student-teacher “lamented” that her school did not follow a student-centered approach promoted by the school adopted textbook, in six of the eight lessons observed, she gave the students worksheets rather than creating lessons that would have fit more closely with the collaborative instruction and group-work recommended in the textbook (Lloyd, 2007). Unlike the teachers in Castro’s (2010) study, who questioned the state curriculum standards, the student-teacher in Lloyd’s study seemed to follow the school site lead by accepting the school mandated curriculum as her own “curriculum-planning decisions” (Lloyd, 2007, p., 338). As we will see later in the Student-teaching Analysis Framework (STAF), and as was briefly discussed in the introduction, student-teachers should be given practice in designing curriculum that does not merely adhere to state standards, but that is based on their content knowledge and on students’ needs and strengths. Although Lloyd stresses that the student teacher did not fully acquiesce to a strictly worksheet driven math curriculum, the fact remains that the student-teacher was indeed constrained, and perhaps to some degree, indoctrinated into a similar behavior-control emphasis promoted at her school site.

**The Urban Setting as Context**

Although research in urban settings has found some significant issues that teacher preparation should address, this section exposes the fragmented and sometimes even contradictory findings. These conflicting findings highlight the need to continue to study contexts, specifically, (a) urbanicity as context, how urban school culture affects student-teachers’ perception; (b) how CTs can influence student-teachers’ beliefs and actions;
and (c) how beliefs about the teacher’s role influences instruction act together to affect the student-teaching experience.

It is widely accepted that “urban schooling in its current form is limited in its potential to afford social transformation for its students” (Elmesky & Tobin 2004, p. 809). Thus, much attention has been paid to teacher education aimed at mitigating the inequities of a racialized society, which have historically restricted minority students’ equal access to educational opportunities. The problem, however, lies in the prevalent belief that urban placement alone automatically leads student-teachers to understand and to gain knowledge of how best to create learning environments that will ultimately result in equal outcomes (Hoffman-Kipp, Artiles, & Lopez-Torres, 2010) for their historically marginalized students.

Reformed teacher education programs are vested in preparing highly qualified teachers with particular attention paid to training in urban settings. The reform efforts of the program in the present study aim to prepare student-teachers who can ensure full access for all children to the general curriculum and are prepared, both in content knowledge and through practice in context, to differentiate their instruction using culturally responsive and targeted methods that monitor children’s progress. Teacher preparation programs like the one in the present study, which have collaborative partnerships with urban schools and placements of pre-service teachers in urban settings, allow student-teachers to gain firsthand experience (e.g., Donaldson, 2009; Larke, Wiseman, & Bradley, 1990; Schaffer, 2012). Unlike much of the research that delves into student-teaching experience by assuming growth through exposure, this study aims to
describe the opportunities to learn and the constraints on that learning that student-teachers experienced during their placements in an urban, high-needs school.

**Urban diversity context.** Important to note is that the use of *urban* as a category of interest in student-teacher research is often given cursory attention, even when researchers claim to be reporting on how context affects teaching. As noted by Anderson & Stillman (2013), much of the student-teaching literature whose purpose is to better explore what it means to teach in urban settings actually gives little consideration to contextualizing their studies within their urbanicity, thereby neglecting to account for how student-teaching is mediated by the particulars of the urban context.

Although fewer in number, there are some studies that effectively represent the broader school culture. Buehler, Gere, Dallavis, and Haviland’s (2009) study investigated how one White student-teacher negotiated and grappled with developing cultural competence. By focusing their attention on one teaching moment fraught with “complex issues involving race, emotions and school context” (Buehler et al., 2009, p. 411), Buehler et al. give a nuanced account of a student-teacher’s attempt to “enact her cultural competence” (p. 411). By triangulating their data through the student-teacher’s journal entries, interviews, and observations of a specific teaching moment, the researchers highlighted the need to investigate student-teaching in ways that thoroughly examined context. Because the researchers paid close attention to the context (i.e., race of the students in the classroom, interaction of the student-teacher with the CTs as well as the student-teacher’s own reflection of her lesson planning), their conclusion of the “deep gap separating [the student-teacher’s] stated ideals and training from her ability to enact
those ideals in practice” (Buehler et al., 2009, p. 413) was well supported through the analysis of their data.

**The influence of the school context.** A thoughtful account of context was offered by Cornbleth’s (2010) study of how student-teachers navigated the unsanctioned curriculum at their placement site. Cornbleth’s study was particularly interested in investigating how the context of the school and ideas/behaviors, implicitly and explicitly stated by staff, influenced student-teachers’ development and practice. Cornbleth’s thorough data went beyond self-reports by including observations and interviews with 12 student-teachers placed in an urban high school. By examining student-teachers’ perceptions of the school context and how the practices of other teachers influenced what the student-teachers believed they “should do,” Cornbleth corroborated Goodlad’s (1999) critique of unexamined student-teaching as an on-the-job training, which often leads to acquiescence of the status quo rather than to reflection. The student-teacher in Cornbleth’s study accepted her clinical-teacher’s (CT) negativity toward students and believed that she had to “blend in” and follow along with her CT’s biased beliefs. This attests to the need for studies that examine how equity minded teacher preparation program tenets hold up when student-teachers are faced with the actuality of the classroom. It is important to view the student-teaching experience from a critical stance and to distinguish how it contributes to student-teachers’ development. If, for example, the student-teacher, when faced with the real classroom, quickly abandons social justice beliefs and is influenced by deficit perspectives found at the school site, as did one student in Cornbleth’s study, then it is imperative to examine the student-teaching role as more than just a place students go to practice. Particularly important for the present study
is that close examination of the student-teaching experience will help illustrate how learning is often restricted when student-teachers are placed with CTs who negatively impact their views of teaching or who exacerbate racialized views of students. By observing the interaction of the student-teacher and the CT, the present study hopes to shed light on what schools of education can do to better facilitate student learning.

**Beliefs about the teacher’s role in urban contexts.** Research in teacher beliefs is extensive and has provided some important information about how preservice education beliefs influence decision-making (Anderson & Piazza, 1996; Lortie, 1975) and how these beliefs are formed early and are highly resistant to change (Kagan, 1992; Munby, 1982). Hollingsworth’s (1989) longitudinal study has been particularly influential in addressing how beliefs specifically impact preservice learning and teaching. Particularly salient to the current study, Hollingsworth sheds light on how field experiences and student-teaching experiences may influence what novice teachers do in their own classrooms. Hollingsworth reported on the first year of a 5-year study investigating beliefs about reading instruction and how said beliefs influence instructional decisions. Hollingsworth followed 14 preservice teachers, 32 cooperating teachers, six university student supervisors, and two reading course instructors in an attempt to trace changes in beliefs. The data sources used were baseline interviews with the preservice teachers about preexisting beliefs, preservice teachers’ reading instruction as they went through the teacher education program, observations of the participants during their student-teaching practicum, and post-interviews with study participants during their first year as teachers. Hollingsworth found that preservice students who did not challenge the ideas behind their CTs’ instructional choices experienced very little change in their own
beliefs about teaching. This was problematic when student-teachers were placed with CTs whose reading instruction was ineffective in providing opportunities for meaningful learning. For example, one student-teacher reflected on how his CT believed that she was teaching students vocabulary by having them look up and define words from the dictionary, but as the student-teacher noted, the CT was really just teaching them how to follow instructions (Hollingsworth, 1989). The fact that this student-teacher recognized a difference between his beliefs and his CT’s beliefs about teaching placed him on the higher level of becoming a more reflective and more effective teacher (Hollingsworth, 1989). Ten other teachers in the study failed to recognize poor CT instruction and therefore, did not challenge it but rather modeled it in their own teaching (Hollingsworth, 1989). Overall, Hollingsworth found that teachers who initially modeled their CTs’ approach were highly successful in organizing their thinking to overcome the complexities of orchestrating a classroom (Hollingsworth, 1989), but teachers who continued to copy their CTs apparently experienced “limit[ed] knowledge growth” resulting in “surface level” knowledge of teaching (p. 185). Participants who did not challenge beliefs that were incongruent with their own had less opportunity to practice teaching in a way that would have allowed them to grapple with “sorting . . . and interconnecting teaching routines” (Hollingsworth, 1989, p. 186). These findings have important implications for the student-teaching experience since student-teachers who do not challenge ideas ultimately have less opportunity to practice the type of teaching that they would later want to do.

Stuart and Thurlow’s (2000) study of preservice teachers’ mathematics beliefs corroborate the need for student-teachers to articulate their own beliefs as a way to help
them understand those beliefs about learning and how their own experiences influence
the instructional decisions they make. Stuart and Thurlow’s study examined the effect of
how a methods course focused on providing mathematics instruction could enable
student-teachers to re-examine their own beliefs. The mathematics methods course also
included assignments that pushed them to be critical of the instruction that they witnessed
in their CTs’ classrooms. Adopting this type of critical stance was meant to help study
participants identify how their CTs’ beliefs, such as the idea that particular students could
not handle a certain set of problems, were ill-informed and led to missed opportunities for
students to engage in challenging work. Student-teachers who recognized erroneous CT
beliefs and then challenged them experienced greater opportunities to practice teaching.
For example, one student not only identified instructional practices that seemed to be
counterproductive but by creating lessons where students were taught “how to work it
through on their own,” she “saw” for herself that these same students handled those
problems she was “told were impossible for them” (Stuart & Thurlow, 2000, p. 118).
This experience was similar to the experience of other participants in the study and
evidences the need for student-teachers to recognize and know how to challenge CT
beliefs when incongruent with their own, since this allows for more opportunities for
them to practice meaningful teaching (Stuart & Thurlow, 2000).

Student-teacher attitude and desire to teach in urban settings is a highly contested
area since most studies find that long held beliefs are for the most part resistant to
change. Another study by Castro (2012) investigated 13 teacher candidates who were
enrolled in an alternate certificate program. Castro’s study sought to investigate
participants’ visions and metaphors for teaching as a way to “capture values, dispositions,
and beliefs” (Castro, 2012, p. 46). Although, as Castro highlights, beliefs are highly resistant to change, teachers’ dispositions and values are influenced by their early teaching experiences and do change as part of the development of becoming a teacher. Through focus group interviews and one subsequent individual interview, Castro found that student-teachers’ motivation to teach in an urban setting could be grouped into four orientations: visionaries, reformers, saviors, and opportunists. Visionaries are those teachers who see teaching as a way of contributing to society and teaching in an urban school is their way of ensuring that they “pay it forward” by “giving back to the community” (Castro, 2012, p. 46). Reformers share some of the visions and metaphors held by visionaries but see their mission in life as “fixing education” (Castro, 2012, p. 145) and needing to fix urban schools, which they see as failing students and parents. Unlike visionaries and reformers, saviors and opportunists hold visions of teaching and beliefs about urban students that are more consistent with less long-time commitments to teaching in urban schools and which generally lead to less effective teaching (Castro, 2012). Understanding their own early conceptions of teaching and initial attitudes about teaching should be used to better inform teacher educators as to areas of focus and necessary support before and during the student-teaching experience. Although Castro’s study did not follow student-teachers into their first years of teaching, visionaries’ and reformers’ early beliefs about urban schools and their practices as student-teachers were consistent with what is known of successful urban teachers (Castro, 2012). The visions and metaphors of student-teachers described as reformers or saviors, highlights the need to continue to foster a community-centered and student-centered approach in student-teaching (Castro, 2012). As Castro posits, offering support and engaging saviors and
opportunists in reflective dialogue during their student-teaching might be one way to influence how student-teachers frame their initial student-teaching experience and might therefore help to foster a more community-centered approach and constructive visions of teaching.

**The context of control.** Toshalis’s (2010) study on student-teachers is an even starker example of acquiescing to school expectations by seeking to control students. As, Toshalis stated, “Discipline so undergirds teacher education that new teachers may be better prepared to command than they are to inspire” (p. 183). Toshalis’s study was conducted at an urban high school with participants recruited from a small private university. Toshalis highlighted that both the public school system where the study took place as well as the New England Teacher Education Program (NETEP), from which the participants were recruited, typically framed students as being “problematic” rather than seeing the teacher or the context as factors that mediate student behavior. Many of the student-teachers in Toshalis’s study often adopted the same authoritarian style used on them when teaching, which Toshalis classified as a system of surveillance through constant, evaluative university and cooperating teacher observations. Through the use of videotapes and observation notes as well as student and teacher surveys, Toshalis’s study found that when faced with struggling students who resisted student-teacher efforts, the student-teachers often turned to strict discipline as a way to survive their classroom teaching experiences with off-task or rude students (Toshalis, 2010). As Toshalis asserted, the limited opportunity student-teachers had for developing “responsive mode[s] of interactions” (p. 204), not surprisingly left them with little resources to better grapple with students’ resistance. Additionally, the student-teachers’ emerging skills in effective
and inclusive instructional design, since it was not supported by the student-teacher experience, was underused as a way to reengage reluctant students (Toshalis, 2010). Although one of the students in the study seemed to understand that strict adherence to a scripted curriculum can lead to disempowerment for her and her students, yet, as Toshalis underscored, the student-teacher quickly rejected the idea of disempowerment via imposed prescriptions and actually seemed to follow in the school site’s steps. She blamed the students for their boredom and refusal to do the scripted work (Toshalis, 2010). Toshalis’s study reaffirms the need to account for school context when conducting and reporting on the student-teaching experience (2010). The school culture and the messages that push the need to control students over the need to collaborate with students can lead student-teachers to enact restrictive and potentially damaging teaching practices.

Valencia, Martin, Place, and Grossman’s (2009) study of nine student-teachers learning to teach language arts used activity theory to explore student-teacher interactions with their cooperating teacher and with their university supervisors. Through observations of student-teachers while teaching and observations of debriefing sessions between the student-teachers and their CTs, as well as interviews with the student-teachers and CTs together with interviews of supervisors, Valencia et al. added another layer of understanding to the importance of context. Their study found that placement could negatively restrict student-teachers’ opportunities to learn (Valencia et al., 2009). Although most of the CTs in this study professed an experimental approach to student-teachers, they offered little support or scaffolds that would have made it possible for student-teachers to explore creative lessons and grouping systems (Valencia et al., 2009). Furthermore, student-teachers who were placed with CTs who followed an initiate-
respond-evaluate (IRE) model or whole class instruction had “difficulty implementing small group work, workshop models or literature circles” (Valencia et al., 2009, pp. 310-311). Constraints imposed by expected adherence to curriculum either from the school or from the CTs not surprisingly led to very limited opportunities for student-teachers to decide what and how to teach (Valencia et al., 2009). One participant in the study, when asked why he was teaching a lesson, responded by saying that he was basically “stuck to it” (Valencia et al., 2009, p. 314). The student-teachers in this study experienced considerable missed opportunities to grapple with important pedagogical decisions, which Valencia et al. described as “among the most important and difficult tasks for beginning teachers” (Valencia et al., 2009, p. 314).

Anderson and Stillman’s (2011) study, which focused specifically on the opportunities or lack thereof that student-teachers have to learn during their student-teaching experience, found that their 11 participants’ experiences, like the studies discussed above, were predicated on the context of that experience. Although all of the participants invariably reported that the student-teaching experience was an important factor in shaping them as teachers, deeper analysis of the interviews and observations revealed that actual opportunities to learn how to teach and to grapple with content and students was often limited (Anderson & Stillman, 2011). Most of the 11 participants, who were in their first year of teaching and who formed part of a 2-year teacher education program specifically designed to prepare teachers for urban settings, were placed in either math or literacy, which meant that this was their only exposure to classroom practices regardless of whether their content area might have been social studies, history, etc. At least two of the participants in the study seemed to appropriate a testing based definition
of their content area instead of a more broad definition promoted by their teacher education program and grounded in socio-constructivism and critical pedagogy (Anderson & Stillman, 2012). Even participants who had been placed with the more adaptive CTs, who carefully selected what they found most effective from the mandated curriculum, still spoke about being confused on how to be creative and found that they had little opportunity to plan and carry out lessons that met mandates and that were also creative and engaging (Anderson & Stillman, 2012). Participants who reported being placed with CTs whose pedagogy was aligned with their teacher education program, none-the-less left student-teaching feeling like they had witnessed lessons that incorporated social justice but didn’t know how “to do social justice” (Anderson & Stillman, 2012, p. 62). Overall, participants who had been placed in schools or classrooms in tightly regulated placements but with CTs who adapted the curriculum so that it was still test based yet student-centered reported the most opportunities to learn (Anderson & Stillman, 2012). As Anderson and Stillman addressed, these findings are somewhat surprising when one considers that participants in placements with more autonomy and with CTs whose pedagogy aligned with their teacher education programs actually lamented their loss of opportunity to experience how CTs grapple with tight control yet still manage to be student-centered.

In summary, the studies reviewed in this section underscore the point made by Anderson and Stillman (2013b) that failure to problematize and situate studies within the school context often lead authors to assume that the duration of placement and location are responsible for student growth instead of analyzing how the student-teaching experience actually offers opportunities for growth. Recent survey research with 1,000
prospective teachers that specifically investigated the duration of placements for student-teachers versus the quality of such placements has found that shorter yet higher quality student-teaching experiences explains “observed changes in preparedness, efficacy, and career plans” (Ronfeldt & Reininger, 2012, p. 1103). The quantity or duration of student-teaching is unrelated to teacher’s efficacy or future plans to stay in teaching (Ronfeldt & Reininger, 2012). In other words—it is imperative to analyze the student-teaching context and its particular features—if we truly want to understand how placement in urban settings restricts or provides opportunities to learn. Assumptions vis a vis placement duration as well as assumptions about placement itself are equally dangerous since they fail to account for how specific teaching moments might mediate student learning. Assumptions, which are also present with regard to students with disabilities and which lead to negative student outcomes (Artiles & Kozleski, 2006), should also be scrutinized during the student-teaching experience. Tracking and education placement of students with disabilities often propagate inequalities.

**Teacher Preparation for Inclusive Settings**

In spite of the fact that 80% of students with disabilities are being educated in inclusive settings, very little student-teaching research, which analyzes the student-teacher’s experience as she learns to teach in inclusive settings, is available. Inclusion has been defined by placement (“Inclusion is when a student with special learning/and or behavioral needs is educated full time in the general education program” Idol, 1997, p. 4). Inclusive education, however, is much “more ambitious and far-reaching” since it is theoretically concerned with all students” (Artiles & Zozleski, 2006, p. 67). As highlighted by Artiles and Zozleski (2006), the historical concept of “inclusion as
increased access of all students (not only marginalized students)” has actually led to a focus on the “inclusion of . . . students with special education needs and disabilities” (p. 67). This tension between the concept of inclusive education and its practice has resulted in research practice that fails to take into account how particular schools have interpreted inclusion. Much of the research on inclusive education fails to account for interaction in the classroom and instead concentrates on particular variables that have been associated with improved student outcomes (i.e., how students with disabilities like inclusive classrooms or how grouping affects reading achievement; Artiles & Zorzaleski, 2006).

Since this study aimed to investigate the student-teaching experience as it unfolded in urban and inclusive settings, I limit my discussion of inclusive settings to studies that have examined the student-teaching experience within inclusive classrooms. To this end, I discuss the two studies that met Anderson and Stillman’s (2013b) criteria for “reviewing extant research focused on student-teaching’s contributions to [student-teacher] development as future teachers of diverse students in urban and/or high-needs schools” (p. 4). As well as findings from studies that have investigated preservice teachers’ perception of their preparedness to teach in inclusive settings and ability to actively participate in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process.

As established by McGregor and Vogelboerg (1998) teachers are initially reluctant to teach inclusion but when provided with necessary support and experience they can become more confident in their abilities to support student learning in inclusive settings. As noted by Kavale and Forness (2000) experienced teacher perception of the IEP process has been linked to efficacious implementation of inclusive policies. Given the fact that the present study took place in a secondary setting, it is important to call
attention to findings which highlight that inclusive policies are particularly problematic in secondary settings often receiving “the bulk of criticism” regarding implementation of policies (Foley, 1999. p. 56). Idol’s (2006) program evaluation found that even though general education teachers had positive responses about implementing inclusive practices the majority of teachers also felt they needed support and felt much more comfortable about meeting students’ needs if “included students [were] accompanied by a special education teacher or instructional assistant or continu[ed] to have resource room services” (p. 77). Given the research on how experienced teachers perceive inclusion and on the supports they need to be effective, preservice teachers would conceivably need teacher education that specifically addresses knowledge of the IEP process and strategies that would help them implement inclusive policies in the classroom. Many teacher education programs are working toward better preparing their students for inclusive classrooms since “inclusion” has become the “current education classroom standard” (Cavanaugh). Consequently, teacher education programs have reformed their teacher preparation to address McGregor & Vogelsbert’s (1998) synthesis of the literature on inclusive settings, which highlighted the need for k-12 schools to restructure their curriculum so that they would be more representative of Dewey’s “integrated, child-centered approaches” (p. 16). In spite of this, research on preservice teacher education in inclusive settings, is scarce and mostly inconclusive.

Sobel, French and Filpin’s (1998) study of a reformed teacher education program with a focus on better preparing students for inclusive classrooms in urban settings, corroborates the need for restructured curriculum in schools of education. Sobel, French and Filpin’s findings reveal that making sure all of the stakeholders understood their roles
within the program was imperative in providing student teachers support during the course of their practicum (1998). Thanks to a concerted effort by the school site, the university mentors and supervisors, as well as the CTs in Sobel et al.’s (1998) study, the student-teachers reported that they understood the value of inclusive settings and the necessity for the child’s needs to be at the center of instruction. As noted by Anderson and Stillman (2013b), however, the Sobel et al.’s findings are limited to self-report data.

In another study Taylor and Sobel (2003) provide evidence from one of the few studies that focus on how inclusive settings influence the student-teaching experience. The study traces the student-teaching experience of teachers enrolled in a teacher education program that included a PDS model and investigated the extent to which coursework and field experiences prompted student-teachers to become social justice advocates who deliver “effective inclusive instruction” (p. 249). Taylor and Sobel’s (2003) content-analysis study of 62 responses to five open-ended questions found that even though student-teachers received training in their educational program and were also exposed to diverse learners in inclusive classrooms, they all clamored for more experiences and more explicit instruction on how best to incorporate meeting the needs of all learners into their teaching practice. Fifty percent of the cohort regarded their student-teaching experience as a “primary avenue for knowing and understanding how to teach effectively” in inclusive classrooms (Taylor & Sobel, 2003, p. 254). Important to note is that student-teachers also admitted that they needed to know more about teaching in inclusive settings and lamented the fact that their teacher preparation had not properly prepared them with more in-depth knowledge of inclusive settings (Taylor & Sobel, 2003). Additionally, student-teachers in Taylor and Sobel’s study asked for future
training to include placements to ensure that students with special needs be represented in all PDS sites (2003).

As evidenced by Taylor and Sobel’s (2003) findings, not only do student-teachers need more exposure and opportunities to learn as they engage with students in inclusive settings, but they also need to become reflective about such practices in ways that enable them to question their beliefs about student abilities and question their own status of power. Being reflective of practices and assumptions as student-teachers experience placement in an inclusive setting, promises to aid them in understanding their responsibility to act as change agents who understand the implications of special education placements without, however, pathologizing their students. Examining if and how the student-teaching experience actually affords room for student teachers to become reflective practitioners is key in informing schools of education about how best to ensure that such opportunities are built into student-teaching (Banks, 2003). Moreover, as suggested by Artiles and Zozleski (2006), research vested in evaluating how schools enact and interpret inclusion has demonstrated the need to use “tools or contexts” as mediators that facilitate professional growth and understanding of disabilities (p. 83).

Collet and Harkins’ (2010) study, though not specifically focused on the student-teaching experience, is pertinent to the present study because their findings are related to how the context/placement affected the preservice teacher knowledge. The 143 preservice teachers responded to an adapted questionnaire, which included open-ended questions (Collet and Harkins). The researchers found that while preservice teachers had a positive attitude about inclusion and saw the value of the IEP process, they also felt ill-prepared to handle the demands of inclusion and the IEP. Most of the survey responders
also felt that the CT was “really the one accountable” (p.13). In response to questions about “their engagement in the IEP process” one preservice teacher seems to have felt cheated by her CT since she was not allowed to view the IEP. The preservice teacher commented by saying the “it [the IEP] becomes political when your cooperating teacher hinders your participation…you want to find out how to help but you also don’t want to ruffle their feathers” (p.13). As Collet and Harkins’ state the “negative experiences” reported in the surveys “seem to be due to the participants’ particular placement” (p. 13). Overall their findings point to the necessity for preservice teachers to have direct experience with the IEP because differences in responses were dependent on experience with the IEP (Collet & Harkins).

Since the student-teachers in the present study were all placed in inclusive, urban classrooms, keeping a focus on context, particularly placement, promises to account for the many layers that form classroom dynamics, i.e. selection of material as well as student/teacher interactions. By providing a more in-depth picture of inclusive settings that does not relegate inclusion research as the study of one-dimensional aspects of instruction (Artiles & Kozleski, 2006), this study heeds Artiles and Kozleski’s call for research that looks beyond outcomes and instead examines how individuals act within activity settings.

**Summary**

In conclusion, because we cannot assume that reformation of student-teaching programs alone will result in student-teacher growth, research in this area will benefit from data that takes into account context and that juxtaposes self-report data with classroom observations. Research in CRT has provided compelling evidence of racial,
ethnic and cultural attitudes and beliefs, which can highly influence teacher perceptions of student ability and which has had negative consequences for minority student achievement. Multicultural education, as a response to the demographic divide has offered some promise in making education for minority students more equitable and in producing more favorable outcomes, but the increasing pressures of the standards reform efforts, particularly inflicted in urban, low performing schools, has diluted the tenets/expectations for teachers to use cultural competence in student-centered approaches. Additionally, the dearth of research examining preservice teacher experience in inclusive settings also calls for studies that directly examine placement. Thus, investigating how the student-teaching experience in urban settings unfolds has the potential to better inform teacher education programs on how to ensure that the student-teaching experience is truly a time where student-teachers can practice student-centered approaches while they navigate the possible constraints of the context.
Chapter III: Methodology

In this chapter, I explore the fit of qualitative methods for addressing the research questions. Then, I discuss the implications of using the Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) model as a conceptual framework for the study. Third, I describe the design of the study.

Qualitative Research

This study of student-teachers’ experiences is framed within a social constructivist lens that aims to go beyond description of practice by addressing the emerging data as possible avenues of transformation and negotiation. Important to this study was avoiding simplistic assumptions about student-teacher placement by providing an in-depth description of the student-teaching process that does not view White student-teachers as necessarily deficient or high school students as tools for changing student-teachers’ beliefs (Anderson & Stillman, 2013). Using qualitative methods to review and question societal, disciplinary, and researcher assumptions holds promise in elucidating how student-teachers’ lived experiences prior to, and during, the study mediate their student-teaching process.

The “battle lines” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 2) between qualitative and quantitative research were established in the 1960s, and 4 decades later, qualitative researchers still feel required to prove the value of qualitative inquiry. Charmaz (2006), Strauss and Corbin (1998), and Denzin and Lincoln (2005) all began their well-known textbooks by extolling the virtues of qualitative work through juxtaposing it against quantitative research. Creswell (2002), even when stressing that he need not make comparisons, seems unwittingly caught in the comparison trap. Although I have certainly felt the
pressure to pit qualitative ways of knowing against quantitative work, there has never been any real pull between the two; qualitative inquiry does not need the juxtaposition. The ambiguity of qualitative work (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and its call to embrace binary or multiple realities lends itself perfectly to the aim of investigating human processes and their inherent complexities.

This qualitative study explored how secondary student-teachers perceived their student-teaching experience in preparing them for teaching in urban settings and how they understood notions of teaching. The study also addresses how student-teachers developed and/or enacted these understandings in their student-teaching practicum. The following questions were the focus of the study:

1) How does student-teachers’ pedagogical knowledge develop in the context of urban, high needs schools?

2) How do student-teachers’ perceptions of teaching in an urban context develop as a result of their student-teaching experience?

A combination of deductive and inductive qualitative methods offered the most suitable means for investigating these questions. As noted by Patton (1999), a study can include elements of both (deductive and inductive) strategies and can draw from many qualitative disciplines, that is, most interviews draw on the principles of ethnography though not purely ethnographic in form. Inductive and deductive qualitative methods that produce an in-depth picture (Creswell, 1997) of the student-teaching experience, as it unfolds within the context of an urban, low-performing, high-needs school, fits well with the present study.
The model for Bransford and Darling-Hammond Model for Understanding Teaching and Learning (see Figure 1), which presupposes the understanding of teaching as a democratic practice, was used as a deductive framework (Charmaz, 2006). Qualitative work that follows a constructivist research design assumes that the interaction between the participants and researcher “**produces** the data, and therefore the meanings that the researcher observes and defines” (Charmaz, 1995b, p. 35). For Charmaz (1995), researchers are authors and co-producers of the data. Research using Charmaz’s (2001) constructivist approach encourages a rich immersion with the data that should result in final research outcomes that tell the participants’ story. This immersion calls for the researcher to code actions (Charmaz, 2001). Accordingly, I used interview guides and observation frameworks where I constructed active codes to aid me in staying focused on specific features of the activity setting central to the research questions. As noted by Bogdan and Biklen (1992) and Patton (1990), interview guides and observation frameworks are helpful in gathering comparable data in multi-subject participant-observation studies. To this end, I constructed the **Student-Teaching Analysis Framework (STAF)**; see appendix A) based on the Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) model. The **STAF**, in a general sense, can be applied to the student-teaching experience in any setting, since the codes are derived from literature that provides evidence of the many different forms of knowledge and practice that student-teachers need (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). As recommended by Bogdan and Biklen, use of the **STAF** and interview guides was open-ended and flexible enough to allow me to “note and collect data on unexpected dimensions of the topic” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 77). As discussed in Chapter IV, unexpected dimensions arose as student-teachers navigated the
overwhelming testing constraints often found in Education Transformation Office (ETO) schools and the uniqueness of teaching in an urban context.

Urban, high-needs schools and inclusive classrooms within ETO schools, like the one in this study, have specific features. Developed in 2010 to serve 19 schools designated as “persistently lowest-achieving” by either the Florida or U.S. Department of Education, ETO schools receive School Improvement Grants (SIG), which began as an initial commitment of roughly $4 billion “to help turn around the nation’s 5,000 lowest performing public schools.” Today, ETO has expanded to 66 schools in its third year, adding 27 elementary, 11 middle, and two high schools for a total of 36 elementary, 18 middle, and 12 high schools. In exchange for their participation, schools receive high quality teachers’ “individualized support on areas ranging from operations, to curriculum and instruction, to professional development, to family engagement” (https://www.ed.gov/blog/2010/11/). In many ETO schools, support has been translated into data-centric surveillance. I honed in on and attempted to elicit information about this type of setting.

**Instrument.** The STAF is organized into three domains borrowed from the model: (a) knowledge of learners and their development in social contexts, (b) knowledge of subject matter and curriculum goals, and (c) knowledge of teaching (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). The subheadings and literature under each domain were used to create broad categories and codes that would help identify the observable features of interactions as outlined by the Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) model.

For example, knowledge of subject matter and curriculum goals is broadly described as a “curricular understanding that enables teachers to organize the subject
matter and skills they will teach in light of their goals” (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005, p. 34). It includes “knowing what to teach and why” (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005, p. 35). I used examples under this broad domain to create categories that might be observable and representative of each domain. Those codes included, but were not limited to, “selects materials and designs activities based on students’ learning needs.” Using these codes helped me in interpreting how the interactions of the student-teaching experience aligned with the Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) model (See appendix A).

The STAF was constructed as a way to generate in-depth concepts and understanding (Bogden & Biklen, 1992) of the student-teaching experience and their opportunities to learn. Using qualitative data, collected through interviews and observations, allows for more nuanced and deeper considerations of the phenomenon to understand how social processes occur rather than to make broadly generalizable statements. In my aim to understand student-teachers’ opportunities or impediments to learning, I attempted to remain open to all of the features of instruction that emerged, including direct observations of classroom interactions and student-teachers’ reports of their perceptions and their interactions with school personnel. Albeit, I did not actually witness student-teacher interactions with school personnel, during the interviews, they often spoke about their perceptions about the school culture and the many deficiencies they found in administrative processes.

I used the deductive codes from the STAF to group data into major categories — knowledge of learners, knowledge of content, and knowledge of teaching—while also
using open coding across interviews and observations. In the following sections, I outline how each of the data collection methods and analysis methods drew from the model.

**Context of the Study**

Qualitative methods call for purposive sampling (Miles & Huberman, 1994) where participant selection is based on direct experience with, or knowledge of, the phenomenon under study. As Hancock and Algozinne (2006) have posited, the beginning researcher must identify accessible cases that will represent the phenomenon one seeks to study. With that in mind, this study consented participants who were completing their student-teaching in a professional development high school currently under agreement with the university. The high school formed part of a university program engaged in restructuring teacher preparation. This program redesigned field experiences that linked research to practice by providing mentors to support candidates in intensive experiences in the field. Student teachers were placed at diverse, urban school sites with which the University had a Professional Development School (PDS) agreement and provides a Professor in Residence. Students were placed at the PDS sites for student-teaching over 15 weeks, and university mentors conducted observations and met with candidates and CTs biweekly over the 15 weeks. Student-teachers were expected to participate in reflective activities to link coursework theories and researched based knowledge with practical applications in the field to develop a better understanding of "the complexities of teachers' actions and interactions with students and contexts" (Blanton, Bremme, Gallego, & Nonon, 2003, p. 7). At the time of my study, however, the mentorship component of the program could not be realized since there were not enough doctoral students to assign to the student-teachers during their practicum. As a result, the student-
teachers only had contact with the student-teacher supervisors, which meant that three of my study participants were being supervised by a retired teacher who had been employed by the university; supervision of the fourth student-teacher was done by a doctoral student. Additionally, during the time of this study, John R. Lewis was not assigned to a Professor in Residence.

John R. Lewis high school is located in a large urban district in the southeastern United States, in one of the oldest neighborhoods of the city. It began as a town built by, and for, Blacks in the 20th century and flourished until the 1960s, but “urban renewal and construction of two expressways” has been cited as tearing “the community apart” (Florida History & the Arts: A magazine of Florida’s heritage, reprinted 2002). John R. Lewis high school is located in “toptown,” a historic part of the city, which is currently associated with violence and high crime. When I commented to people outside the university (i.e., small talk with parents from my son’s school and others who lived outside of “toptown” in mostly high SES and suburban neighborhoods) about my role as a student-teacher supervisor they were often shocked and wondered how I “would drive there all alone.” These conversations often ended in them giving me advice on being especially vigilant while in “toptown.” These beliefs appear to have been formed on the basis of common stereotypes, not on direct/firsthand experience.

John R. Lewis first opened in 1926 for the Black community and is actually the second oldest high school built for Blacks in the county. In 1967, it became a middle school as part of the county’s desegregation efforts. In 1996, new buildings were added to the ones already in place, and in 1999, it was once again converted to a high school as a way to relieve overcrowding in neighboring schools.
The student demographics at John R. Lewis are 53% African American, 45% Hispanic, and 2% White. Eighty-four percent of the population is eligible for Free/Reduced Price Lunch. Additionally, 7% of the students are classified as English Language Learners (ELLs), and 19% of students receive Special Education (SPED) services. Eighty-six percent of the students scored below grade level on the Florida Comprehension Assessment Test (FCAT; Florida Department of Education, 2009).

During my tenure as a student-teacher mentor and supervisor, I slowly began to establish a working relationship with the school administration as part of our efforts to place student-teachers in classrooms with teachers who had been clinically trained. This meant that during that first year, I had at least three meetings with the principal and the assistant principal in which we discussed possible student placements for each semester. In addition to these meetings, I had both formal and informal interactions with school administration while we discussed the student-teachers. The school assistant principal (A.P.) also spoke to me about his vision for the school and explained that their work centered on making sure these “kids understand that they can go to college and they will go to college and that that’s their number one priority in life.” (Lawrence, personal communication, February 2014). During the time of this study, I spoke with the A.P. on at least four occasions and also spoke with the principal at least two times. These informal conversations usually came about from running into the administration on my way in or out of the school and served as background for the study to fill out the details of the context but were not subjected to coding or data analysis.

As already mentioned in Chapter I, few studies, although they claim to contextualize their findings in urban and high-needs schools, actually offer information
about the school or its culture. Recent research in teacher education highlights the homogeneity of the current teaching force and juxtaposes it against the growing diversity of schools and students’ needs. Thus, there is a great need for pre-service training that will enable new teachers to better meet the challenges of urban, high-needs schools (Banks et al., 2005). To this end, the present study was designed to provide contextual information about the school and the classrooms that goes beyond simplistic demographic data and that delves more deeply into what this particular urban school looked like. By including a thorough description of my 3-year interaction with the school personnel as a former university mentor and supervisor, I aim to provide a more in-depth picture of the student-teaching experience.

During the 3 years I was visiting as part of my graduate assistantship (mentoring and supervising) I observed that the school culture was different from what I had experienced while teaching in a neighboring, high needs urban school. As a teacher in a neighboring school, I worked within a ‘Foucauldian’ environment, where prison-like surveillance was used as the means of control. Unlike the school where I taught, I did not perceive the same general feeling of antagonism provoked in me by security guards using whistles to heard students into class, which is unfortunately a rather common practice at urban schools. Although this was an inner-city school, the school did not have metal detectors as did at least two other high schools within miles from the school and with a very similar population. It was not until one of my last visits to the school that I was once again confronted with policies that seemed antagonizing and which were certainly disruptive to the learning environment.
The generally relaxed feeling of the school was evident in students’ and administrations’ interactions with me. For example, almost every time I visited the school, I asked students to help me find particular classrooms and most of the time the students were exceedingly friendly. They held open doors, pointed in the right direction, and/or walked me to the class in question. There were very few visits to the school site where I did not by happenstance run into at least one person from administration: They would either be walking back to their office or seemingly on the way to a classroom. These run-ins often led to conversations about who I was visiting on that day and their perception about how that particular student–teacher was doing. On at least two occasions, the A.P. took the opportunity of my visit to also pay the student-teachers a visit and observe their teaching.

Unfortunately, my last visits to the school were quite different from what I had previously experienced. On one of my last visits, two to three administrators (none of whom I knew) were standing at one of the main gates to the school and asking (demanding) students to show their I.D.’s. The I.D. check itself is perhaps not problematic but the fact that it was now just being implemented with only 3 months left of the school year seemed odd. Additionally, the exchange between school personnel, who were now manning school entrances, was disruptive, time consuming, and generally done while yelling at the students to either “keep moving” or to “go straight to the office.” Clinical teachers corroborated my experience and repeatedly stated that they just “didn’t understand what was going on this year” and often complained about the lack of proper planning for testing procedures, class scheduling, and general disregard for organization.
Participants

Participant Recruitment. Participants for this study were drawn from a pool of students who were currently working toward their teacher certification in a teacher preparation program and who were eligible for student-teaching assignments during the spring of 2014. The participants were recruited as part of a larger study, which sought to better understand how pre-service teachers’ attitudes toward inclusion and teaching in inclusive settings changed over time as they participated in a teacher education program, which included working with a university appointed mentor during the student-teaching semester. As part of this larger study, students were consented to participate in an interview process and to allow classroom observations during student-teaching.

During the spring of 2014, four student-teachers were placed in John R. Lewis high school as part of the university’s professional development agreement and all four became study participants. The four student-teachers were all White middle-class, traditional students. As is commonly accepted, traditional students are defined as those who enroll in full-time college courses immediately after graduating from high school and complete their bachelors by the age of 22 or 23. The participants in this study graduated at the end of their 15-week student-teaching assignment (see Table 3).
Table 1 *Participating Student-Teacher Characteristics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant pseudonym</th>
<th>Race/ethnicity</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Selected grade level and content for study observation</th>
<th>Geographic background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sheryl</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>9th honors, 9th regular</td>
<td>Southeast suburban/urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ophelia</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>11th grade &quot;retakers&quot;</td>
<td>Midwest/rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>9th honors, 9th regular</td>
<td>Northeast/Suburban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lance</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>9th regular</td>
<td>Midwest/Suburban</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Participant profiles.** This study began one week before the participants assumed the role of teacher for roughly 15 weeks during their student-teaching practicum. The participants were placed in inclusive classrooms. For the purpose of this study, the inclusive setting was defined by clinical teachers’ report of having four to five students with IEPs in their classroom, in addition to their general education students. Three of the participants (i.e., Sheryl, Mark, and Lance) were assigned to a university supervisor, a retired teacher the university had hired, and Ophelia was assigned to a doctoral student who had previously been a student-teacher mentor. All four participants were placed in John R. Lewis high school: Sheryl and Lance were placed with Mr. Henderson who taught five 9th grade world history classes and one 11th grade honors psychology course; Mark was placed with Mr. Saunders who taught two 9th grade geometry courses and
three algebra courses; and Ophelia was placed with Ms. Plumb who taught five intensive reading classes to “FCAT re-takers” (mostly 11th grade students who had not passed the FCAT in 10th grade). I will briefly describe the student-teaching context for each participant.

Due to a lack of clinically trained history teachers at John R. Lewis, instead of being assigned to different classrooms, Lance and Sheryl were both placed with Mr. Henderson and each one took over teaching two 9th grade world history courses. For Sheryl, one of these was designated as honors. Mr. Henderson is a 30-year veteran teacher who had already assumed the role of CTs to two university student-teachers in previous semesters. The physical appearance of his classroom merits a very brief description since it was famous among university personnel as exemplary. As one university supervisor said, “It feels like History in there,” thanks to two beach-ball size world globes hung from the ceiling and to other décor, which included an antique looking desk lamp and a large world map on the left side of the room. In the back of the room, next to a colorful world-wall displaying at least 100 words, were also some bean bags with a couple of throws, creating a reading-nook type atmosphere. From my experience as a student-teacher supervisor prior to the study, Mr. Henderson’s teaching style was traditional and teacher-directed. Overall, he was very popular with his students, and like Sheryl and Lance both expressed, he “really cared about the students.”

Sheryl feared that being placed together with another student-teacher would result in “less teaching time” for each of them. Although Sheryl began the student-teaching semester with some trepidation about sharing the class, at the end of her practicum, she did not necessarily see it “as a bad thing” (pre-interview, 2014). Sheryl grew up in
Florida and attended a diverse high school but reported that it was “still pretty segregated.” She also reported noticing and being surprised by the fact that there were very few Blacks in any of her advanced placement classes. Sheryl had been accepted and attended a northeastern university and after spending 1 year there, transferred to South Florida.

Lance was from what he described as “a pretty small and affluent town in the Midwest” and during the first interview, when asked how he felt about teaching in a diverse school, he admitted to “having expected stereotypes of someone from the Midwest,” but followed that up by saying that he was very excited about his placement and was looking forward to the student-teaching semester (Lance, pre-interview). Lance was the only participant who admitted to being employed during the student-teaching semester since the university did not allow students to work outside of their student-teaching practicum. Perhaps this is one reason why he, unlike the other three participants, spoke very often about the difficulty of navigating college life with his new role as a student-teacher. Unlike Sheryl, Lance was not too worried about sharing his placement but did worry that this would result in less opportunity to observe Mr. Henderson teach.

Ophelia grew up in a very small and affluent town in the Midwest and, like Lance, had had very limited exposure to diverse schools or CLD students. Ophelia was majoring in English literature and secondary education but was placed in an intensive reading class. Ophelia’s CT, Ms. Plumb, like Mr. Henderson, was a 30-year veteran. Her teaching style was student-centered in that instruction was mostly done via group work. The fact, however, that she taught re-takers resulted in a very scripted curriculum mandated by the administration. As Ophelia said, her classes were “basically FCAT”
classes. Additionally, perhaps because students in Ms. Plumb’s classes were just waiting to pass the FCAT in March to transfer out of the class, since the class was designed specifically for 11th and 12th grade students who had not yet passed the test, the students in the class were more resistant to work and generally expressed a feeling of discontent toward the class but not necessarily toward Ms. Plumb. This in turn may have led to a classroom dynamic where Ms. Plumb seemed to allow certain antagonistic behavior.

Mark grew up in a rather affluent town in Massachusetts, with highly educated parents, but, unlike Ophelia and Lance, he was exposed to diverse schools in Florida and was also involved in research projects at the university, which placed him in a variety of schools, including low-performing schools with large CLD populations. Mark’s CT, Mr. Saunders, had been teaching for 4 years at the time of the study and was a Teach for America (TFA) graduate. Although he had only been at the school a short time, like Mr. Henderson, he was very well liked by the administration and the students. Mr. Saunders’ style was student-centered with established classroom expectations that dictated that students work together and that they understand the value of respecting each other and helping each other succeed. In contrast to Ophelia’s classroom, the dynamic in Mark’s classroom and his CT’s clearly established rules produced a classroom climate where students consistently knew what to do and when to do it. Mr. Saunders’ classroom was distinctive both because it was much larger than most of the other classrooms (it might have been a computer lab at one point) and because all of the posters/signs in the room reflected the idea that intelligence was malleable and that math was one route toward higher education. For example, on one wall, a ladder made of brown pieces of construction paper began with “high school” as its first step and went through college,
masters, and doctorate to end in career,” the signs next to it read: “math can take you there” and “your mind is as flexible as you want it to be.” In a conversation with Mr. Saunders, he explained that his classroom was a “science lab” where he studied/reflected on his instruction and its direct impact on student performance.

Table 2 Cooperating Teachers Assigned to Student-Teacher Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cooperating-teacher pseudonym</th>
<th>Race/ethnicity</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Years of experience</th>
<th>Selected grade level and content for study observation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Henderson</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9th honors, 9th regular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Plumb</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>11th grade &quot;re-takers&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Saunders</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9th honors, 9th regular</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Collection

Two types of data were collected for the study: a pre and post semi-structured interview, three post-observation interviews, and three to four observations of student-teaching.

Pre and post study interviews. Interviewing is central to qualitative inquiry since it allows for thorough investigation of particular issues or experiences (Charmaz, 2006). Through interviews, the researcher elicits participants’ understandings of their experiences, thus eliciting their perspectives (Patton, 1999). As outlined by Spradley (1979), the qualitative interview, though conversational, is not to be mistaken as a chat with a close friend. Although ethnographic interviews share “many features with the
friendly conversation” it is distinct through its most important ethnographic elements: its explicit purpose, use of ethnographic explanations, and ethnographic questions (Spradley, 1979). Unlike friendly conversations, ethnographic interviews have an explicit purpose and both the researcher and the participant know that the conversation “is supposed to go somewhere” (Spradley, 1979). Ethnographic explanations help keep the participants vested by offering clarifications and also help the researcher assess what she is learning from the participant while placing the participant in the role of the teacher (Spradley, 1979). The third most salient distinction between a friendly conversation and an ethnographic interview centers on the type of ethnographic questions employed during the interviews. The three most important types of questions (descriptive questions, structural questions, and contrast questions) formed part of the interview protocol and aided in keeping me focused on the student-teaching experience as it related to the model, without, however, allowing my researcher agenda to supersede the need of the participants to tell their story.

I had originally planned to conduct interviews with the participants about their student-teaching experience while holding a rather objective stance that would allow me to collect data regarding their perceptions of opportunities and constraints related to their learning within the student-teaching experience. My aim at the beginning of the study was to observe the student-teachers and then to interview them about their experiences, without in any way giving any feedback from my observations. Although I set out to remain on the more removed end of the participant-observer continuum, by the time I had conducted my first observation and its subsequent reflective interview, my researcher role had already shifted. Part of that shift was prompted by one of the participant’s reactions
to my study and to our upcoming interview. Despite my explanation of my role at the outset of the project as described in the consent form, as she saw it, I would be observing her teaching, and then during our discussion of that observation, I would provide her with feedback from what I had observed. She repeatedly told me that she was “really looking forward to [my] feedback” (Sheryl, pre-interview). After having this conversation about feedback with Sheryl, I spoke with my dissertation chair and we both agreed that not providing feedback would actually be a disservice to students, particularly if my observations of their teaching pointed to areas where they could really use, and grow from, constructive/supportive feedback. Because, however, I wanted to ensure that my data collection process would not be tainted by my influence over the students, my chair and I decided to let the participants know that I would withhold any feedback that I had about the observations until the end of the interview, and I also made it a point to let them know that they could choose not to receive my input.

Each student-teacher participated in one pre and one post semi-structured interview where I asked questions based on the three dimensions of the model as outlined by the STAF. As previously explained, the interview protocol (see Appendix B) was constructed from the STAF and included questions about student-teachers’ knowledge of learners and their development in social contexts, knowledge of subject matter and curriculum goals, and understanding of teaching. I also asked questions that drew from the two framing concepts in the model: teaching as a profession and learning in a democracy. These questions attempted to gauge student-teachers’ sense of preparedness as outlined by the three dimensions (see appendix A). Additionally, I asked about student-teachers’ readiness and willingness to teach in urban settings, their own
experiences in schooling, and their perceptions of their field experiences and experiences during their student-teaching semester. During the pre-interview, I also asked questions that centered on student-teachers’ readiness to teach students with disabilities and students who were culturally and linguistically diverse (see Appendix B for the interview protocol). These pre-interviews were often lengthy and led to extended conversations about the student-teachers’ schooling experiences and their perceptions about how their own experiences would or would not affect how they would teach during their upcoming student-teaching semester. The pre-interviews often took on a conversational feel, which led participants to tell me about their upbringing, their families, and their prior schooling experiences.

The post-interview asked questions that centered on the student-teaching experience and on possible changes in beliefs or perceptions since the first interview. These post-interviews were also used as member-checking opportunities where I shared some of my codes with the students and verified that they felt that “their words matched what they actually intended” (Shenton, 2004, p. 68). Moreover, I also used these post-interviews to enter into a dialogue with the student-teachers about the patterns I was starting to see in the data (e.g., acquiescence to high-stakes pressures, lack of cultural competence). I also used this last interview to highlight positive patterns in the data that pointed to areas of strength that I felt students should continue to explore. These member checking sections were used to both, “confirm the description and analysis” of my study and add to the triangulation of the data since they provided space for participants to “react to what is described and concluded” (Patton, 2002, p. 560). In both the pre- and post-interviews, I used the STAF guide combined with an open-ended format that
allowed me “flexibility in probing and in determining” when and how to explore key themes in more depth (Patton, 1999).

**Post-observation interviews.** Three student teachers were observed three times during the student-teaching semester, and one was observed four times. The latter one occurred, because I had the opportunity to visit Ophelia’s classroom during university-related business and was able to conduct an extra informal observation of her during her first few days of teaching. After each student-teacher observation (3 observations for Lance, Sheryl and Mark and 4 for Ophelia) and before conducting the post-observation interview, I typed up the field notes and added observer comments as well as memos about the observation and my interpretations of what I had seen. I then used the *STAF* to code the field notes taken during the observation. This process aided me in generating “more focused queries” that tapped into the categories outlined in the *STAF*, but which were also grounded in the observation I had just conducted (Charmaz, 2006). Once the field notes from the student-teaching observations were coded using the *STAF*, I created an interview guide that asked questions based on the analysis of the coded observations. The codes in the *STAF*, which were created from the Darling-Hammond and Bransford model (2005), were used as deductive categories. Data placed within each category was then further analyzed to construct codes that captured the nuances and details within the category since these codes were developed in response to the data. Since the interview guide drew from the three dimensions of Darling-Hammond and Bransford’s model (2005)—knowledge of learners, knowledge of subject matter and curriculum goals, and knowledge of teaching—the interviews can thus be seen as grounded theory interviews that at once narrowed the range of interview topics and likewise allowed me to
“immediately pursue . . . leads” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 29). Based on the coded observations and the model as a guiding tool, I conducted post-observation, semi-structured interviews with each participant. I asked questions related to the types of learners the student-teachers were teaching and their perceptions regarding learner abilities. Questions were also framed around student-teachers’ emerging understanding of their role as teachers and the responsibility dictated by such a role. Additionally, I asked about their perceptions of teaching diverse learners as it applied to the construction of the classroom dynamic and open-ended questions that attempted to uncover the many facets of the student-teaching experience, with particular attention to the student-teachers’ perceptions of opportunities to learn and restrictions to learning during their student-teaching assignment.

Observations. The direct observation of student-teaching had many advantages. Through direct observation, I was not only better able to “capture the context within which people interact[ed] (Patton, 1999, p. 262), but just as importantly, the observations, which were all 90 minutes long, supplied extremely rich data that I later juxtaposed with the student-teachers’ perceptions of how these particular lessons had unfolded and their actions and reactions during the lesson. These direct observations allowed me to describe the setting, the activities that took place in that setting, and the possible meanings that the study participants assigned to what happened during the activity setting (Patton, 1999). As mentioned earlier, it is imperative to view and account for the context within which student-teachers fulfill their practicum by analyzing the classroom culture through the interactions student-teachers have with their students, with the CTs, with the school culture, and with the curriculum. As Patton (1999) has argued, because schools are places
with many routine activities, the observations unearthed assumptions behind routine practices that might otherwise have gone unnoticed or unexamined by those who participated in the setting (Patton, 1999). Although interviews with participants provided important information about how participants understood their experiences, direct observations provided accounts of the actual practices that went beyond what participants thought about by allowing me to document what they actually did. On more than one occasion, this led to stark differences between what study participants thought they had accomplished and what I had observed, thus the observations worked to offset some of the disadvantages of self-report data by triangulating across data sources (Stake, 1995).

Student-teacher research draws almost exclusively from what student-teachers self-report, but few studies have actually analyzed how the student-teaching experience contributes to the development of student-teachers’ practice (Anderson & Stillman, 2005). Since observation offered a “firsthand encounter with the phenomenon of interest rather than the second-hand account obtained in an interview” (Merriam, 1998, p. 94), I developed an observation guide that aided me in focusing on the actions and interactions that were most salient for my study. I relied on the STAF as a lens by which to conduct observations on the more removed end of the “participant observation” spectrum, However, participant observations allowed me to focus on topics of interest while holding a moderate participation role (i.e., although I was known to the participants, I did not actively participate with the participants in the setting as described by DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011).

During the observations, I took extensive field notes and used the codes under the dimensions of the STAF as a broad guide while remaining open to unanticipated events.
that occurred in the setting. As advocated by Angrosino and DePerez (2000), the STAF helped structure the observation and helped to “minimize researcher bias, maximize efficiency in the field, and “facilitate replication or verification by others” (Kawulich).

As mentioned above, after the observation, I typed the field notes and also wrote memos about my interpretations of what I had observed to help me work through any biases that I experienced during the observations. I also spoke with two of my colleagues at length about each observed lesson and about possible questions to ask during the upcoming post-observation interview.

Data Analysis

The Bransford and Darling-Hammond (2005) model was used to create the STAF. The literature on best practices research from the three domains of the model was used to create broad initial categories; these categories informed by the key concepts of the model, became broad areas, which were applied to the observation and interview data. The broad categories led to open codes, which are representative of what was observed and what was reported in the interview data. Through axial coding, data was reassembled by cross referencing the broad categories and open codes to specify the properties and dimensions of each category. Axial coding (reassembled data) led to the five major themes: activating/accounting for learner knowledge, navigating cultural relevance, developing a democratic curricular vision, negotiating constraints and adjusting to urban teaching. These fives themes were then subjected to further inductive analysis of the categories to arrive at a wider understanding of the topic (substantive statement). The student-teaching experience in urban, high needs schools is often hijacked by testing
regimes if not highly structured by university personnel and by placement with CTs who allow practice with salient teaching strategies.

As already discussed, in recent teacher preparation literature, the under-specification of context within the student-teaching experience fails to account for how “specific contextual features mediate learning” (Anderson & Stillman, 2013). Since schools of education with reformed teacher preparation programs, like the one in the present study, aim to prepare teachers for particular contexts, it is imperative to study the student-teaching context through a sociocultural lens that allows us to more readily capture the many nuances of that experience.

Following Strauss and Corbin’s (1999) argument that qualitative research should strive for authentic interplay of methods, I used a combination of a deductive and inductive approach. Although use of a deductive framework may not conform to the more constructivist approaches found in qualitative research, deductive approaches do not necessarily mean a divorce “from context” but rather an approach to investigating context by embracing complexity (Yin, 2003). As Yin (2003) asserts, deductive approaches “benefit from the prior development of a theoretical proposition to guide data collection and analysis” (p. 14).

The open coding methodology used in grounded theory fit nicely with my deductive/inductive research design. Although traditional grounded theory “emphasizes steps and procedures for connecting induction and deduction through constant comparative methods” (Patton, 2002, p. 125) and does not specifically discuss the connection of inductive and deductive methods through a deductive framework, constant comparative methods can be applied to this design as well. A deductive framework that
allows for inductive coding can actually allow the researcher to hone in on the research questions while simultaneously leaving room for the researcher to discover emerging themes. The inductive and systemic process of data analysis in grounded theory usually follows a standard format that includes open coding, where meaningful segments are coded into initial categories about the phenomenon being studied. Codes “are tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during the study” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 54). Open codes can be thought of as the “bones of your analysis,” while “theoretical integration should then assemble these bones into a working skeleton” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 45). For this study, we can think of the codes generated by the $STAF$ as the bones of the study while the open coding can be seen as the theoretical integration that slowly led to the fleshing out of the study skeleton. Grounded theory defines a category as a unit of information composed of events, instances, and happenings that form concepts (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Axial coding is then used to connect and cluster similar concepts within the categories. Then, we look for themes (the stories told) by analyzing the categories and their interconnections. Finally, the interconnections among themes provide the explanatory statements that lead to delineation of a substantive theory.

For the deductive part of the study, I used the dimensions in the $STAF$ as major categories: (a) knowledge of learners and their development in social contexts, (b) knowledge of subject matter and curriculum goals, and (c) knowledge of teaching. I used the codes from the three categories as well as the inductive categories, negotiating constraints, and challenges in urban schools generated from my open coding—to code across surveys, interviews, and observations. These deductive codes imposed on the data
by the STAF and the inductive codes were used to saturate the categories (Patton, 2002). Axial coding, which “relates categories to subcategories, specifies the properties and dimensions of a category and reassembles the data . . . to give coherence to the emerging analysis” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 62), was then used to “specify possible relationships between [the] categories [I] developed during my initial coding” and my more focused coding (Charmaz, 2006, p. 63). Through axial coding, I constructed five themes. Three of these were derived from the STAF:(a) activating/accounting for learner knowledge, (b) navigating cultural relevance, and (c) developing a democratic curricular vision. In addition, two themes were constructed as part of the open coding process: (a) negotiating constraints and (b) adjusting to urban teaching.

The next level of coding is described in different ways by different theorists. For example, Charmaz (2006) views it as an approach to help tell a coherent “analytic story of the data” (p. 63). I used a modified version of grounded theory and an adapted form of thematic coding in an effort to move my “analytic story in a theoretical direction” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 63). I applied a strategy similar to Charmaz (2006), who describes her coding as a way to analyze her categories by attempting to view them as dimensions within the category. For example, the category “behaves in ways that indicate cultural competency” can be seen as having dimensions or levels that move along a continuum (Charmaz, 2006). “Behaves in ways that indicate cultural competency” includes particular properties and can reflect views of self and identity as well as views of students. Because the use of the STAF was derived from “theoretical concepts from [my] discipline,” (Charmaz, 2006) that is to say that the framework drew on theoretical concepts related to teaching and teacher preparation, in attempting to analyze the validity
of these concepts as represented by the model and their dimensions, I used Charmaz’s suggested questions: Do these concepts (categories/families) help you understand what the data indicate? If so, how do they help? Can you explicate what is happening in this line or segment of data with these concepts? Can you adequately interpret this segment of data without these concepts? and What do they add? (Charmaz, 2006, p. 68). The use of these questions forced me to revisit my data in an iterative process and led to a deeper understanding of my categories and their fit in the study. For example, considering the above referenced questions and how they applied to the category “behaves in ways that indicate cultural competency,” allowed me to take a close look at the open codes for this family. The open codes revealed that although I might have been able to “interpret segments of data” (Charmaz, 2006) without the use of the theoretical teaching concepts, having these concepts and their definitions within my framework focused my analysis on how student-teachers perceived cultural competence and how they did or did not enact that knowledge in the classroom. Because most teacher preparation literature highlights the urgency for teachers to be culturally competent, particularly teachers who work with CLD populations and students with disabilities (Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2004), using the literature to inform this category helped to hone in on what student-teachers said and did with regard to their own culture, student culture, and school culture. This is important in my study since its aim is to investigate the student-teaching experience and how that experience aligns with what we know about best practices.
To provide a substantive theory, thematic analysis was used to explore connections and instances of occurrences among and across categories. A substantive theory is “a theoretical interpretation or explanation of a delimited problem in a particular area, such as family relationships, formal organizations, or education” (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 293). It is developed through further inductive analysis of categories and cases to find differences and similarities within and across categories and cases around a common theme to arrive at a wider understanding of a topic (Adelman, 2009; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I attempted to develop a substantive theory that built on the data to further the understanding of student-teachers’ experiences in an urban context, perceptions of their preparedness to teach in urban settings, and opportunities and impediments to learning experienced during their student-teaching practicum.

The Bransford and Darling-Hammond (2005) model was used to create the STAF (see appendix A). The literature on best practices research from the three domains of the model was used to create broad initial categories; these categories which appear under each domain of the model were applied to the observation and interview data, through an open coding process. Through axial coding, data was reassembled by cross referencing the broad categories and open codes to specify the properties and dimensions of each category. Axial coding (reassembled data) led to the five mayor themes: activating/accounting for learner knowledge, navigating cultural relevance, developing a democratic curricular vision, negotiating constraints and adjusting to urban teaching. These five themes were then subjected to further inductive analysis of the categories to arrive at a wider understanding of the topic (substantive or theoretical statement).
Substantive statement: The hijacking of the curriculum by testing regimes, coupled with student-teaching placement with weak clinical teachers and the limited provision of university support result in a highly restricted student teaching experience that does not allow practice with salient teaching strategies.

The Relationship of the Researcher to the Phenomenon Being Researched

The researcher is constantly constructing his way of knowing while at the same time being formed by what he is studying (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Although there is always room for debate surrounding the ontology of research, in qualitative work, it is accepted that knowing is an “interpretive process” and consists of a person’s actions based on what things, places, or people mean to him (Blumer, 1969, p. 2). This interaction in turn is predicated on the premise that these meanings are “derived from” or come from “social interaction” (Blumer, 1969, p. 2).

Sensitizing concepts. My previous positions as a student, an educator, and my role as a student-teacher supervisor for the past 3 years form part of the “sensitizing concept” that hindered and aided in the development of researcher persona and in the analysis of data (Charmaz, 2006, p. 16). Unwittingly, I often found myself making comparisons between my study participants and student-teachers I had mentored or supervised in the past. Although these comparisons were somewhat valid because they were linked to my expertise and experience with the processes usually carried out during the student-teaching practicum (e.g., the student-teacher’s ability to capitalize on the established classroom dynamic or, when necessary, work to change it), I worked hard at applying my intuitive comparisons as sensitizing concepts rather than as avenues for interpretation. Like many other graduate students who embark on qualitative research as
part of their dissertation process, my doctoral studies, my research assistantship, and research presentations have given me an “intimate familiarity” with the topic as well as a firm grasp of disciplinary knowledge. But as Charmaz (2006) posits, sensitizing concepts and disciplinary knowledge are merely places to start, they should not limit the construction of your data or the use of it (Charmaz, 2006). “Sensitizing concepts” and “intimate familiarity” with the student-teaching process acted as guides in this study and in how I analyzed and constructed meaning from the data. In using Darling-Hammond and Bransford’s (2005) model, my student-teaching supervisor experience, as well as my experience as an urban teacher for 8 years, I stayed focused on the unit of analysis (i.e., the student-teaching process), while at the same time remaining open to emerging themes that fit or did not fit into the three dimensions of the Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) model.

**Balancing personal and research agendas.** My training in a doctoral program with a very clear social justice agenda, my background as an immigrant Latina, and my experience as an urban teacher for 8 years thoroughly complicated my data collection, the interpretation of my findings, and what I envisioned as my mission. Although I had come to terms with the reality that my social constructivist approach to research in this study would not lead to transformative practices and even less so to critical theory, I grappled with this tension throughout the work. Critical theory, similar to participatory action research, seeks “not just to study and understand society but rather to critique and change society” (Patton, 2002, p. 131). Social constructionism asks/expects that the researcher “negotiate and transform the practice” (Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2009, p. 690). Educational research, however, when conducted at school sites with participants who belong to, and
work within, that activity setting, does not easily lend itself as a vehicle by which to “confront injustice” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000 as cited in Patton, 2002, p. 131).

Although publications of school site research can potentially become “transformative endeavor[s]” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000 as cited in Patton, 2002, p. 131). I grappled with my own sociocultural stance as I collected data and became immersed in classroom observations that were in opposition to my beliefs about equity and the need for equity to be enacted in the classroom. My deep familiarity with teaching likewise presented biases about what I considered good teaching and proper lesson planning, which I strove to keep in check through lengthy memos and by engaging in dialogical conversations with colleagues, both outside and inside education. My critical theory orientation with its emphasis on how race and minority status interact to create and perpetuate injustice in schools ultimately led me to pursue avenues through which I could at least address these concerns within the study. The shift in study design, truly warranted by the need for students to receive critical feedback, provided some room for me to guide student-teachers to reflect on their assumptions and to make suggestions about their lesson planning and their pedagogical beliefs. Providing this type of feedback is advocated by Taylor and Sobel (2003) since the student-teaching experience should include opportunities for student-teachers to question their beliefs and reflect on their own status of power. In providing feedback or teaching suggestions, I found that I was advocating for their current students, most of whom were CLD and many of whom were being served under special education, and/or working to ensure that their student-teaching experience provided opportunities for learning. As I witnessed the student-teachers wrestle with high-stakes pressures and often conform to these pressures by failing to
teach against the grain, my role on the more removed end of the participant-observer spectrum shifted toward a more collaborative role.

**Shift in the Researcher Role.** Qualitative work accepts the shifting of the researcher role as one of its indelible properties (Karnieli-Miller, Strier, & Pessach, 2009). Indeed, it not only accepts the shifting role of the researcher but delineates the moments within the study where role shifting is most prominent and where power differentials shift between the researcher and the participants. Karnieli-Miller et al. (2009) have identified five stages where power and relationships shift during qualitative research: (a) initial stage of subject/participant recruitment, (b) data collection, (c) data analysis and production of the report, (d) validation, and (e) additional publications.

During phase two, the data collection phase, the power lies most closely with the participant since he is in control of the data. The researcher is at the participant’s mercy in receiving the participant’s story, even though the researcher is the one who initiates the study, sets the interviews, and chooses most of the topics of conversation (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009). Traditionally, phase three, data analysis and production of the report, initiates a shift in power differentials since the researcher has acquired the data, and how he analyses it and the publications that come from the study place most of the power back with the researcher.

My shift toward a more participatory stance during the research process, via my feedback and suggestions to participants in the post-observation interviews, is aligned with the idea that social constructionism, as a theoretical perspective, seeks to “transform practice” (Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2009, p. 690). My contributions and suggestions provided at the end of the post-observation interviews were in line with the tenets of
social constructionism. The shift toward a more social constructivist approach, which is distinguished by the negotiation and the transformation of practice (Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2009, p. 690), was certainly not linear or fully accomplished. The fact that I was not a student-teacher supervisor or mentor, but merely a researcher, did not necessarily produce transformations in study participants’ views or ways of teaching. In some instances, the study participants seemed to resist my feedback but still followed some of the teaching suggestions related to the feedback. These negotiations will be fully described in the results section and make it clear that the shift in my researcher role impacted the study outcomes to some degree but that they ultimately did not get in the way of my ability to answer my research questions.

The fact, however, that the participants in this study viewed my feedback and eventually the resources I suggested as benefits to their student-teaching experience certainly changes the nature of the relationship, by providing a certain type of power balance. During phase two, power was more balanced since I provided students with feedback that they actually asked for. For example, during one of my post-observation interviews with Lance, our exchange might be seen as evidence of both resistance and collaboration. In trying to review his pedagogical choices for one specific lesson, I sensed that he was resisting my feedback about the lesson’s cultural and thematic disconnect from students and from the content, but toward the end of the interview, he welcomed suggestions that encouraged him, though in implicit terms, to teach against the grain. During the data collection phase, power was more balanced, and because I attempted to make sure that the feedback I gave to participants supported them in what they wanted
(i.e., constructive feedback that included suggestions and/or teaching strategies), power was also more balanced during the last phases of the study.

I have also come to recognize that my particular researcher agenda, which is heavily fueled by the urgency to validate minority students’ voices and to ensure that their learning takes place in equitable classrooms, was at times difficult to align and contain with the current study of student-teachers. As a researcher who subscribes to a social constructivist epistemology and a critical theory perspective, I had to contain my insistence on transforming practices for minority students since this study’s purpose was to explore how secondary student-teachers perceived their student-teaching experience in preparing them for teaching in urban settings. Since to some extent, my feedback formed part of the student-teachers’ experience, it can be argued that the shift in researcher role did not necessarily detract from the data but rather was part of the data.

I have come to reconcile my own agenda, within the constraints of my study, by realizing that by working to make education more equitable through better teacher training I can contribute to the improvement of learning outcomes for minority students. This study has the potential to provide necessary insight on how the student-teaching experience can become one that better prepares teachers and that pushes them, through transformative reflection, into becoming the change agents that would make education more equitable.

The call to action research (Angrosino, 2007) and critical research agendas that promote “empowering individuals . . . by giving more to research sites” than what we take away, aligns to some extent with the shifting researcher role of this study. Choosing not to remain as a more removed participant-observer and choosing to provide
suggestions that could potentially make these student-teachers more prepared to teach in urban settings, heeds the call to action research by giving back to the field during the study and not merely after the study through its reported findings.

The “Qualitative Researcher as Bricoleur”

The idea of researcher as filmmaker, or bricoleur, fits in well with my study approach since qualitative research uses a wide array of data as a means to give an in-depth interpretation of the phenomenon in question. As Denzin and Lincoln (2005) explained, the researcher provides montages or images of the data through ethnographic methods that ultimately create a “sense of urgency and complexity (p. 5). These multiple realities give space to overthrow meta-narratives or hegemonic belief systems by giving voice to participants and by exposing systemic biases and assumptions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). While ethnographic studies are more centered on the study of a group and its culture, ethnographic methods allow us to study the processes of a group or a phenomenon (Charmaz, 2006). Processes, however, are sometimes more difficult to analyze since they are often implicit or hide behind the guise of the mundane or the everyday (Charmaz, 2006). Applying ethnographic methods to grounded theory enables researchers to study processes in ways that go beyond topics or descriptions (Charmaz, 2006; Harry & Rippey, 2009).

My role as a former student-teacher mentor and supervisor meant that I had established close ties with the school, its administrators, and with my student-teachers’ CTs. I had the opportunity to speak at length with the CTs during my observation visits. These conversations were held outside of the classroom either before or after I had observed the study participants. They usually came about when we greeted each other
(sometimes not until after I had observed) and then progressed into discussions about student-teacher performance, changes in the school culture, and increased top-down pressure exerted by the state and the administration. These conversations allowed me to piece together or assemble different images of the student-teachers that attempted to work toward the creation of a “montage” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 4). In qualitative research, a bricoleur is described as stitching together images that will form a “montage.” A montage is described as juxtaposing or piecing together different images that form a contrasting but at the same time meaningful whole. In qualitative work that uses montages, “different voices, different perspectives, points of views, and angles of vision” (Denzin, 2005, p.4) are going on at the same time. The informal conversations held with the CTs added to the images that I was constantly piecing together. My montage was in constant flux being created and recreated by the observations in the classrooms, the interviews with the students, my conversations with colleagues, analysis of the data, and by the information from the CTs. For example, Mr. Henderson, Lance’s CT, referred to him at the beginning of the study as superficial and overly concerned with his image but then later described Lance as growing and beginning to work outside of “being Lance.”

The Rigor of Fluidity: Meeting the Criteria for Trustworthiness

The fluidity of qualitative work, which some see as too messy or not sufficiently scientific, essentially makes qualitative inquiry more difficult and more rigorous (Berliner, 2002) because the researcher is constantly forced to know when and how to stay open and how to construct the “interpretive portrayals” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 10) of the world we study. Interpretation is not predicated on some evasive phenomenon but rather on deep interaction with data and on the understanding that we are not “separate from the
scientific observer” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 10). Positioning ourselves in the study necessitates constant reflexivity about the self and about the data. Strauss and Corbin (1998) continuously remind us that the qualitative researcher must be married to her work and willing to immerse herself without, however, losing herself in the relationship. Good qualitative research requires the researcher to become a bricoleur who weaves in and out of “interviewing to intensive self-reflection and introspection” to understanding the “ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies” (Denzin & Lincon, 2005, p. 6) that drive a particular paradigm.

As a former educator and student-teacher supervisor, I attempted to work in ways that ensured that this knowledge and intimate familiarity with the context did not lead me to take anything for granted. Extensive use of memos, constant attention to my position in the study, and flexible movement within the “participant observer” continuum aided me in keeping biases and assumptions in constant check.

Bratliger, Jimenez, Klinger, Pugach, and Richardson (2005) have, to some extent, refined the quality indicators delineated by Guba and Lincoln (1985) as elements necessary for trustworthiness in a study. Bratliger et al. concede the importance of quality indicators in qualitative work but warn against use of credibility measures as rigid and unreflective checklists. As aptly explained by Bratliger et al., “Authors who succinctly clarify the methods used and [their] rationale” convey that “their reports are reliable and worthy of attention” (p. 201) by the thoroughness with which they report and approach their studies. In the study, I followed the quality indicators as presented by Bratlineger et al., which call for “transparency or clear descriptions of methods used” (Harrry, Sturges, & Klinger, 2003).
Chapter IV: Findings

This chapter reports the data by tracing the unique experiences and contexts of four preservice teachers to uncover dominant themes and trends that can inform our understanding of preservice teacher development. The data is reported in two sections: the first section reports the data based on the three domains as outlined by the Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) model introduced in Chapter III (see Figure 1).

I. Knowledge of learners and their development in social contexts (learning, human development, and language),

II. Knowledge of subject matter and curriculum goals (educational goals and purposes for skills, content, and subject matter), and

III. Knowledge of teaching (content plus content pedagogy, teaching diverse learners, assessment, and classroom management).

Under each domain, I report on the corresponding deductive theme: activating/accounting for learner knowledge, navigating cultural relevance, and developing a democratic curricular vision. By discussing briefly the literature that informs each domain and by providing examples, I delineate how the data addressed each area of the domain.

In section two of this chapter, I report on the two inductive themes constructed as part of the open coding process: negotiating constraints and adjusting to urban teaching. The image below gives an overview of the coding process and the way I report the data.

As was discussed in Chapter three, the participants in this study were all White traditional students with varying degrees of exposure to diverse school settings and with
virtually no exposure to urban schools, save for Ophelia who had been placed in
the same PDS school during her field experience and Mark who had worked (as part of
his work-study program) and volunteered at an urban school. The findings from their
student-teaching experience evidence their different levels of knowledge in the three
domains of the model and how they used that knowledge to enact what they considered to
be teaching in a way that would be most beneficial to their particular population. Across
the data, the participants in this study experienced restrictions that sometimes prevented
them from being able to practice the teaching strategies they wanted to and those
delineated in the three domains of the model. Some of these constraints included
restrictions imposed by the school testing context and time spent on the actual
administration of standardized tests, while others were related to their classroom, subject
matter, and internal barriers. Overall, although the participants viewed their student-
teaching experience as positive, they also expressed severe concerns with their student-
teaching placement during the FCAT testing since they saw it as depriving them of
invaluable instructional time.
Figure 2. Overview of the process.

Knowledge of Learners and Their Development in Social Contexts

Having learner knowledge means that teachers understand the importance of building background knowledge not just for engagement, but also for facilitation of learning by contextualizing material and disconfirming surface level knowledge.

Activating background knowledge is “a powerful boost for new learning” (Bransford, Derry, Berliner, Hammerness, & Beckett, 2005, p. 54). As discussed in Chapter I, learner knowledge is also rooted in the idea of “cognitive incongruity”—meaning that it involves accounting for what students already know, which oftentimes includes misconceptions, to
create inquiry based opportunities whereby students are presented with “novel problems” where “prior knowledge is not readily applicable” or where students are presented with a “phenomenon that disconfirms a prediction based on prior knowledge.” For example, a student in a social studies class may have some pre-established concept of an abstract idea such as “communism,” but more often than not, these ideas are only based on surface level knowledge and misconceptions. Learning about “communism” in a way that would lead to meaningful comprehension would entail creating lessons on communism where students are confronted with material that leads them to disconfirm surface level knowledge through “dialogical interaction” with the material, the teacher, and their peers. “Designing instruction” to “take account of students’ prior conceptions” and misconceptions is key since it “will influence what students learn—for good or for ill—whether or not the teacher is aware” of it (Bransford et al., 2005, p. 53).

When teachers understand the processes behind learning, they use that knowledge to plan lessons and choose teaching strategies accordingly. In the present study, the most commonly used method of activating learner knowledge was a bell-ringer exercise. Data showed this strategy to be used most effectively by Mark but less so by the other three participants. Data revealed that the participants accounted for, and attempted to activate, learner knowledge by attempting to contextualize the material within students’ already existing schema, by providing context that would support the learning of new information, and by making students thinking visible.

**Activating/accounting for learner knowledge.** The participants in this study spoke about the importance of activating background knowledge and more often than not, constructed lessons that were indicative of that knowledge. Studies have demonstrated
that knowledge in a particular topic or area affects how people remember and “solve problems” (Bransford et al., 2005, p. 57). The more expertise one has in a given area, the less effortful it will be for a learner to remember and process new information (Bransford et al., 2005, p. 57). As utilized by Bransford et al. (2005), the following example should help illustrate the differences between “effortful and effortless processes” (p. 57).

*Read each sentence below and try to react to each as effortlessly as you can:*

John walked on the roof.
Bill picked up the egg.
Pete hid the axe.
Frank flipped the switch.

*Now try to answer the following questions:*

Who walked on the roof?
Who picked the egg?
Who hid the axe?
Who flipped the switch?

As explained by Bransford et al. (2005), most people would have a difficult time answering these simple questions if they were not allowed to look back at the sentences. But if these sentences are presented with our knowledge base in mind, they become much easier to process and to remember. Experiments in this area have also used a second set of sentences that read, “Santa Claus walked on the roof, the Easter Bunny picked up the egg, George Washington hid the axe, and Thomas Edison flipped the switch” (Bransford et al., 2005, p. 44). Experiments using this second set of sentences with references like “Santa Claus” and “George Washington” have consistently found that the more known references make it easier to process the information since they “activate knowledge that, without much effort, permits a number of elaborations” that makes remembering and processing much easier (Bransford et al., 2005, p. 45).
Observation data indicated that the student-teachers in this study had different knowledge levels of the learning process. The observations of Mark’s classes indicated that he was most consistent in his understanding of the learning processes. Lessons usually began with a “bell-ringer” meant to both introduce and review the material previously covered. During an interim assessment review, Mark began by going back to basics, having students copy the different types of angles into a diagram, and pointing out how many angles were in a particular shape (e.g., a triangle has three angles). The observations of Mark’s lessons consistently demonstrated this method of activating background knowledge. By building on what most high school students would already know or by presenting them with problems that tapped into a common misconception; Mark’s examples worked toward helping students access their prior knowledge, restructure their thinking if said prior knowledge was only surface level, and use that to better process the new, more complex information about angles in his geometry class.

Activating background knowledge, however, does not merely consist of thematic reviews about previously covered material. Part of activating background knowledge entails “connecting content to learners” (Bransford et al., 2005, p. 56). Teachers can do this by encouraging students to think about personal experiences that they have had that are relevant to the topic being explored” (Bransford et al., 2005, p. 57). Mark’s lessons strove to go beyond surface level prior knowledge assessment by incorporating “real world applications to connect with the students to help foster the idea that you will use these skills for the rest of your life” (Mark, Post-interview 2, 2014).

Connecting content to learners was typically seen in Mr. Henderson’s use of daily quotes. In Mr. Henderson’s class, quotes were used as “bell-ringers” and were usually
inspirational; they were authored by anyone from Shakespeare to P. Diddy. Students were given 20 minutes to copy down the quote, explain the quote in their own words, and write about a time when they might be able to connect the message of the quote to something that they had either personally experienced or to some historic event. Both Lance and Sheryl adopted the use of quotes. During the first observation of Sheryl, students were asked to work on the following quote: “Strive not to be a success but rather a value.” It was customary in this class for students to volunteer and share their reactions to the quote. Of the 12 students in the room, three shared their reactions. One of the girls explained, “Most people are trying to be perfect when it is best to strive for meaning” (Sheryl, observation 1, 2014). The student went on to explain that this was relevant in her life because she saw girls in school who “care[d] too much about what others think” and not enough about their own value (Observation of Sheryl, 2014).

This strategy, however, had variable success and student-teachers struggled to develop ways to adapt it for meaningful activation of learner knowledge. Through the quote, students were encouraged to think about their own experiences and connect to the quote as a way of processing what it meant. However, from my experience as a student-teacher supervisor for students previously placed in Mr. Henderson’s classroom, Mr. Henderson did not tie the quotes to anything students were actually covering in class, which made the activity disjointed from the learning objectives. Observation data and interview data established that Sheryl and Lance implemented use of the quotes to “make Mr. Henderson happy” since “he’s been doing this quote thing forever” even though Lance thought that “students are given way too much time to work on the quote” and he referred to it as “just not my thing” (Lance, Interview 1, 2014). During the second
interview with Lance, we discussed use of the quotes, and I explained that the quotes were a good way to connect content to learners, but I also explained that they could make much better use of the quotes if they were tied thematically to the unit or to the day’s lesson. Lance agreed and also stated that he had “thought about doing something where we let the kids pick a quote . . . tell them it’s your day to have a quote” (Interview, Lance, one, 2014). After the last observation where Lance used a quote of the day as the “bell-ringer,” but did not tie it to the material covered in class nor was it chosen by a student we returned to that topic:

I’ve thought about the bell-ringer almost more than I have about a lot of the other stuff for my own classroom. I plan on doing the quote maybe once a week. . . . What I’ve come up with that I think would be the best idea is that at the beginning of the semester, or every couple of months, do a sign-up sheet where each student has a day. On that day, they have to come in and present a current event for 5 to 10 minutes. Give some form of presentation on it. It doesn’t have to be that intense. . . . It promotes responsibility and then it also, I think in social studies, one of the biggest things is keeping students updated, as updated citizens. Current events is a great way to do it. Especially here. A lot these kids have no idea what’s going on in the world . . . in history, you gotta realize—we’re not only just studying history, we’re also, we’re currently making history right now. (Lance, Interview 3, 2014).

When probed about his statement, after I suggested that the issue might be its disconnection from rest of the material covered in class, Lance responded by saying that he hadn’t “picked too many of the quotes that have gone up, just because—[he doesn’t] really care” (Lance, interview, 3, 2014). Lance felt obliged to use the quote as the bell-ringer even though he conceded that it should be connected thematically and that he was not very vested in the quotes as instructional tools. In spite of his own ideas about how to improve the quote usage in ways that would be more aligned with helping students learn by connecting the content to their experiences, Lance ultimately resigned himself to the
idea that “the ones [he] did pick, [he] tried to have an author who was from the time that [they] were studying” (Lance, Interview 3, 2014).

Sheryl’s adoption of the quote was more in line with its potential to help students learn by connecting her students’ experiences with the content being covered. Sheryl took over the quotes in her second month as a student-teacher and chose them in conjunction with a unit on “famous women in history” as part of women’s studies month (Sheryl, Interview 2, 2014). The quote of the day then became a way of having students think about the material they would be covering through personal reflections of their own experiences.

Although not observed, interview data suggests Sheryl used activating prior knowledge to have students reason through their prior knowledge on any given topic, which in turn could lead to the type of “dialogical interaction” necessary for more meaningful understanding. Sheryl described class discussion of the sort as follows:

 Sometimes they debate about the answers. And I like when I hear them discussing what the question is really asking . . . because that’s something that they usually have a difficult time with they really . . . struggle. That’s a real weak spot and for the FCAT they really need that. (Sheryl, Interview 1, 2014)

Although perhaps only in implicit terms, the students, according to Sheryl, seemed to have engaged in inquiry based learning, which may have included disconfirming previous misconceptions to gain deeper meaning. That Sheryl views this as important for the FCAT is indicative of imposed standards based thinking.

**Providing context.** Research in expert knowledge has had some direct influence on what and how we teach. As discussed in Chapter I, expert knowledge can often become a “blind spot” that may impede teachers from presenting material so that novices can actually access it (Grossman, 1990; Nathan & Petrosino, 2003). Part of being the
expert in the room means that you are aware of your own expertise and that you use that
to point out features or processes that “may be obvious to experts yet go unnoticed by
novices unless the features are pointed out and discussed” (Bransford et al., 2005, p. 42).
Moreover, experts also need to provide novices with context to that they can more easily
access information. During the first observations of Lance, he often used a PowerPoint
presentation that combined lectures with note taking. When asked about this method,
Lance responded by stating:

I don’t want to waste everything that we have learned in the past. . . . I always
want to make sure to try and connect things as much as possible, especially since
what we have been learning is very easy to connect . . . they had just finished the
enlightenment time period everything is connected back to that so I try to make
them realize the connections. (Lance, Interview 2, 2014)

Ophelia went beyond helping students see connections by providing context to
enable a deeper engagement with the material. When asked about a lesson where students
were expected to compare poems, she highlighted the need for contextualization:

I think that it’s important to put it into context so that they could be able to relate
to it or see that it’s not just a standalone poem. That it was produced in a time
period and by . . . authors who were living in Harlem and struggling with the race
riots and violence and that kind of thing. That’s another way to see the value of it
and not just reading a poem for the sake of the poem. But it’s contextualized.
(Ophelia, Interview 2, 2014)

Sheryl’s lessons were also indicative of her attempts at contextualizing
information. In one of her last observations, Sheryl helped students make connections to
their work by soliciting their knowledge of World War II. Although not explicit, this
exchange between Sheryl and the students may have helped some students contextualize
what they already knew and the world history unit they were assigned. Sheryl explained
her goals and her students’ reactions in the following words:

It was WW I so the object was to introduce the unit start and draw from their
background knowledge and to start working towards answering the essential
question which was about the changing nature of warfare and how it led to WW II. I was really happy to hear that they had so much of that background knowledge . . . and also that they could connect it to the reasoning . . . they did a really good job and that made me so happy because they will be revisiting that in 11th grade. (Sheryl, Interview 3, 2014)

As was already mentioned, Lance’s use of inter war videos was a good attempt at choosing material to engage students. The fact that he did not, however, “help students bring a mental organization to the learning experience” by setting up the videos to help students notice important features evidences a lack of understanding about how to help students learn. If you’ll remember, the follow-up assignment to the videos was for students to write five sentences about what they learned. Not only were these instructions vague and given only verbally, but the students’ frustration about the assignment and the fact that very few students actually turned in any work, is indicative of Lance’s inability to provide any type of mental organization that would have helped the students with their culminating write-up. Although many of Sheryl’s assignments were “pretty easy for them” (Sheryl, Interview 3, 2014), she still managed to point out specific features to students by engaging them in classroom conversations before having them complete bookwork. For example, two of the observations consisted of Sheryl introducing a new unit by assigning bookwork. Before having the students begin their work, Sheryl held quick discussions about which specific areas of the bookwork to be mindful of.

Unlike Lance, Ophelia’s use of video attended to the expectations of student learning through “observation and participation” (Bransford et al., 2005, p. 42). During one of the first observations of Ophelia’s teaching, she used an excerpt of a hazing video to introduce a new unit and the novel Jericho. Students were given instructions prior to viewing the videos and were also given a hand-out with questions that they needed to
answer as they watched the video. The questions and instructions helped students focus on features that they might have otherwise missed and made them more apt to discuss the videos in their groups.

Mark’s lessons also exemplified proper use of expert knowledge by pointing out specific features of math problems by outlining “what learners should pay attention to” (Bransford et al., 2005, p. 42). Because Mark’s lessons were explicit and since his power points were snapshots of the assignments students were working on, this allowed Mark to physically underline and verbally highlight the most important features of the mathematical problems being addressed in class.

Making students thinking visible. Understanding learner knowledge also includes an awareness of metacognitive processes (Bransford et al., 2005). Teachers can help students learn by making them aware of “their own abilities to learn and solve problems” (Bransford et al., 2005, p. 57). Using metacognition in the classroom means that teachers (usually the experts in the room) attempt to make their own thinking visible in helping students solve problems and also monitor students’ thinking. Teachers and peers can be vital when students are confronted with a new topic for which they may not “have developed scripts and schemas that help provide internal standards for monitoring” (Bransford et al., 2005, p. 60). By designing lessons that allow students to demonstrate their thinking processes to themselves, teachers and peers helps students monitor their thinking and can also help the teacher properly assess and handle student misconceptions.

Student-teachers enacted their notions of metacognition through various methods. Lance and Sheryl mostly used it to monitor or encourage student contribution. Ophelia
and Mark seemed to have a deeper understanding of metacognition and strove to create lessons and opportunities where they could make students’ thinking visible.

Observation data revealed several lessons where Ophelia enacted her understanding of metacognition by working one-on-one with students or in small groups. During the second observation, while working on FCAT passages and attempting to reengage Andrea, a resisting student, Ophelia began by very carefully probing her into reading and thinking things through. By asking Andrea text related questions and by asking her “to think about how [she] would feel if [she] were the person in the passage” (Observation 2 of Ophelia, 2014). By having Andrea relate it to her own experience, Ophelia was able to get her to think aloud and reason through the passage on a deeper level. This joint think-aloud session helped the student recognize her own thinking and helped Ophelia provide necessary scaffolds. Ophelia also held a debate in class where students enthusiastically shared their opinions and their own thinking as well as validated their classmates’ thinking. During the last observation, Ophelia was again working one-on-one with a student on analyzing the poem “Invictus.” They were reading the first verse of the poem: “Out of the night that covers me, Black as the Pit from pole to pole, I thank whatever gods may be For my unconquerable soul” (Ophelia, last observation, 2014). Once again, Ophelia probed the student to think aloud about what that first line could mean. In spite of the fact that the student was clearly having a difficult time with the poem since she kept saying that she “couldn’t do this” and that she “just ain’t getting it,” Ophelia pushed on. This included having the student look up the word “unconquerable” until finally the student, after much thinking aloud, reached an
acceptable interpretation of the poem and one that allowed her to complete her assignment.

Mark’s commitment to being metacognitive was observable during lessons and was also corroborated during interviews. He summed up struggling for ways to model metacognitive skills in ways that would actually be useful to students:

At first, I would walk into a lesson and be working out the problem myself but as a teacher you should have that worked out in your head . . . you should know that well in advance so you can ask the students what they would do but you need to know first . . . You can’t multitask . . . so the focus is on my students.

Observation data toward the end of Mark’s practicum was demonstrative of how Mark constantly thought aloud and had his students do the same. In his last interview, Mark highlighted that it wasn’t always easy and that he had to have things “worked out” in his head before he could model his own metacognitive process. At the end of his practicum, he felt he had made progress and had remained focused on his metacognitive goals:

I have been able to work on fostering the metacognitive approach focused on my metacognition on how I approached a problem so that the students would get accustomed to how to approach the problem that way . . . I would say this is how I want you to start thinking of how to solve the problem . . . They can construct their own thought process through the problem once they know how to approach it.

During the post-interview, Mark’s enthusiastic description of when students contributed to working out problems, or more specifically, when they felt that they could correct Mark’s math, further evidenced his understanding and use of metacognitive skills in the classroom:

My absolute favorite thing is when students catch a mistake on the board or when they think they have caught a mistake . . . I like how it stops the flow and gives you those ideal 8 seconds of waiting time and everyone’s attention is on me and
on the person who called me out, and you know that everyone at that time is only thinking about math and that’s rare and its wonderful. (Mark, Interview 3, 2014)

Mark went on to describe how he has implemented metacognitive skill building by providing the following:

Rewording and affirming what a student says by affirming . . . regardless of whether its logical or not but really working on displaying the thoughts as clearly as possible to the whole class. So I try to incorporate that into every lesson. Like I say things like “is this close to what you were thinking?” (Post-interview)

Knowledge of Subject Matter and Curriculum Goals: Subject Matter, Skills, and Social Purposes of Schooling

The second domain of the model outlines necessary curricular knowledge that enables teachers to organize the curriculum and the skills they will teach based on their goals (Name, year, p. 34). An important underlying consideration is that teachers are expected to have a broader knowledge of teaching that includes the social purposes of education, including the ability to prepare students for equitable participation in a democratic society by creating democratic classrooms. In democratic classrooms, students can then experience democracy firsthand with a teacher who works to eliminate disparities by choosing materials and skills that support a democratic commitment.

**Developing a democratic curricular vision.** Central to the second domain of the model is that teachers understand how to construct a curricular vision for their classrooms that works toward establishing and maintaining democratic practices. This means that teachers, even beginning teachers, must carefully choose what they teach and how they teach it (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005, p. 182). As illustrated by Darling-Hammond et al. (2005), two teachers may use the same pacing guide as a model by
which to plan their lessons but how they handle and present the material to their students dictates how students will receive it and understand it. On one end, for example, is a teacher who assigns Sophocles’s *Oedipus* by having students read the text at home and then assesses them through a final exam that assesses vocabulary and character details versus a teacher who assigns the book by reading it with her students and combines those readings with dramatic presentations and daily reflective journaling (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005). As suggested by Darling-Hammond et al., these teachers are using the same material but their curricula are very different. Teachers, who understand their curricular vision is upholding the tenets of an equitable society, work to build curricula like our second teacher (in the example above) since the scaffolding provided helps produce more equitable outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005).

**Influence of curricular policy.** As already mentioned the participants in this study understood their position as role models for democracy and enacted these understandings through their curricular visions to varying degrees. The extent of their enactment was often related to the policy context of the ETO curriculum. This was observed in Lance’s and Sheryl’s lessons, which adhered closely with the expectations of the pacing guide even when both of them admitted that in certain areas the pacing guide was poorly designed (e.g., Lance described the pacing guide in their upcoming unit as deficient in how it covered Latin America since it only “gave [them] 2 days on the Americas, 2.5 days on the French Revolution, and 3.5 days on like the Caribbean”). He went on to say that he “didn’t really get it, but we follow it.” Both Lance and Sheryl mentioned that given their population of students, mostly Black (many from Haitian descent) and many Latin American immigrants, they recognized that they should spend
more time examining the history of Latin America and Haiti and how that history has had a direct impact on their students’ lives. But instead of acting on their apprehensions, neither one did anything to adapt the schedule. As Lance explained, having the pacing guide, even with its imperfections, was “nice especially from a new teacher perspective even if it’s not the best it’s nice to have something to follow” (Lance, Interview 1, 2014). Lance’s explanation of how he and Sheryl used the pacing guide since it “tells [them] what [they] need to go over” and how they followed it to “find that part in the book and [then] go from there” (Lance, Interview 2, 2014) contradicts a broader view of curriculum planning.

Although Mark viewed the pacing guide as “good, especially for beginning teachers” observation data corroborates how he followed his CT’s lead by planning lessons that combined pacing guide expectations and “identify the most important skills and build the unit around that . . . making sure it flows and skills build upon each other” (Mark, Interview 3, 2014). Additionally when referring to joint planning with his CT, Mark explained that they worked to ensure that students had visuals of what they were doing and that there was consistency between their expectations and what they provided to students, thereby working toward more equitable outcomes. He illustrated his level of agency in the following statement:

It’s so explicit you develop a worksheet that flows nicely with skills for that day and the PowerPoint is just snapshots of the worksheet for that day so they have a visual of what they are doing . . . will also keep the stamping tickets. The main focus is just that they have all their work there and it gives them immediate feedback . . . it’s kind of a sticker of congratulations you finished this part of today’s lesson. (Mark, Interview 3, 2014)

Participants’ democratic curricular vision was not always clear nor was it always enacted. Gaining a curricular vision means that teachers are clear about their educational
purposes, are able to explain such purposes to their students, and are able to weave together their fundamental goals into the informal as well as the formal curriculum (Darling-Hammond, 2005).

For example, although Ophelia recognized that her CT’s lack of procedures and vague expectations for students led to poor classroom management and therefore to a poor model of democratic practices, Ophelia’s own internal barriers restricted her from fully establishing the type of “cooperative classroom” she had envisioned (Ophelia, Interview 1, 2014). Both Ophelia and her CT spoke about her extreme shyness and the need for her to break out of her shell in efforts to be a more effective teacher: “I think that Ophelia will come out of her shell, she will do the same [as me], she just needs practice” (Conversation with Ms. Plum). During the post-interview, Ophelia corroborated her CT’s opinion by saying, “It’s one of the areas where I need much more practice” (Ophelia, Post-Interview, 2014). During classroom observations, Ophelia’s inability to manage constant interruptions from students who spoke out of turn, texted and refused to work, or who cursed at each other from across the room led to a classroom dynamic that lacked an effective democratic model since the teacher in the room could not ensure that all students were given the opportunity for more equitable outcomes. Ophelia’s efforts to take into account students’ opinions and their individual interests was frequently overshadowed, since learning was often hijacked by students’ lack of respect for each other and for the two teachers in the room.

Unlike Ophelia, Sheryl felt she handled classroom disruptions well and saw that as one of her greatest gains:

In terms of classroom management . . . I have learned how to be more strict and stern. At first, it was really intimidating for me to get over my personal feelings
for them to like me . . . I had to understand that this is my job. . . . I care about them too much to be nice right now. (Sheryl, Interview 3, 2014).

It is important to note that Sheryl’s CT, Mr. Henderson, had been teaching for over 30 years and that his classroom was on the more effective end of modeling democracy. Interview data illustrated that Sheryl and Lance saw their CT “as really caring and understanding the kids” and both saw him as an exemplar teacher who typified really knowing how to show students that you care by creating a space where they feel valued and cared for. The following is Lance’s description of Mr. Henderson’s effectiveness in implementing a democratic model:

He focuses strictly on learning life’s skill . . . that’s his biggest thing, so he is very relaxed, very laid back, very understanding of his students, which I think they definitely respect so that’s one of the reasons why they love him the most, cause he understands where they are coming from and why they act the way they do and have the problems they do (Luke, Interview 2, 2014).

In spite of the fact that during the initial weeks of student-teaching Sheryl shared concerns about finding proper management balance, the final interview and observations evidenced that she was satisfied with her progress. During the first reflective interview, she worried that she would not be able to “play . . . big and tough and intimidating” since “it’s not believable coming from [her]” and conceded that she would “have to figure it out” (Sheryl, Interview 1, 2014). During the final observations, it was clear that Sheryl had managed to become stricter and that she had, to some degree, accomplished to overcome her initial worries about handling class. For example, Sheryl said,

I’m concerned . . . You know I’m not entirely sure, that I can pull off classroom management. He intimidates the kids . . . he’ll occasionally raise his voice . . . because he’ll be talking really quietly and then if he sees they’re not listening just
raise his voice. And like . . . I just, I don’t think I could pull it off. And he knows them really well, and he’s been at that school a really long time, so he jokes around with the kids a lot. And that’s good because he knows them and their comfort level. Especially right now, I’m not there to be able to do that.” (Sheryl, Interview 2, Month 2014)

During observations, Sheryl’s ability to manage classroom disruptions could be seen as contributing to a democratic curricular vision, but as will be discussed in Chapter five, her acquiescence to the school’s curricular expectations ultimately thwarted her ability to fully realize an equitable learning environment that created a civic-minded curriculum. Because most of Shannon’s lessons, particularly at the end of her teaching practicum, focused on bookwork, she did not uphold the enactment of democracy in the classroom. Since a democratic model presupposes that students will be given opportunities to “develop the capacity to deliberate in public discourse,” Sheryl’s overuse of bookwork inhibited her from providing students with opportunities to practice how to behave in a democracy (Darling-Hammond, Banks, Zumwalt, Gomes, Sherin, Griesdorn, & Finn, 2005, p. 173).

As already presented, Lance’s understanding of democracy and his ability to enact that in the classroom were not always aligned. Although Lance strived to improve his classroom dynamic by working on “connecting to students,” his ability to fulfill a democratic curricular vision was stymied by his inconsistent style of classroom management (Interview 2). During the last two observations, Lance was visibly upset by students who were speaking out of turn and who were cursing loudly during class. When confronted by a vocal female student who cursed intently about how cold the room was, Lance acknowledge her concern but said nothing about her language choices. When the same student talked and cursed through Lance’s next set of instructions, it was actually
one of her classmates who addressed her by saying, “Hey, he is waiting for you to shut up so we can move on” (Lance, Observation 2). The fact that Lance vacillated between acknowledging, ignoring, and/or responding to the vocal girls’ complaints by being sarcastic, set the dynamic for the class and created a hostile environment where Lance understandably felt threatened and thus reacted with annoyance at other student requests or commentary. Like, Ophelia, Lance’s lack of control over certain students led to a poor model of democratic principles. When the students complained about Lance’s choice of assignments, he either completely ignored their comments or responded by acknowledging them but did not do anything to explicitly fix the problem. On one occasion, Lance had the students view two videos on the interwar era, after which students asked questions and were engaged with the material. The assignment following the two videos was to write five sentences of what they had learned. Students voiced their discontent by refusing to work. One student voiced his frustration by shouting, “I can’t even write two sentences on that.” Lance’s lack of follow through to capitalize on his students’ engagement with the videos was a missed opportunity to enact a more democratic curriculum.

In conclusion, Ophelia, Lance, and Sheryl missed opportunities to help students “develop habits of participation in a diverse community” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005 p. 173) by Ophelia’s and Lance’s inconsistency in constructing a respectful classroom environment and through Lance’s and Sheryl’s overuse of the pacing guide and book-based lessons. Mark, on the other hand, effectively took advantage of the pre-established classroom dynamic. He worked with his CT to construct lessons that did not merely subscribe to mandates but that functioned to “support more equitable achievement”
(Darling-Hammond et al., 2005, p. 173). Mark’s “shared goals” mentality and his “we are in this together” behavior aligned consistently with a democratic curricular vision (Mark, Observation, 2014).

**Democracy in the classroom.** The participants in this study defined what democracy meant to them by first defining democracy as a whole and then by defining what democracy meant in educational settings. When asked about what democracy would look like in the classroom, their responses ranged from a strong sense of agency and responsibility to one that was less involved. Mark, for example, who was on the more involved end of the spectrum, saw himself as directly responsible for creating a democratic classroom. On the other end of the spectrum, Lance was less involved and did not have the same understating of his responsibility to foster and model democratic practices. Data from the pre-interview illustrated Lance’s view of democracy through his clear caveat about being “realistic,” while the others seemed more optimistic. Lance’s description of democracy did not directly implicate him as the agent responsible for establishing democratic norms in the classroom. His definition nonetheless evidenced a social justice lens since he saw it as “everyone within a population having an opinion and being able to have influence with that opinion” (Lance, Pre-Interview, 2014). Lance followed up by saying, “But I don’t know how well it’s ever been implemented, and that doesn’t really work out as ideally as it should.” Mark, Sheryl, and Ophelia went further in their understanding of the democratic goals of education and viewed teaching as a chance to right social inequities. The pre-interview with Ophelia established her understanding of democracy on the more involved end of the spectrum. Like Lance, Ophelia recognized the discouraging reality of democracy by pointing out that “we do a good job at making it
look like we have a democratic model, but it’s actually not really what we’re making” (Ophelia, Pre-Interview, 2014.) Ophelia also went on to say: “I think most of the big issues we have in the country are very hidden. . . . I think it’s really easy to ignore it” (Ophelia, Pre-Interview, Month 2014). Ophelia prioritized “making the students feel they’re valued by staying really open to it . . . to really see what’s going on” (Ophelia, Interview 1, Month 2014). For Ophelia, this critical stance toward democracy translated into what she described as:

I don’t really want to have an authoritative teacher student relationship. I don’t want to demand respect without having to earn it, that kind of thing . . . making students feel welcome-like their thoughts are valued, their opinions are valued, and feelings are valued-is very important. And feeling like, they can have an influence in the classroom too.” (Ophelia, Interview 1, 2014)

In discussing her future teaching choices and her preference to teach in high-needs schools, Sheryl stated that she wanted to “make . . . an impact . . . and . . . create change, the way it would in [low-performing] school[s] where the students aren’t necessarily getting” challenging teaching (Pre-interview, 2014). Mark’s initial desire to “truly change education” so that it gives minority students a chance to prosper was evident in his consistency to promote an “open discussion classroom environment” where he was constantly asking his students to collaborate through his “shared goals approach” to teaching. During the observations, Mark always referred to the class assignments and problem solving as a joint effort where “we all are in this together” (Mark, Observations, 2014). He fostered a civic responsibility in his students by both pointing out their individual strengths and by encouraging them to share their knowledge. In almost every observation he would ask students to “help out . . . since you just explained that to me, I’m sure you can explain it better than I do to your table mate” (Mark, Observation 2, Month 2014). Although Mark’s CT should be credited with establishing norms of
participation that very clearly delineated the expectation that students should help each other, Mark’s efforts to ensure enactment of this principle while he was teaching was evidenced in how students did help each other very often. On more than one occasion, I heard students turn to a classmate and say something like, “Hey man, you have that one wrong” (referring to a math problem). They would then go on to show their classmate how to fix the problem and would often say things like, “Come on, you just have to finish this part so you can get credit for it” (Mark, Observation 3, Month 2014).

Mark successfully capitalized on the pre-established norms of behavior in his classroom by bringing in a curricular vision that encouraged and modeled a “shared goals” mentality. This meant that Mark’s way of teaching mathematics was seen as a collaborative effort between him and the students. While teaching, Mark consistently reminded his students that “we are in this together” and worked to make sure that his students remained on task by reminding them that “we need to stay on point.”

This type of camaraderie was also present in some of the lesson observations in Sheryl’s classroom. Like Mark, Sheryl encouraged her students to “teach each other” and made them responsible for each other’s learning by creating some assignments where she would tell students not to “leave your partner out to dry” (Sheryl, Observation 2, 2014). Sheryl and Ophelia also modeled democratic principles by asking their students for suggestions. For example, Sheryl asked her students whether they had liked “working in groups” and then went on to ask, “Which aspects of the group work [they] liked best” (Sheryl, Observation 2, Month 2014). Ophelia, after recognizing how “really bored” her students were by school mandated articles, surveyed her students’ interest by asking, “What do you like to read about? and What are you interested in . . . favorite books,
favorite authors?” (Ophelia, Interview 2, 2014). Important to note is that Ophelia interpreted her CT’s lack of established procedures as possible barriers to the enactment of democratic principles:

[In the class] there’s not a set up for what do you do when you come in. Like they always have a bell ringer . . . they’re supposed to get out their journals and do the bell ringer but that’s not posted anywhere in the class. She doesn’t umm greet them at the door and like remind them every day to do that (begin the bell-ringer immediately) and then when they don’t do it, she just kind of yells at them and reprimands them for not doing that. So I think that procedures are really important and having you know not just rules for the sake of rules. But having you know procedures set in place, so that students feel comfortable—they know what to expect, they know what’s expected of them, and then you can move on to doing the classwork more efficiently. . . . I think because she doesn’t have the procedures set and she has to reprimand them for behaving the way she doesn’t want them to behave.

**Connecting Curriculum to Long-Term Goals.** Building on the work of Zumwalt (1989), this second domain of the model includes an expectation of teachers to have knowledge of curriculum that includes (a) how different views of curriculum suggest for educational goals and the teacher’s role, (b) how to develop and carry out curricular plans that are coherent and have a high probability of success, and (c) how to make sound curricular decisions and address curricular issues that arise. Teachers are expected to understand “learning and learners as they intersect with educational goals and purposes,” and how to shape curriculum through an understanding of effective teaching options, which also means that teachers understand their responsibility of teaching within the democratic vision already mentioned above (Bransford et al., 2005). Key to developing curriculum that produces more equitable outcomes is that teachers know how to plan lessons that work toward overarching instructional goals that go beyond individual lessons and don’t just get students through the book. Darling-Hammond, Banks, Zumwalt, Gomez, Sherin, Griesdoen, and Finn (2005) build on the
seminal work by Beuchamp (1982) in “curriculum theory,” which describes the concept of curriculum as: formal curriculum, which outlines topics or concepts to be taught; the enacted curriculum as it occurs in the activities, materials, and assignments teachers select and develop in the interactions that occur between and among teachers and students; and the hidden curriculum that tacitly implements the underlying goals and perceptions schools and teachers hold for students individually and as groups (p. 170).

Studies that have examined teachers’ curricular knowledge and planning have found that experienced teachers without previous formal preparation reported gaining important curricular knowledge after pursuing a master’s degree in education (Kunzman, 2002, 2003). Teachers reported that knowing how to plan curriculum by drawing on the concepts acquired in their graduate-level-program was key in helping them develop a better understanding of how to connect long-term goals with their learning objectives (Kunzman, 2002, 2003). Because the nature of this study did not include an analysis of participants’ lesson plans, it was difficult to draw conclusions about their overarching goals and their ability to connect that to individual lessons. Interview data and observation data did, however, provide some important insights. For example, because Ophelia’s class was heavily restricted by the mandated testing, her ability to carry out the type of curriculum that includes being able to explain educational goals for students, such as an overarching goal like helping students develop habits of communication, were not present during observations. Overarching curriculum goals of this type, which would include encouraging students to speak in complete sentences or review and revise their writing, would be infused in ongoing everyday expectations. Although Ophelia demonstrated an awareness of broader goals like having them “think critically” and
developing better habits of collaboration with peers (Post-Interview), the testing regime and the loss of valuable instructional time made it difficult for her to enact that understanding during her practicum.

Although Sheryl’s and Lance’s placements were not heavily restricted by testing mandates, their close adherence to the pacing guide made it difficult to discuss if their broader goals were in fact carried out through their book-based lessons.

Mark (perhaps as a result of modeling his CT’s style) did not strictly follow the textbook but rather used it as a guide to plan lessons; thus, this provides some evidence of his ability to connect everyday goals, as seen in the use of exit tickets, with Mark’s broader goal of helping students “see that math is just a different way of looking at the world” (Mark, Interview 2, 2014).

Overall, participants in this study expressed an awareness of broader curricular goals, but the nature of the study and the context of their schools made it difficult to thoroughly view if they were in fact able to follow through with those goals.

**Knowledge of teaching.** The third domain of the model focuses on teachers’ ability to get and maintain student engagement. As argued by LePage et al. (2005) developing and maintaining an effective learning environment requires that students be engaged with the material. Engagement presupposes that teachers will “choose tasks that are . . . intellectually meaningful and [provide instruction through scaffolds to] make sure that children can understand their instruction” (LePage et al., 2005, p. 332). As explained by LePage et al. (2005), to enhance student learning and interest in academic activities, teachers must (a) emphasize intrinsic reason for learning rather than stress grades or other rewards; (b) relate material to students’ lives and experiences; (c) offer choices about
what, where, how, or with whom the work is done; (d) assign tasks that are varied and that include novel elements; (e) assign problems for students to solve that are realistic and challenging; and (f) assign work that involves creating a product or provides some form of accomplishment.

Participants offered a variety of ways in which they created challenging curriculum. These included planning lessons that were student-centered, accounted for student interest, and provided appropriate scaffolds for learning. A fundamental aspect of engagement, as outlined by this domain of the model, presupposes that teachers will be responsive to their individual students. In the context of this study and as supported by the model, engagement in diverse schools is closely tied to behaving in ways that are culturally competent and that make use of teaching strategies to ensure minority student engagement through challenging material.

**Navigating cultural relevance.** As argued by Lepage et al. (2005), perhaps one of the most pivotal areas that informs the third domain in the model is the need for teachers to engage in culturally responsive pedagogy. Because teachers “who respect cultural differences are more apt to believe” that diverse students are capable learners, and also know how to build on students’ “individual and cultural differences,” studies have found that students exposed to teachers with high cultural competence are more likely to have “favorable academic outcomes” (LePage et al., 2005, p. 335). Teachers engage in culturally responsive pedagogy when they know the value of “exposing students to an intellectually rigorous curriculum” (LePage et al., 2005, p. 335), and just as importantly, they provide supports and scaffolding that helps students master it.
**Need to develop more cultural competence.** The theme navigating cultural relevance constituted eight topics: need to develop more cultural competence, understanding complexity in cultural competence, motivating students through challenging tasks, motivating learning through feedback, understanding responsibility of inclusive settings, knowing how to accommodate instruction for students with disabilities, and being underprepared for inclusion.

Issues related to a lack of culturally responsive pedagogy were particularly prominent in the observation data, and for Lance, it was also prominent during interviews. Lance’s interview responses and classroom practice placed him on the lower end of behaving in ways that were culturally competent. As explained by LePage et al. (2005), behaving with cultural competence includes that teachers “hold affirming views of students . . . and know about the lives of their students and incorporate sociocultural experience in the classrooms” (LePage et al., 2005, p. 335).

Lance’s interview data revealed personal biases about diverse students. But the interviews also demonstrated that Lance was cognizant about some of these biases. For example, when asked about his feeling toward teaching in an urban school and in an inclusive classroom, Lance responded by stating: “I am not going to lie. I have no common background with these kids. I am from a pretty well off area” (Interview 1, 2014). In subsequent interviews, Lance expressed similar feelings about the difference between himself and his students. He explained that “Indianapolis is nothing compared to here” and went on to describe his student-teaching experience in an urban school by saying that “before I got here I had known that the demographics were majority Black and then Hispanic . . . so I just had the standard umm stereotypes for someone from the
Midwest” (Lance, Interview 1, Month 2014). Lance’s recognition of these biases was also present in his discussions about students with disabilities when he pointed out that he “would just not expect as much from these kids” as he would of himself (Lance, Interview 2, 2014). In subsequent interviews, Lance expressed other deficit based views about his perceptions of urban students that did not indicate recognition of his own biases. For example, in discussing a new plan that would issue iPads to students at John R. Lewis high school in the upcoming year, Lance commented:

> These kids can’t even remember a pen. I know an iPad is different, but I still. . . . I don’t-know . . . this is an inner city. Let’s be real. These iPads are very expensive pieces of technology that are very easy to either steal or lose.

Even when Lance spoke positively about student ability, his expressions were still framed within negative caveats:

> I have gotten a much more positive response to like learning content than I thought. A lot of them (referring to his students) remember a lot of stuff which I did not expect; the way Mr. Henderson made it sound, I did not expect that . . . even one of my lower level kids gets it. He (a student) had stopped by the class to talk to Mr. Henderson we had finished some of the French revolution, and he (the student) just listed off everything. The entire thing that happened! I was standing saying, “WOW!” His name is Darren . . . he looks at me and said, “You should be paying me for making you look good right now,” and I said, “You are right. I should cuz you are killing it!”

Observation data from Lance’s classroom was likewise indicative of a need to develop greater cultural competence. Although Lance respected his students, he missed opportunities where he could have connected to the diversity of his students and created a more culturally sensitive classroom dynamic. For example, during the second observation, after the daily quote, Lance announced that the class would be playing Boggle. He then pointed to a tic-tac-toe like square on the board that had letters going across it and said, “The point of the game is to make as many words as you can” (Lance,
Observation 2, 2014). Most of the students in the room were very vocal about their negative reactions to the game. Many kept saying that they “just didn’t get it” and also asked loudly things like, “What the f*** is Boggle?” and “Who ever heard of this sh**?” (Lance, Observation 2, 2014). Lance was visibly frustrated by these comments and responded with a certain degree of sarcasm when one student kept exclaiming that she didn’t get it. Lance responded by telling her, “Why don’t you just be quiet so the rest of us can work on it” (Lance, Observation 2, 2014). The boggle game went on for about 15 minutes and was mostly ill-received by the majority of students, even after they “finally got it” (Lance, Observation 2, 2014). Students continued to make comments that expressed their discontent (e.g., “This is the stupidest game ever” and “Man, I hope we never play this again” (Lance, Observation 2, 2014). During the game, one of Lance’s students, who looked Hispanic, asked him if they could create Spanish words to which Lance responded, “No, no Spanish, just English” (Lance, Observation 2, 2014). Lance’s refusal to let them use Spanish words without an explanation was a missed opportunity for him to use his students’ cultural experience. The fact that the Boggle game was not tied to any curriculum content and that it was unfamiliar to most of Lance’s minority students were yet other missed opportunities for Lance to connect with the students’ cultures.

**Complexity in cultural competence.** Because cultural competence as a sociocultural stance is multifaceted, having an awareness of the importance behind being culturally competent is not always transferred into actions. Similarly, what people know about their own culture and how others view them also impacts how they view other cultures. Interview data with the other three participants placed them at a higher level of
awareness of cultural competence. Ophelia and Mark expressed positive notions of culturally responsive pedagogy when asked about their views on student ability. Mark emphatically viewed a lack of student understanding as a lack of proper instruction. As he said, “If the students don’t get something, then the exit tickets let’s us know that we didn’t do a good job of teaching . . . so we go back and see how we could like teach it more effectively” (Mark, Interview 2, 2014). Mark’s use of the student journals and his discussion of how he interpreted those journals illustrated his cultural competence:

> Like the journals I had my students keep gave me really good insight into the things they are going through . . . some wrote some deep things in it and in a way it fostered a great ability to hold them to the highest expectations.

Mark went on to account for students’ lived experience by saying,

> No matter what their backstory is, I still have to push them and its and empathetic push . . . like I know what you are going through but at the same time if you don’t get this done and you don’t pass the E.O.C [state math test] it will be that much worse . . . so like lets work together. . . . I’m here, and you can talk to me, but the high expectation is still set . . . and that consistent high expectation is very important to develop.

Interviews with Sheryl provided a more complex picture of her understanding of cultural competence. Unlike, Mark who spoke about students’ experiences through the information they personally gave him in their journals, Sheryl’s information about student background was second hand. For example in describing her students, Sheryl resorted to information she received from her CT:

> He was telling us about a ninth grader who lives completely by himself . . . we heard about that . . . you know kids whose parents have a lot of issues. Umm, he was telling us about a former student, who the first time he had a bed was when he went to college. Things like that and it’s just, you know it’s amazing . . .

Sheryl expressed a deep understanding of how biases undermine the learning environment and can lead students to have low expectations of their own ability. For
example, in discussing her experience with the mandated reading camp (students were pulled out of class to receive intense test preparation the week before state mandated tests), Sheryl described how one teacher at the reading camp spoke to the students by saying,

> The reading camp works with the lowest group and the teacher there she kept saying things like “oh you have extended time . . . thank god you have extended time” and then even said things like, “even my bright kids didn’t get this one.”

After describing the other teacher and what Sheryl understood as biased behavior, she looked at me and asked, “Can you believe that?” Sheryl’s indignation and recognition about the teacher’s biased comment was also illustrated in her discussion of how urban, minority students have not had sufficient exposure to high-order thinking:

> I think that’s the biggest difference, when someone tells them to think critically about this and then explain your own reasoning they . . . just kind of freeze and just point to a sentence in the text and say, “Is this the right answer?” and point to the textbook. Like they do not have the confidence to give their opinion.

In comparing her honors students to her non-honors students, Sheryl went on to say, “I don’t think as many of those kids have been expected to think critically . . . they are put down a lot” (Sheryl, Interview 3, 2014). She also made comments about her non-honors classes that seemed to contradict these previous statements. For example, in describing a group project, she explained that only her honors class was given that assignment because the “other classes just can’t handle that” (Sheryl, Post-Interview, 2014). Although Sheryl recognized that all of her students needed to be taught “how to think critically” and needed more practice to enable them to do so, most of the lessons observed (as will be discussed in the next section dealing with observation data) did not make use of that knowledge.
Finally, observation data documented missed opportunities that came in the form of poor planning and delivery of lessons that were not academically rigorous; thus, not part of culturally responsive pedagogy. Although Ophelia strove to create lessons that were in line with her culturally responsive stance, the need for greater classroom management complicated her ability to fully enact a culturally responsive curriculum. Mark came closest to realizing his commitment to culturally responsive teaching methods by his consistent use of student-centered lessons. Both Lance and Sheryl seemed to have adopted their CT’s style; thus, many of the lessons observed were purely textbook-based and not very academically challenging. Nor did they attend to the tenets of culturally responsive pedagogy. As will be discussed in the section that follows, the scarcity of lessons aimed at motivating students through challenging tasks evidenced the need for Lance and Sheryl to further develop a culturally responsive pedagogical curriculum.

**Motivating students through challenging tasks.** Creating effective curriculum includes motivating students to learn and “helping students . . . identify what motivates them” (Bransford et al., 2005). As noted by Bransford et al. (2005), effective teaching is a “juggling act” that requires teachers to find that perfect fit between “just manageable difficulties”—so that students are engaged by challenging material but are not confronted with material that is too difficult, thus ultimately too frustrating (Bransford et al., 2005, p. 61). Teaching in ways that motivate students is tightly correlated to how teachers present their lessons and the type of lessons they choose to teach (Bransford et. al., 2005). While both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation have their place in the classroom, research illustrates that intrinsic motivation (e.g., “wanting to learn something because it is relevant”) has had more favorable academic outcomes (Bransford et al., 2005, p. 60).
Across the data, participants expressed a desire to create motivating lessons and knowledge about why challenging material was intrinsically motivating. Data obtained from the interviews attested to participants’ aspirations to make their lessons engaging by accounting for student interest. Ophelia, for example, shared that she wanted “students to work on more fun activities and be more active in the classroom” (Interview 1, 2014). During this first interview, she also went on to describe how her subject matter lent itself well to accounting for student interest:

I think that literature allows for more opportunities for what students want to read, or what to study or what to write about. Even writing opens up a lot of doors for students to be able to express themselves. . . . Allowing for student choice . . . whether it’s read what they want, or write what they want to write about, or pick a form of writing is very important and . . . allows them to express themselves that way.

Data from interviews with Mark similarly indicated his desire to engage students by creating motivating lessons. To this end, Mark and his CT produced lessons that used “real world problems where we would use examples that we knew the kids would be interested in” (Mark, Interview 2, 2014). Additionally, Mark had students respond to questions about their interests by having them keep a journal where he gave them written or verbal feedback. The journals were meant to tap into students’ interest and to provide students with valuable information about how their interests could align with possible career options. Mark explained his use of the journal in the following way:

So basically I had them ask questions in the journal or tell me about their interests and then I would answer the questions and give them back their journal . . . so we engaged in a dialogue. The whole point was also to get my colleagues and friends in different fields to also help me by responding to students’ questions, like if a student said they wanted to become a lawyer I would have my buddy who is an attorney respond to their question in writing, (anonymously of course) and then I would paste those responses into the students’ journals. They were just . . . like they couldn’t believe that they were getting real responses from people who were
doing exactly what they wanted to do . . . like be an attorney. . . . (Mark, Interview 2, 2014)

Like Ophelia, Mark recognized the need to “to build on [students’] interests,” and demonstrated an awareness of how to prepare students for more complex thinking. As argued by Bransford et al. (2005), preparing students for more complex tasks requires use of appropriate scaffolds and activities (Bransford et al., 2005). Observation data corroborated Mark’s statements about building on students’ interests. Without exception, observation data revealed that Mark’s students were actively engaged in learning and worked up to the bell. The last observation of Mark took place on an early release day. From my experience of teaching high school and working in John R. Lewis as a student-teacher supervisor, “early release day” is often seen by students as a day to skip classes. Because early release in schools with block scheduling also means that classes are considerably shorter, students expect to do less work and are generally expecting less rigor from teachers. Even on early release days, Mark engaged students by making them responsible for their own learning and by planning a lesson that was academically challenging without being too frustrating.

Interviews with Sheryl and Lance echoed similar beliefs about the importance of motivating students, but the observational data did not fully evidence their ability to follow through with those beliefs. During the first interview, Sheryl discussed not wanting “kids to be able to recite dates to me, or memorize the Gettysburg address” (Sheryl, Interview 1, 2014). She went on to say that she “would rather have students who by the end of the year can . . . even if their reading level isn’t up to par, analyze a primary source. Or read the newspaper and analyze it. Or . . . watch a clip from CNN and . . . talk about it” (Sheryl, Interview 2, 2014). Observation data form most of Sheryl’s lessons;
however, many of her lessons were actually book-based and had little built in academic challenge. In a reflective interview following one of the book-based lessons, Sheryl described using the chapter notes this way:

To give them an idea or an overview. It’s basically just copying straight from the book, and they find it very manageable. It’s pretty easy for them, and they like skimming as they copy it, and it gives them an outline. . . .

In describing this introductory lesson during the reflective interview, Sheryl conceded:

First section was about the beginning of the war. And we didn’t dive into the most interesting parts of the war . . . they like hearing about the weapons, it’s a little harder to sell them on the political part. . . .

Sheryl’s account of the planning and presentation to this new unit contradicted what the literature promotes as proper curriculum design since she did not provide “engaging questions” that would lead to “entry points” to the curriculum (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005, p. 197). Furthermore, the fact that she conceded that students would have been more interested in the more stimulating parts of the war and would have liked “hearing about the weapons” made her choice to begin the unit with easy copying from the textbook antithetical to the idea of tapping into students’ interest as a way to encourage learning. An important caveat to these findings is that interview data from Sheryl illustrated that she did have one of her honors classes engaged in “creating a product” by having them work on a group project (LePage et al., 2005, p. 333). The fact, however, that this was only done once and in only one of her classes, since she felt that her non-honors students “couldn’t handle it,” limited Sheryl’s ability to consistently create challenging and engaging curriculum.

Despite Lance’s objections to the type of teaching he was expected to follow (i.e., based on his CT’s modeling and/or on school mandates), Lance ultimately provided
students with very few lessons that were academically challenging; thus, motivating for
students. In his last interview he critiqued the teaching expectation by stating:

A lot of the activities that we’re encouraged to slash away with and the way we’re
supposed to handle classes . . . you’re really not supposed to really even have
discussions and talk about things . . . especially anything that has to do with the
content, when it comes to history . . . even . . . a lecture’s not supposed to go more
than 10 minutes.

As was the case with Sheryl, observation data from Lance’s class challenged his views
(as stated above). Although Lance did begin some of his lessons by holding a 5 minute
conversation with the students about a particular topic of study, the rest of the classwork
was usually centered on copying notes from the book and answering textbook questions.
It is important to note here that during my second interview with Lance, he informed me
that the SMART Board had not been working for the past 2 weeks and that this limited
his ability to plan and present more creative lessons. At the end of that second interview,
I asked him if he wanted my feedback/suggestion (a now customary part of the interview
process) to which he agreed. I then provided several suggestions, one of which was a
“gallery walk” and explained that it entailed having students view images, in this case,
perhaps war images since that was the unit being covered. Students would have different
stations in the room where they would view and interact with the images through
individual writing and group work. Directly after the meeting, I sent him some Internet
based links about different types of gallery walks. During the final interview, I asked him
if he had followed up with my suggestions and he responded by describing the lesson and
his satisfaction with it:

Yeah. I thought it went great . . . it was very interesting and useful. It wasn’t just
read through this. I thought it was a good use . . . writing and analysis skills that I
thought were positive . . . I had a propaganda poster, a persuasion poster, and an
argument poster . . . I kind of hit every different type of—not assessment activity
that I could. I thought it went well, because I didn’t really have students saying, “This sucks! I don’t wanna do this. We always do this.”

Although I did not observe this lesson, together with a lesson using primary sources, the example from Lance’s self-report data above constitutes one of the few lessons where Lance created a more student-centered approach to planning and teaching.

On the whole, both Lance and Sheryl did not fully enact their understanding of motivating students by use of challenging curriculum since they rarely assigned tasks that were varied or that included a novel element (LePage et al., 2005). Ophelia and Mark both demonstrated more consistent ability to include novel elements, “relate materials to students’ lives and experiences,” and “offer choice about what, where, how or with whom the work is done” (LePage et al., 2005, p. 333).

**Motivating learning through feedback.** As explained by Sheppard, Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Rust, Snowden, Gordon, Gutierrez, and Pacheco (2005), an important aspect of creating engaging pedagogy focuses on the use of feedback. The first serious discussions and analyses of feedback emerged during the 1930s with a fundamental finding in psychological research (Thorndike, 1931/1968), which established that “feedback facilitates learning” (p. 287). More recent research on feedback has led to an understanding that feedback, which focuses on features of the task and emphasizes learning goals” (Gordon et al., 2005, p. 287) is most helpful. To teach more effectively, teachers need to understand the “motivational consequences of feedback” and its “cognitive purposes” (Gordon et al., 2005). For example, giving “false praise” just for the sake of boosting self-esteem is just as bad as “straight-forward negative feedback” since both undermine learning (Gordon et al., 2005, p. 287). Both interview and observational data demonstrated that participants provided feedback in a
variety of ways. These ranged from giving immediate, more generic feedback to giving feedback that was more focused and that dealt with the specific features of the task at hand.

Across the observation data, participants provided students with different levels of feedback. Both Sheryl and Lance offered students feedback whenever students shared their reactions to the “quote of the day.” As already explained, perhaps because as Lance said “the quote is just not really my thing,” his feedback during student sharing was more generic (e.g., “That was really good” or “Yeah, I agree;” Lance, Observations 1-3, 2014). Sheryl provided students with more specific feedback. During the first observation, for example, Sheryl gave a student specific feedback by pointing out to the student she had “made a clear distinction between virtue and success” (Sheryl, Observation 1, 2014).

Feedback from Ophelia was given on a more individual basis and was usually very specific since it was given during times when Ophelia was working one-on-one with students (Observations 1-4, 2014). Mark also provided students with one-on-one feedback as he helped students work out math problems, but he also gave feedback to the entire class on “doing really well” with a specific concept or on doing well “by staying on task” (Observations 1-3, 2014). An important caveat is that Mark’s adoption of his CT’s point system provided students with constant and immediate feedback. In the words of Mark’s CT, this type of feedback meant that he (Mark’s CT) provided any given student with “over 200 times of individual feedback by giving him a stamp for correctly completing his work” (Conversation with Mark’s CT, 2014). Mark’s adoption of the stamping system gave him an opportunity to provide this type of immediate feedback as well. Both Mark and his CT made sure that they only gave stamps for work that was
correctly completed. In every observation while helping students with problems, Mark would say things like, “You need to keep working on this one . . . call me over again so that I can give you the stamp” (Mark, Observations 1-3, 2014). In Mark’s words, “keeping the stamping as the main focus . . . gives them immediate feedback . . . it’s kind of a sticker of congratulations you finished this part of today’s lesson” (Mark, Interview 3, Month 2014). Mark also spoke about the use of exit tickets as way to have students “show what they know . . . and a good way to gauge . . . if you had a good lesson. It’s also good for developing testing skills” (Mark, Interview 3, 2014).

Conversations with the three CTs evidenced that all four participants graded student work and gave very specific written feedback. For example, Mr. Henderson said that Sheryl was “particularly meticulous and conscientious about giving student written feedback” (Conversation with Mr. Henderson, 2014). According to Mr. Henderson, Luke gave students “adequate feedback” (Conversation with Mr. Henderson, 2014).

**Understands the responsibility of inclusive settings.** Also included in the second domain of the model are important considerations for effective teaching in inclusive settings. As Banks et al. (2005) maintain, *culturally responsive classrooms*, like the ones mentioned in the above section, are similar to the ideas behind *inclusive classrooms*. Their most fundamental similarity is that both classrooms call for teachers to be supportive and “accepting of differences” (Banks et al., 2005, p. 255). General education teachers are expected to have a “deep understanding of child development, learning, and language development” and a repertoire of sophisticated strategies to maximize the learning environment for all students (Banks et al., 2005, p. 257). While general education teachers may not know all of the “adaptive techniques available” for
students with disabilities, they are nonetheless expected to contribute to the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and know of the different adaptations that could move children with disabilities toward progress (Banks et al., 2005, p. 259). This means that general education teachers must create supportive classrooms where all students feel safe and students with disabilities are allowed to contribute to the class knowledge (Banks et al., 2005).

Without exception, participants in this study reported feeling that they needed further development of their ability to teach in inclusive settings. Luke, for example, felt that he “would be alright if there were some of those students in [his] class,” but he went on to add that he “would not be comfortable teaching a class of fully handicapped type” (Luke, Interview 1, 2014). Sheryl, Mark, and Ophelia echoed Luke’s concern about being able to teach in self-contained classes but were felt fairly confident that they could at the “very least know where to get appropriate support,” as Mark said. Participants also expressed wanting to know much more about teaching in inclusive settings and were interested in gaining knowledge and practice during their student-teaching practicum. When asked about IEPs, the participants had some working knowledge of the rights and provisions granted to students with disabilities by their IEPs but also said that they were not allowed to look at the actual IEPs of the students they were serving.

Interview data with Sheryl and Lance illustrated some misconceptions regarding students with disabilities. For example, in trying to understand why one of her relatively high-achieving students even had an IEP, Sheryl considered that perhaps because she was a teen mom someone had just “made it happen so that way she could have more time or something” (Post-Interview). The fact that Sheryl questioned why a high-achieving
student would have an IEP is problematic, since on the one hand, she had obviously seen past the stigma that disability labels often carry by recognizing the students’ abilities but on the other hand, almost assumed that a disability would typically result in lower performance. During this discussion about the IEP, I explained the diagnosis process, which would make it impossible for someone to get an IEP because of pregnancy.

Interviews with Mark and Ophelia demonstrated a deeper understanding of students with disabilities, although they too stated that they would have really wanted to have more exposure to students with disabilities during their field experiences.

**Knows how to accommodate instruction for students with disabilities.**

Teaching in inclusive settings entails that teachers know how to both accommodate and modify or differentiate instruction based on student need. Both accommodations and modifications are used to ensure that students with disabilities gain access to the best possible instruction (Banks et al., 2005). The participants in this study readily made accommodations for their students with disabilities but there was less evidence of modifications. Accommodations, in a general sense, are “typically physical or environmental changes” that allow students to work around their disability (e.g., allowing a student who has difficulty with handwriting to type or to provide information verbally). Modifications, on the other hand, are defined as changing “what is being taught” and are typically assignment specific (http://nichcy.org/accommodations-and-modifications).

Modifications or adaptations (as referred to) in the Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) model, necessitate that teachers “adapt the work they plan for learners with particular needs” (p. 261). These include level of support, time flexibility, length of assignments, flexible output/production, modified goals, and modified degree of
difficulty (Banks, et al., 2005). Observation data illustrated that accommodations, such as making sure that students with disabilities were sitting closer to the board or that information was displayed in multiple ways, was evident in all of the participants’ classrooms. Adaptations, although less common, were also evident during classroom observations. In Mark’s class, adaptations came in the form of a community-centered classroom approach where all students received increased levels of support depending on their needs. Students in Mark’s class worked in heterogeneous groups and were not only expected to mentor each other but were actually held accountable by established norms of participation (Mark, Observations 1-3, 2014). For example, Mark would first model how to work out a problem with one student and would then hold that student responsible for helping others at his table. Students who were experiencing more difficulty received additional support from Mark and were also encouraged to stay after class or to come back after school to receive one-on-one help. As Mark explained during the second and third interview, “Many students came after school or during lunch, to get extra help, particularly if there was a test coming” (Mark, Interviews 2-3, 2014). Observation data corroborated this information since the last two observations were conducted at the end of the school day, and students either stayed behind or came in to ask for additional help (Mark, Observations 2-3, 2014).

Observation data from Ophelia’s classroom also corroborated what was expressed during interviews. During the pre-interview, Ophelia predicted some of the strategies she would probably need to use in her inclusive classroom as follows:

Trying to be really in tune with all the students’ needs . . . and being very reflective and seeing like if what you implemented is working and then needing to go back and edit when you are looking it over to see if it worked or adjusting and working with the student. (Ophelia, Pre-Interview, 2014)
Observations of Ophelia’s classroom documented her ability to be reflective and to be responsive to students’ individual needs. Her consistent one-on-one work with students allowed her to provide necessary supports. Ophelia also adapted her curriculum by creating worksheets that provided writing support based on students’ needs. For example, she provided students with different levels of “sentence starters” depending on each student’s writing ability. This meant that some students had more sentence starters than others (Ophelia, Observation 3, 2014).

Interview data with Lance provided a more complex picture of his views on differentiation for students with disabilities. During the pre-interview, Lance explained that differentiation in his CT’s classroom meant that students were grouped by ability levels (determined through standardized test scores) and that they were assigned three different levels of books to work from depending on their ability grouping. For example, students with the higher scores worked out of the social studies textbook, while students with the lowest scores worked out of workbooks that were presumably easier. During the pre-interview, Lance said that he “really liked the differentiated instruction through the three book levels” (Lance, Interview 1, 2014). Lance went on to describe the logic behind an individualized worksheet assignment used by his CT as very useful since “you don’t have to teach everyone together;” therefore, you are not forced “to dumb it down” for the benefit of struggling students (Lance, Interview 1, 2014). The post-interview with Lance, however, revealed that he had serious reservations about the type of differentiation used by his CT and said that “I just don’t get, cuz those books are so boring, and the kids just hate them” (Lance, Post-Interview, 2014).
Sheryl echoed Lance’s view of differentiation done through the tiered books by stating that “the kids know what the different levels mean . . . this is high school, so they know that if you’re working from the workbook instead of the real textbook your dumb” (Sheryl, Interview 2, 2014). Sheryl went on to say that students who were in the higher ability grouping “just knew that more was expected of them, and they lived up to that” (Sheryl, Interview 2, 2014).

In spite of both Lance’s and Sheryl’s voiced objections to the tiered books as a valid form of differentiation, as already discussed in previous sections, most of the observation data established that the majority of lessons were book-based and adhered to the tiered system.

**Underprepared for inclusion.** Across the data, participants felt their teacher education classroom had not sufficiently prepared them to teach in inclusive settings and described feeling short-changed. In Sheryl’s words:

One of the things I wish [the university] would do is focus more on special education. . . . I know they really do it at the elementary level, but coming here I wasn’t required to take any special education courses . . . I really think it’s something that the university needs to focus on more, because I took a special education class at Boston University. So I feel that I have a better understanding on it than some of my peers here.” (Sheryl, Pre-Interview, 2014).

Lance likewise expressed that he felt that the secondary education majors received more training and support in special education. He stated:

The whole elementary kids, they all have mentors (refereeing to elementary education majors). Mentors meet with them and do projects on that type of stuff (referring to special education). I have never heard of anything like that. I do honestly think that the secondary program is kind of just like an afterthought (Lance, Post-Interview, 2014).

Overall, both interview data and observation data indicated that participants would have wanted, and could have used, more training in special education.
Inductive Themes

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, in this section I report on the two inductive themes: negotiating constraints and adjusting to urban teaching, and I explain how these two themes permeated the data. I then offer a constrained version of the Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) model.

Negotiating constraints. As explained by Bransford, Darling-Hammond, and Lepage (2005), their model accounts for the fact that it takes “many years of experience for teachers to develop sophisticated expertise” (p. 3). They also highlight, however, that the model, “serve[s] to describe the initial understandings that teachers need to serve adequately the very first students they teach” (Bransford et al., 2005, p. 3). Although the literature that informs the model includes a section dedicated to how high-stakes testing and school mandates can lead to a narrowing of curriculum and can become obstacles to more equitable teaching; teachers, even beginning teachers, are expected to effectively navigate these barriers (Bransford et al., 2005). For example, the chapter on assessment outlines the pitfalls of teaching in high-stakes schools and warns against teaching-to-the test and its “distorting effects on instruction” (Shepard et al., 2005, p. 310). Teachers, even novice teachers, should be “the mediators who determine how much external tests will reshape the curriculum” (Shepard et al., 2005, p. 311). The authors also describe a teacher’s responsibility to be both efficient and innovative (Shepard et al., 2005). In discussing some of the few benefits of scripted curriculum, the authors argue against the idea that novice teachers should begin with scripts since this could “result in teacher[s] learning a nonresponsive practice” where they do not have the opportunity or expectation to “individualize to meet students’ needs” (Shepard et al., 2005, p. 364). Shepard et al.
also discuss “appropriate” adaptations in schools as ones that meet both “professional and community standards” while also addressing the needs of individual students (p. 365). Thus, teachers are asked to “innovate within constraints” (Shepard et al., 2005, p. 365).

The contextual factors in participants’ placements, along with school-mandated testing constraints, complicated and often thwarted their efforts to fully enact the type of innovation that would have led to more effective teaching. Ultimately, even though the model takes into account how high-stakes testing makes teaching even more challenging, it does not fully consider how the surveillance and mandated curriculum of schools, like the one in this study, restrict and confine the three domains in the model.

**Teaching to-the-test.** Across the data, participants reported feeling compelled and expected to teach-to-the-test. Interview data from the four participants revealed varying levels of frustration with the school’s teach-to-the-test curriculum and lack of organization surrounding testing efforts and logistics. Even Lance and Sheryl, whose content area (world history) did not yet have a mandated standardized test, none-the-less, felt pressured to subscribe to the standards and depth of the pacing guide.

At the beginning of the study and his teaching practicum, Lance expressed a certain level of satisfaction with the bookwork Mr. Henderson assigned and said that “it teaches them reading skills” (referring to students). Lance also qualified his statement by saying that concentrating on reading strategies in a history class was only warranted by “the situation that we are in, where they have so many tests so at least we might as well teach them how to like look for specific things” (Lance, Interview 1, 2014). During the post-interview, Lance added further qualifications to his previous views about teaching test skills by saying that “maybe they learned how to, if on the FCAT they got a passage,
to look through it, to pick something out. But what are you really learning? You learned how to pass a damn test” (Lance, Post-Interview, 2014).

By the end of his practicum, Lance discussed the irony of testing; since his subject matter was not part of the standardized testing it should have allowed for a bit more, but the school used it as another reading class and disregarded content matter. In discussing the things he did not like about the school and his experience, Lance stated that he had

big problems with . . . working at a school like this where they say the content doesn’t really matter . . . in like a class like the one I’m teaching now, where they’re just like-it doesn’t matter if they remember it. To me, it’s just like I couldn’t disagree more . . . it’s just like, I don’t know, it’s like the content does [emphasis added] matter. (Lance, Post-Interview, 2014)

When asked to elaborate on what he considered constraints about being a new teacher, Lance explained that “teaching at a school like Robert R., like here, that’s an ETO school, I don’t know—it’s not really my thing” (Lance, Post-Interview, 2014). He went on to explain that “if I were at an ETO school with those types of mandates as a beginning teacher, they’d have no problems saying, like, ‘Peace. You’re not doing it our way.’” (Lance, Post-Interview, 2014). In explaining what he thought of the pedagogical choices he made he said:

I mean, realistically, the only reason I went straight into bookwork is cuz I’m here. When I was in high school, I never did bookwork like to the extent that they do. Where it’s every chapter. . . . Here, it’s their curriculum. It’s just like, my job is just to figure out which chapter matches up with the damn pacing guide. (Lance, Post-Interview, 2014)

In trying to absolve his teacher education program from advocating this type of teaching Lance said, “I wouldn’t blame that on the . . . program . . . I think that’s just kind of forced here (referring to the school site). Ultimately, Lance felt that he had “to reconcile
with it and just realize that . . . [he didn’t] really have a choice” (Lance, Post-Interview, 2014).

Sheryl likewise strongly critiqued the teaching-to-the-test mentality by commenting on the school’s policy against reading novels in English classes:

The fact that they don’t read books in their English class, no wonder they all hate reading because they are reading FCAT passages. It’s just so different from what I experienced, and I went to school in Florida . . . so to me testing has made inequality worse, because before the FACT we could be reading a novel about WWI in social studies. So it takes away so much of the enrichment and what makes things interesting . . . I hate it. (Sheryl, Post-Interview, 2014)

When asked about her overall student-teaching and her learning experience, Sheryl responded by explaining how she had accepted the constraints by adapting to the school’s expectations:

I think that I moved away from what I wanted to do more towards what the school expected, which was sort of like a wakeup call. To do all of that reading focused work . . . not that I don’t love reading but to have them do bookwork every day was not something I really would have wanted as a student. (Sheryl, Post-Interview, 2014)

It is also important to note that when asked about her pedagogical content and its development or possible restrictions during her practicum, Sheryl rationalized that part of what kept her from teaching “[her] way” was the “90 minute block scheduling” since “you can’t lecture for 90 minutes with ninth graders, while if I had 40 minute classes, I could lecture for 30 minutes and then assign homework” (Sheryl, Post-Interview, 2014).

When asked about her future pedagogy, Sheryl went on to explain:

In terms of pedagogy it will depend so much on where I end up teaching and what subject area I end up teaching. For example, if I teach U.S. history next year instead of world history my job is going to be for them to pass the U.S. history end of course exam. So I’ll be in some ways teaching to a test. I’ll have to make sure that those items specs are what we are focusing time on . . . vs having world history is for ninth grade there is more of a focus on reading and writing skills. It
will depend so much on what course I end up teaching. (Sheryl, Post-Interview, 2014)

Sheryl’s views on pedagogy and school wide restrictions confounded the ideas behind “innovation within constraints” since both her student-teaching practicum and her future plans fell short of the appropriate adaptations that would enable teachers to both comply with school standards but still deliver effective curriculum that made provisions for students’ needs.

*Adaptation within constraints.* Unlike Lance and Sheryl, whose subject matter was not tested, both Ophelia and Mark were placed in subjects where the school highly prioritized test-preparation practices. Ophelia and Mark, however, worked toward adapting the curriculum so that it could conform to school expectations but also allow them to teach against the grain.

In Ophelia’s class of eleventh grade FCAT re-takers, even her CT, a 30-year veteran, was feeling the pressure to teach-to-the-test. In a conversation with Ms. Plumb, she explained that the administration was “really coming down hard on the teachers and pushing them to understand that their scores had gone down and that at least half of the re-takers simply had to pass the FCAT this time around” (Conversation with Ms. Plumb, 2014). When asked about these pressures and their possible restrictions, Ophelia reported that she was shocked by the amount of test preparation expected since “all they do (referring to students) in this class are FCAT passages” (Ophelia, Post-Interview, 2014). Ophelia went on to explain that even though she wanted to work on “more authentic material,” which aligned with her “student-centered pedagogy,” her placement in an intensive reading class made that all but impossible.
Ophelia, however, did manage to make “appropriate adaptations” to the school’s expected curriculum. Early on in her practicum, before she took over any teaching, Ophelia explained that her students were working on “cause and effects” through material supplied by the reading department. Ophelia described the assignments as “mainly reading these articles and then um, or short passages and then looking for examples within it” (Ophelia, Interview 1, 2014). Ophelia recognized that “one of the most obvious things that could be changed is just finding articles that they care about” and went on to create lessons that targeted the FCAT skills but that used texts she had chosen. Even during the final weeks before the FCAT test when the administration expected strict adherence to test preparation via FCAT passages, Ophelia found a way of adapting it. In her CT’s words:

Ophelia advised me to change the testing strategy since all the kids in class and school wide were constantly cheating. Ophelia suggested that instead of having them work on the multiple-choice questions, she suggested that they (the teachers) not include the multiple-choices but only the questions and instead have students write out their answers and then compare them against the multiple-choice and then choose the best multiple-choice based on what they wrote. (Conversation with Ms. Plumb, 2014)

By having students think about the passage and write down their answers, instead of simply choosing from the multiple choices, Ophelia’s adaptation of the material raised it toward the type of higher-order thinking that aligns with providing students more rigorous material. It, in turn, became the type of adaptation that worked within the constraints.

Mark’s version of working within constraints was facilitated by his CT’s pedagogy. In Mark’s classroom, the pacing guide was used as a way to create lessons that “hit the skills that the kids” needed (Mark, Interview 2, 2014). Although Mark conceded
that the “current testing culture” highly influenced his lesson plans, he also highlighted that “we (referring to his CT) really try to make it flow properly and we never have EOC (mathematics state test) prep . . . like we never have a part of our lesson labeled EOC prep” (Mark, Post-Interview, 2014). Mark lamented on his students’ focus on the EOC as an “unfortunate consequence of what the testing culture has done to them . . . so we try to make them see that our subject matter is just another way of looking at the world” (Mark, Post-Interview, 2014). In discussing lesson planning with his CT, Mark explained the objectives of the lessons were to help their students pass the test but also make sure that they gained a broader perspective of math. To that end, Mark explained that they only used the textbook as a reference tool:

I mean we have plenty of them (referring to textbooks), but we don’t feel that . . . they are very good . . . in a way the textbook is more constraining . . . I would say that we are more efficient at teaching the skills than if you were just reading the textbook. (Mark, Post-Interview, 2014)

In addition to creating lessons that used “real life examples” that did not come straight from the textbook but that were adapted so that they were more effective, Mark also worked on inquiry based lessons (Sheppard et al., 2005). In describing such a lesson, Mark explained that at least “one time per unit we have some lesson where we (referring to his class) do like centers (Mark, Post-Interview, 2014). For example, he explained that in one lesson they used black tape on the floor of the classroom to create “figures within a geometric area and perimeter with centers” (Mark, Post-Interview, 2014). Students were grouped so that they worked together to “double check their formulas” (Mark, Post-Interview, 2014). Although Mark expressed that “it’s tough to make them stay on task” during these more open-ended activities, he also said that they were “very valuable;”
thus, they were built in to the lesson plans on a regular basis (Mark, Post-Interview, 2014).

Ultimately, the interview data and observation data established that participants were aware of the need to adapt curriculum based on their teaching objectives and on their individual students (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). As argued by Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005), pacing guides and adherence to standards necessitates that teachers plan their lessons in ways that both comply with the standards but that also go beyond standards when necessary or dig more deeply into specific topics based on students’ needs. Participants’ comments with regard to the school’s teach-to-the-test culture illustrated what they perceived as restrictions to teaching the way they would have wanted.

**Loss of instructional time.** Not only was testing cited as a barrier to effective teaching but so to was the loss of instructional time due to the logistics and schedule behind testing. Across the data, participants voiced deep frustrations with how the school scheduled the mandated standardized test and the school’s poor management of instructional time. Sheryl’s critiques typified all of the post-interview data. When asked about possible barriers within the student-teaching practicum, Sheryl stated that the “two most frustrating things have been the overwhelming emphasis on testing . . . since it’s not really teaching . . . and all the time we lost because of it (Sheryl, Post-Interview, 2014). At this point during the post-interview, she pulled out a school calendar and proceeded to show me and tell me that “all of the highlighted days are days that where we either lost the entire day or at least two class periods” (Sheryl, Post-Interview, 2014). While pointing to the calendar, she emphatically asked me to look for myself, “You see we lost
8 days in the month of April and that’s not even counting teacher planning day and early release” (Sheryl, Post-Interview, 2014).

Sheryl also cited that the admiration’s lack of proper planning led, not only to loss of time, but also contributed to what she described as the staff’s frustration and their sense of disempowerment. Sheryl explained that the:

> huge disconnect between them (administrators) and teachers . . . leads to all kinds of logistical problems . . . they don’t tell us what the testing schedule is going to be until like the day before . . . and it’s impossible . . . and the teachers get so angry and so frustrated and they just shut down, which is not right but no wonder they are popping in a movie when they don’t know their schedule.” (Sheryl, Post-Interview, 2014)

Across the interview data, the participants echoed Sheryl’s complaints about the administration. In commenting about the lack of proper planning, Lance pointed to “all kinds of little things that they just constantly mess up” (Lance, Post-Interview, 2014). Lance went on to say that “it’s almost lucky that they don’t have that many kids to try to figure out what to do with” (Lance, Post-Interview, 2014). Like Sheryl, Lance lamented on the loss of instructional time by explaining how the testing schedule prohibited him from teaching “because of all the different block schedules or lock downs, and FCAT stuff” so that he only saw his “first two periods here and there.”

Interview data with Mark and Ophelia corroborated the same type of frustration and critique against the schools’ testing procedures. In Mark’s words, the time during the FCAT testing was “absolute chaos” (Mark, Post-Interview, 2014). Even Ophelia, who had expressed being “very impressed with the administration” during the beginning of her practicum (Post-Interview), now said that she just didn’t understand “why they (the administration) wait until the last minute to give us the schedule only to find out that we
are going to have the same kids, for like four hours . . . for 2 days in a row” (Post-Interview).

Overall, the testing schedule led to a student-teaching experience that resulted in what participants perceived as a student-teaching practicum that restricted them from fully being able teach as they would have liked. As the participants saw it, the student-teaching practicum should not even take place during the spring term since they found that the FCAT (the mandated state test) as Sheryl stated, “wasted an entire month” of their teaching time (Sheryl, Post-Interview, 2014).

Adjusting to urban teaching. The Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) model addresses the issue that the diversity of students “in today’s classrooms pose[s] a wide range of different needs” that teachers must be “prepared to address” (p. 36). The model, however, does not directly discuss teaching in urban, high-needs schools.

Interview data and observation data provided a complex picture of what student-teachers expect when placed in urban settings and about their beliefs and attitudes toward urban students. For example, although Sheryl expressed a desire to teach in urban schools at the beginning of the study and at the end of her practicum, her post-interview revealed some evidence that she may be operating under the impression that some students might have been too urban for her to teach effectively (Watson, 2011). In comparing one of her ninth grade regular classes to one of her ninth grade honors classes, her statements about the regular class and their disruptive behavior may indicate that the regular class was too hard to teach. It could also be that she thought that these students were somehow less mature. Nonetheless, her comparison of the classes and the following discussion were problematic. She described her regular class as follows:
That class, they are just loud and rowdy and even though they won’t admit I’m sure they just have a lot of problems outside of school like a disproportionate number of them. Like one was arrested over the weekend so in a lot of ways that makes them more sensitive . . . so a joke about a baby daddy in that class it becomes something.

During the first interview, Sheryl also spoke about that regular ninth grade class by using information she had received from her CT. She explained that her CT told her that these were the “lowest level of kids he’s ever had, and he has more umm special ed. students included than he ever has” (Interview 1). In trying to make sense of the information, Sheryl followed up by saying, “So you know . . . I guess that’s not as surprising knowing that (referring both to the students’ behavior and to the fact that there were more students with disabilities in that class). Sheryl went on to say that “having observed at Sunrise last semester and being with the ninth grade world history teacher there who primarily teaches AP world history” that is “something these students would not be remotely ready for.” Sheryl’s assessment that students at this school would not be remotely ready for an AP class again seemed to operate from a low level of confidence about urban student ability. The fact that she felt that she could not lecture because she dealt with some student resistance was both evidence of her attempt at being innovative and her acquiesce to the status quo.

In the beginning of the semester when we lectured it didn’t go over very well. I think that’s partly because I don’t think Mr. Henderson ever lectures so they would come into that class and they would feel utterly unprepared.

Sheryl’s positive expressions of students’ urbanicity/low-income status were also complex since her view of them as survivors of urban life seemed to be coupled with stereotypical beliefs and mostly anecdotal information. During the first interview, Sheryl expressed these views:
Umm, I think the thing that is so incredible to me, is like hearing about their backgrounds from Mr. Henderson and how rough some of them have it. And yet they’re still so friendly and so happy in class and participating. And . . . I mean to me they’re just . . . they seem so much more resilient than I expected. Umm, like I can’t imagine growing up the way some of these kids have grown up, umm, so that really pleasantly surprised me.

Lance’s disposition toward urban students, his lack of consistent confidence about their abilities, and his critique of what he witnessed while student-teaching offered a multilayered view of his beliefs. Lance felt that the students in this school were “the lowest performing students who can’t focus, they can focus less than any other group of students.” Lance’s predictions about this school being a place where he would have to be particularly careful not to assume that these students would learn the way he does since he “admittedly . . . had a great education throughout [his] whole life” offers a two-pronged representation of his beliefs. Again, on the one hand, he realized that expert knowledge always needs to be made explicit, but his caveat and assumption about the fact that “these kids” would need more scaffolding than kids at other schools was worrisome since it seemed to add credence to his belief that these particular students were very low performing and had a limited ability to focus and learn. Ultimately, when asked about his future teaching plans, Lance responded with the following:

I’m just gonna get a job . . . wherever I can. At that point, I’m gonna have to figure it out from there. Ideally, I would like not teach in an ETO school. That’s the number one problem . . . if I could be in an inner-city school that wasn’t ETO, I think that might be ideal, almost. Being able to work with kids who really need help, but not having a cookie-cutter approach to it.

Lance’s interpretations of the teach-to-the test policies at ETO schools were as follows:
This is how you’re gonna save these kids from the ghetto. It’s like, that’s not how it works. A lot of these kids are just like, just, “F*** this,” to be honest, or . . . a lot of the times you’ll do bookwork, writing work. They just write it straight from the textbook. It’s like, not only did they end up not remembering a word of content that we’ve now gone over, they now also really didn’t learn any writing skills.

Like Lance and Sheryl, Mark and Ophelia also found particular challenges related to teaching in an urban school. Like Sheryl, Ophelia spoke often about how hard it was to “make them (referring to students) think critically” (Interview 2). Ophelia lamented the fact that urban high-needs schools, like this one, exemplified “how policy and school personnel are disconnected from what students really need to learn” (Post-Interview). Although Ophelia approved of how the school personnel tried to reach out to students and provided them with support that went beyond the classroom, she echoed Sheryl’s complaint that “they just get pulled out way too much, to like help them handle stuff at home, which is actually really good but . . . it should not be done during class time” (Sheryl, Post-Interview). Unlike Lance, however, Ophelia was looking forward to teaching in urban schools, even if they were ETO and was planning to gain more knowledge of urban students by working next year for city year in New York.

Before the end of his practicum, Mark was hired by Teach for America (TFA). At the time of the post-interview, Mark and the principal were negotiating with TFA so that they would ensure him that he could complete his 2 year TFA commitment while teaching at Robert R. Lewis. During this post-interview, Mark spoke enthusiastically about being able to teach at this same school next year and said numerous times that he was “beyond excited.” When asked to reflect specifically about teaching in this school and to this particular population, Mark said that “teaching here was pretty much like teaching anywhere” except for the high absenteeism, which he attributed to the school’s
urbanicity. During the post-interview, Mark said that he hadn’t really predicted such a high level of students that “day after day are constantly absent.”

In the post-interview, Mark also spoke about his progression from blaming the home to realizing that it was his responsibility to reach out to parents. He said, “I was always like thinking that parents are really just not involved, and I always tried to make sense of why they just don’t come out and see what’s going on with their kids.” He then followed up this remark by explaining that he realized that he should do more to reach out to parents and that his goal next year was to make “parents part of the shared goals approach so that we are all on the same page.” He also said, however, that he “knew that wouldn’t be very easy since it’s so tough to reach anyone” (Post-Interview). Like Lance, he repeated the same phrase to explain that parents in urban schools can’t be reached because “half the numbers on the list are fake or have been disconnected.” Different from Lance, however, who had received that information from his CT, when I asked how he knew that “half the numbers were fake,” Mark said that he “sat with Mr. Saunders while he was going through the list calling all these numbers but literally half don’t work” (Post-Interview). His trepidation about being able to carry out his shared goals plan with parents evidenced how he perceived the school’s location, population, and low-performing ranking as more challenging than teaching elsewhere.

Summary

Denzin and Lincoln’s (2005) view of the researcher as a bricoleur, discussed in Chapter three, who provides montages or images of data is once again fitting since it helps us bear in mind that the qualitative researcher is both reporting and interpreting the data. As a sociocultural and critical theory, Latina, researcher, I struggled with how to
ensure that I honored my participants’ voices while also creating images or montages of themes that cut across the data to pursue deeper understandings of their perceptions of teaching and how the student-teaching experience influenced their perceptions as well as provided opportunities for practice.
Chapter V Discussion

This qualitative study explored how secondary student-teachers perceive their student-teaching experience in preparing them for teaching in urban settings and how they understood their role as teachers. By investigating the questions below, the study also addressed how student-teachers developed and/or enacted these understandings in their student-teaching practicum.

1) How does student-teachers’ pedagogical knowledge develop in the context of urban, high needs schools?

2) How do student-teachers’ perceptions of teaching in an urban context develop as a result of their student-teaching experience?

As already explained, I explored these questions through both inductive and deductive methods. Use of the model and STAF allowed me to hone in on the research questions during observations and interviews. Observation data and interview data illustrate that placement in the urban, high-needs school context led to notable differences in the way that participants thought about their experience and its influence on their already existing knowledgebase.

In chapter four, I explored the themes from the data, grounded in interview and observation data and also grounded in best practices literature as outlined by the Darling-Hammond and Bransford (20025) model, which related to each of these questions. In this chapter I consider the implications of these themes for addressing the role of the urban student-teaching experience in the development of pedagogical knowledge and personal growth. I must note, however, that the impact of the placement varied widely across the
participants, since their pre-existing knowledge about teaching ranged from deeper, more nuanced understandings to less developed understandings, and since their individual placements differed greatly.

The findings in this study stress the need for teacher preparation to continue working on systemizing and aligning well-planned course work with meaningful field experiences that account for teacher beliefs and that help student-teachers become reflective, adaptive experts. Additionally student-teaching placements must be a highly organized university activity with supervisors and mentors collaborating with school personnel to ensure that the student-teaching practicum is a time for student-teachers to practice and learn. Finally, the findings in this study call for a modified version of the Bransford and Darling-Hammond model, which would account for how contexts, and standardization efforts in particular, highly restrict student-teachers’ opportunities for learning.

**Developing Adaptive Expertise**

The premise of “adaptive expertise” discussed in Chapter I, as a central goal of teacher education (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005) will help elucidate the type of knowledge base presupposed by the key concepts of the model. “Adaptive experts” are defined by their ability to use their expert knowledge to adapt to the classroom in ways that promote student learning (Hatano & Iganaki, 1992). Moreover, best practices call for metacognitive and reflective thinking regarding teacher practice and should help students do the same (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

As discussed in Chapters IV and I, being an adaptive expert involves using expert knowledge to point out specific features that novices would most often miss. This was exemplified by Mark’s explanation of math problems that outlined “what learners should
pay attention to,” illustrating his ability to predict areas where students might have struggled (Bransford et al., p. 42, 2005). Because Mark’s lessons were explicit and since his PowerPoints were snapshots of the assignments students were working on, this allowed him to physically underline, and verbally highlight the most important features of the mathematical problems being addressed in class. Unlike the participants in Nathan and Petrosino’s (2003) study, who were unaware of their intuitive knowledge, Mark struggled to be metacognitive about his own knowledge so that he could support student learning. Mark did not allow his expert knowledge of math to dictate his instructional approach (p. 912). As aptly explained by Nathan and Petrosino (2003) many teachers and student-teachers inadvertently allow expert knowledge to dictate instruction “irrespective of the developmental needs of their students” (p. 912). Ophelia demonstrated a deep understanding of literature and ability to use her expertise in ways that actually created scaffolds. Her placement in an intensive reading class with a CT who adhered closely to the imposed curriculum, however, meant that much of Ophelia’s student-teaching experience was spent letting curriculum, in the form of standardized test preparation, dictate instruction irrespective of her students’ needs.

Lessons aligned with the components of adaptive expertise would use inquiry-based strategies in an effort to push students to disconfirm and/or affirm prior knowledge (Hatano & Iganaki, 1992). The participants in this study were aware of the importance of prior knowledge but interview data and observation data did not reveal full incorporation of the components in adaptive-expertise (Hatano & Iganaki, 1992). Mark’s “shared goals” approach and his stated goal to be metacognitive come closest to realizing a knowledge-centered approach. The concept of adaptive-expertise and its focus on
building classroom culture “encourages individuals to engage in active experimentation (p. 270). As explained by Lin and Sullivan, this form of instruction and classroom culture “naturally fosters explanation and elaboration” vs. a performance-oriented classroom culture, which is more concerned with the end product and understands learning as an outcome rather than a process. The participants in this study, perhaps partly because they viewed themselves as just “student-teachers,” did not create a classroom culture that fostered explanation and elaboration as typical practice.

Edwards and D’arcy’s (2004) study of how student-teachers make sense of and support student learning corroborates these findings. Like the student-teachers in the present study, Edwards and D’arcy (2004) found that student-teachers answered questions about helping students learn by giving examples of “children’s performance on highly structured work sheets where classroom practices were geared at outputs” (p.151). As noted by Edwards and D’arcy, these responses evidence an “emphasis on curriculum coverage rather than [on] learning” (p.151). Similar to the student-teachers in Edwards and D’arcy’s study, who were overly preoccupied with following the text-book, Lance and Sheryl’s adoption of mostly book-based lessons illustrate a comparable goal of curriculum coverage with little attention to creating room for dialogue and/or elaboration.

This lack of inquiry-based instruction, however, may also be explained as the accepted norm in social studies instruction (Goodlad 1984; Powell, Farrar, & Cohen 1985). Social studies’ long history of “being rated the most boring subject” in high school is probably tied to its’ teacher-led, recitation style (Gerwin, 2004). Like the students in Gerwin’s (2004) study who spoke about the use of primary documents as something innovative, Sheryl’s use of primary documents seems to have been given similar credit.
The student-teachers in Gerwin’s study described their use of primary source documents as “document based questions” (DBQ’s), which, according to Gerwin, sound much more like “documents-as-drill routine” than instructional innovation (72). Similarly, the few observations of lessons that were not book-based in Lance and Sheryl’s class used primary source documents for testing prep practice—that is—students in the class were provided the documents but the purpose for the documents was linked to pacing guide adherence and teach-to-the-test dispositions rather than to help students meaningfully engage with the text.

Sleeter and Stillman (2005), and Anderson (2001), among others who have indicated that testing constraints have narrowed and distorted curriculum, may categorize Lance and Sheryl’s adoption of their CT’s pedagogical practice and adherence to the pacing guide in their social studies class as yet another consequence of standardization. Gerwin’s (2004) conclusions about the “unchanging nature of chalk-and-talk, textbook-based social studies teaching,” however, may absolve standardization since the “cover-the-topic curriculum” was already in place in social studies classrooms (Gerwin, 2004). Like the student in Gerwin’s focus group discussion, who could not “remember anything particularly different” about his high school social studies class and who had “never watched a good movie or read a historical fiction or got out of [his] seat to learn anything,” (p.72) the participants in this study reported a similar experience in their own high school history classes. Particularly telling, however, is that unlike the student in Gerwin’s study, who critiqued his experience for its failure to teach him anything, Lance and Sheryl spoke positively about their high school history, teacher-led lectures. Although Sheryl’s interview data are representative of her desire to teach students how to
think critically, observations of her textbook-based lessons contradict her statements. Furthermore, her final reflections about future pedagogical choices were also grounded in her positive experience and pedagogical acceptance of social studies instruction as lectures and homework assignments.

The concept of adaptive expertise and its goal to teach student-teachers to become adaptive experts who are life-long learners and who, in turn, teach so that their students can also become adaptive-experts (Bransford and Darling-Hammond, 2005), seems ambitious given the evidence of the present study. The preparation of adaptive-expertise requires that teacher education programs provide student-teachers with highly organized, in-depth knowledge about how people learn (Shwartz, 1998). Without well-organized schemas of their own, teaching that is inquiry based and that promotes dialogue and elaboration seems implausible. Particularly important is that student-teaching placements with highly restricted expectations provide very little opportunity for student-teachers, even those with a high level of adaptive expertise, to enact that knowledge in the classroom.

**Negotiating Constraints**

Feiman-Nemser and Buchaman (1985) describe the tension and pressure produced on student-teachers by the contradictory aims of teacher preparation and the realities of school context as the two-world’s pitfall. Student-teachers find themselves caught between trying to teach as advocated by their teacher education preparation and as expected by their CT (Smagorinsky, et al., 2004). Participants in the study by Valencia et al., (2009) evidence the result of this tension since they reported on how their placement highly restricted their opportunities to learn and teach as they wanted to. Lloyd (2007)
and Toshalis (2010) add yet more fuel to the premise behind praxis shock (Smagorinsky, et al., 2004) by establishing that the particularities of urban, low-performing schools pose even more stress on student-teachers’ ability to teach as they had envisioned. Finally, the highly scripted curriculum of high-stakes, low performing schools are yet another confounding pressure on student-teachers and their individual commitment to meet student-needs (Sleeter & Stillman, 2007).

Although the participants in this study worked to balance their students’ strengths, the context of their classrooms, and their students’ learning needs, this balancing act was not always realized and often the learners’ needs became obscured by participants’ desire to comply with the mandated curriculum or with the clinical teachers’ expectations. Participants recognized that teaching required them to be in many places at once (Bransford & Darling-Hammond, 2005), but the context of their particular classroom and the school culture ultimately led to a student-teaching experience with limited opportunities to practice salient forms of teaching moving them toward becoming adaptive-experts. Additionally their individual pedagogical knowledge, dispositions and sociocultural stance toward teaching acted as an important mediating factor to how these student-teachers responded to urban school context pressures.

Clinical teachers and their influence on the student teaching experience. As evidenced by Toshalis (2010), Valencia et al., (2009), and McIntyre, Byrd, and Foxx (1996) the CT invariably influences the teaching practices during the student-teaching experience. When the CT’s pedagogical style and cultural competence are in line with the student-teachers’ own beliefs this has often resulted in a student-teacher and CT relationship where student-teachers practice important areas of pedagogy (Anderson &
Stillman, 2012), i.e. planning, delivering and reflecting on well-organized lessons tied to broad subject-matter goals and the even broader purposes for schooling (Bransford & Darling-Hammond, 2005). For participants in this study, the CTs’ teaching style and pedagogical beliefs highly impacted how student-teachers planned and carried out instruction. For most of them, this influence constrained and restricted not only how they taught, but also, how they thought about teaching. Lance and Sheryl’s adoption of a CT style that was strongly student-centered but not at all knowledge-centered or content-centered (Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005) led to student-teaching that allowed them to observe a civic minded interaction between the CT and the students. Their limited experience in fostering this type of relationship ultimately left them with little opportunity for them to practice planning and executing lessons that led to their own dialogical relationship with students. Although they capitalized on the civic minded dynamic of the classroom by attempting to be mutually respectful of students, their student-teaching practicum offered very little opportunity for them to practice how they would eventually do this in their own classrooms.

As reported by Adler (1991), CT influence during the student-teaching experience does not necessarily mean that student-teachers’ accommodations and adaptations will endure into their own teaching career. The fact, however, that the student-teaching practicum is pivotal as an opportunity to practice teaching that holds the learner at the center and that makes use of socio-cultural competence means that teacher educators have an important responsibility: First and foremost, to place their student-teachers in classrooms with CTs who will model the tenets of their teacher-education program or who will, at the very least, not only encourage them to take risks and be innovative, but
that will provide them with necessary scaffolds to do so. For example, Ophelia’s CT though certainly “nice and encouraging” did not help Ophelia make sense of how best to use her adaptive expertise.

The various areas of high contention in student-teacher preparation and placement merit weighing different angles of the arguments. As Zeichner (2001) highlights, there is clear documentation that the teaching of teachers and placement of student-teachers is often relegated as a less valued even “domestic labor,” which is “under-appreciated ”(e.g., Tom, 1997; Zeichner, 2001). Research on the importance of placing student-teachers in schools and with CTs that are compatible with the “principles of good teaching” advocated in their university programs, though seemingly plausible, is not a clear cut process (Zeichner, 2001, p.61). Though compatibility proponents see it as a reasonable solution to diminishing praxis shock and negative CT influence, it has nonetheless come under fire. Critics argue that it is too difficult to meet the compatibility criteria (Zeichner, p.61) and view placements in compatible schools (majority suburban) as being in conflict with the urgency to place novice teachers in urban, high needs schools. Placement in these schools offers imperative opportunity for student-teachers to teach CLD populations within the realities and constraints of urban, high-stakes schools (LeBosky & Richer, 1999). In spite of this tension, however, there is still much which schools of education can do to ensure that placement offers opportunities for growth. Schools of education vested in better preparing teachers to meet the needs of urban students do and can create programs that view placement as pivotal and that combine placement with high levels of support. Blue Ribbon Panel recommendations call for a re-conceptualized combination of teacher preparation with “a meaningful integration” of
field experience and student-teaching practicums (Banks, Jackson, Harper, 2014, p. 9). Such integration would include providing candidates with extensive feedback; mentoring and supervising done through “rigorously selected and effective practitioners,” and of particular importance, “content and pedagogy woven around clinical experiences” throughout the duration of the program and “through laboratory-based experiences” as well as in “school-embedded practice” (Banks, Jackson, Harper, 2014, p.10).

**Restrictions on the Bransford and Darling-Hammond Model**

As discussed throughout this study, multicultural education coursework and student-teaching placements in urban settings (Vavrus, 2002) have shown great promise in addressing inequalities through the promotion of placements where student-teachers can gain experience with culturally diverse students (Donaldson, 2009; Schaffer, 2012). Developing sociocultural consciousness, referred to in the study as cultural competence, through adopting or gaining a more developed sociocultural stance, typically requires immersion with cultures different than our own coupled with deep reflection (Banks, 2001). Research has established how difficult it is to change established teacher biases and disposition towards minority students and how these can negatively impact academic achievement (Nasir, 2008; Shaunessy & McHatton, 2009; Tyler et al., 2010, Watson 2011). Only one participant in this study expressed harshly biased and stereotypical beliefs about minority students. His views about urbanicity and lack of confidence in his students’ abilities to learn might have been cause for his difficulty in connecting to students. Observations of his lessons evidenced how his inexperience with CLD students thwarted his efforts to potentially create a more equitable classroom dynamic. His use of academic games as tools for engagement were met with student resistance and effusively
expressed discontent for good reason: Minority students’ inexperience with a game like boggle, played by a majority White population, and his poor delivery/introduction to the game exemplify the many missed opportunities for a more culturally responsive classroom culture.

The other three participants in this study held a moderate to high awareness of cultural competence. Both Ophelia and Mark were on the higher end since they seemed to understand that differences in social locations are not neutral and had a broad understanding of their roles in a racialized society where power differentials have led to deeply embedded social inequalities (Artiles, Villegas & Lucas, 2002). But due to poor classroom management, Ophelia’s desire to create a classroom culture that fosters critical thinking in students through rigorous assignments that account for and use the students’ experience, was highly restricted by her placement and her shy disposition. Although Ophelia’s heart was in the right place and her knowledge of student-centered pedagogy was strong, she needed vital experience in navigating the classroom and student resistance (Toshalis, 2010). Sheryl’s awareness of cultural competence and her strong content knowledge should have led to a more culturally responsive classroom culture but her strict book-based lessons, with very little attention paid to inquiry-based teaching, limited her ability to create a classroom of students who consistently engaged in open dialogue. Her acceptance of secondhand information about ‘just how bad’ urban kids have it may have further complicated her ability to create a more equitable classroom.

Reformed teacher education with an equity minded plan has had questionable success in fostering deep and transformative cultural competence, largely because of the disjointed and often fragmented nature of multicultural coursework (Villegas & Lucas,
Two of the students in this study would have needed teacher education coursework aimed at having student-teachers examine their own sociocultural identities (Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Bennet, 1995; Zeichner & Hoeft, 1996). As highlighted by Villegas & Lucas (2002), Ophelia and Mark seemed to have a strong sense of who they are socially and culturally; others, however, like Lance and Sheryl, could benefit greatly from engaging in “autobiographical exploration, reflection and critical self-analysis to develop that sense” (p.22). Student-teachers like Lance, who pointed out his “stereotypical beliefs from someone from the Midwest” (Lance, pre-interview, one, 2014) would benefit from coursework and mentoring to help him explore his sense of identity and group membership and how membership in those groups has shaped his personal and family history (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Ward and McGregor’s study (2004) evidences how questioning “fundamental assumptions and purpose more deeply” through “transformative reflection” can help student-teachers move through Fuller’s (1969) stages of growth more efficiently and more quickly (p. 255).

Although transformative reflection is a long process and one that most student-teachers would certainly not be able to accomplish in one semester or even in one year, use of transformative reflection would help identify lower levels of reflection to provide the scaffolding needed to reach a higher, deeper level of the reflective process. As illustrated by Lance’s acceptance of his stereotypical Midwest identity, teacher education preparation needs to address this type of surface level reflection by providing program embedded opportunities to push Lance, and others like him, to reflect on their assumptions and on how those assumptions influence how they think about urban students and ultimately how they teach.
**Student-teachers’ development of a democratic curricular vision.** In order to develop a sociocultural consciousness, teachers need to accept that practices like tracking (Braddock, 1992) perpetuate inequalities found in society. This set of presupposed conditions about the inequities often found in schools underlies the need for teachers to develop a democratic curricular vision (Bransford & Darling-Hammond, 2005). Gaining a democratic curricular vision entails that student-teachers have strong curricular knowledge and that they use that knowledge to provide challenging instruction, which not only models democracy, but which provides students with opportunities to develop habits of thinking that prepare them for participation in a democratic society (Bransford & Darling-Hammond, 2005).

As can be expected by the patterns in the data thus far, three of the participants in this study struggled to fully develop a democratic curricular vision. Part of that was due to their expected inexperience in thoroughly planning curriculum and part of that was probably due to a surface level understanding of curriculum that does not include viewing it as both broad teaching goals and available teaching choices, which impact the way students learn (Gamoran & Berends, 1987). Curricular planning involves knowing where you are going and developing lessons that get students there in explicit terms. Because Lance and Ophelia fell in the two-worlds pitfall (Feiman-Nemser & Buchaman, 1985) and because they seem to have accepted the standard form of teaching social studies (Gerwin, 2004), their student-teaching experience afforded them with very little opportunity to create a democratic curricular vision where democracy was consistently being modeled through meaningful lessons. Equally as important, they did not give
students practice in democratic participation through dialogical interactions (Bransford & Darling-Hammond, 2005).

**Teacher preparation for inclusive settings.** Embedded in developing a democratic curricular vision is knowing how to differentiate instruction and how to adapt and accommodate curriculum based on students’ needs (Bransford & Darling-Hammond, 2005). In spite of the fact that the participants in this study expressed some working knowledge about how to differentiate instruction for their students with disabilities, there was actually very little meaningful differentiation. With the exception of Ophelia, most of the participants enacted differentiation by making physical accommodations, like having students sit close to the SMARTBOARD, and by ensuring that students were provided with highlighters and other tools that would support organization. Like the teachers in Idol’s (2006) inclusive program evaluation, all of the participants in this study felt underprepared to teach students with disabilities and all of them said that they felt that the university had not provided them with sufficient knowledge of teaching strategies that would have helped them better navigate the praxis shock (Smagorinsky, et al., 2004) of the inclusive classroom. Observation and interview data from this study substantiate the findings in Idol’s study, where the teachers reported needing more training to effectively accommodate and modify curriculum.

**Negotiating the standardization of curriculum in urban schools.** As referenced in the above sections, some research in standards reforms has established that the standardization of curriculum through abusive testing practices (Sleeter & Stillman, 2007) has led to negative academic outcomes, particularly for minority students (Costigan, 2008; White, Sturtevant, & Dunlap, 2010). For three of the participants in this
study, teaching-to-the-test practices, even in subject areas not tested by the state, and acceptance of overused FCAT preparation resulted in a student-teaching experience where teaching-to-the-test thwarted their efforts to teach in ways that would have been most beneficial for their students. As mentioned earlier, helping student-teachers navigate testing pressures and CT influence is pivotal in helping them properly address constraints. Unlike the teachers in Castro’s study (2010), who adequately negotiated the constraints by “adapting through innovation,” (Bransford & Darling-Hammond, 2005) three of the student teachers in this study had very little opportunity to practice adaptations of a standardized curriculum. Although all of the participants in this study expressed a desire to teach in ways that fostered more critical thinking and all of them understood their responsibility as teachers, their individual placements and the school’s testing regime highly restricted their experience. Moreover, student-teacher dispositions toward urban student ability also restricted what student-teachers taught. Ultimately, the ill-planned logistics of FCAT preparation robbed student-teachers of valuable teaching time.

**Recommendations**

The findings from this study support Edwards and D’Arcy’s (2004) suggestions for teacher-preparation to aid student-teachers in gaining sociocultural competence. Building on the work of (Noddings 1984) and Goldstien (1999), Edwards and D’Arcy recommend training in “relational agency” to help student-teachers begin to develop an understanding of the classroom as a joint leaning opportunity where student-teachers recognize the importance of valuing students’ experiences where teachers view teaching as a joint learning activity.
Moreover, for student-teachers to enact the type of responsive teaching discussed throughout this study, they need to be supported by a “well-worked-out notion of ZPD as a site for supported action and learning” (p.152). As Ziechner and Flessner (2009) have argued, teaching student-teachers how to become change agents presupposes that teacher educators also embrace and enact a critical orientation. The findings from this study demonstrate that most of the student teachers had a firm grasp of critical teaching but had difficulty in fully enacting that in the classroom. In other words, for student-teachers to become change agents who create more equitable classrooms (Bransford & Darling-Hammond, 2005) teacher preparation must first model this type of instruction.

Developing student-teachers’ reflective processes is an important beginning but it is certainly not enough. Teacher preparation needs to be coupled with courses where materials and objectives are well aligned. The findings from mathematics teacher preparation at Vanderbilt (2003) offer compelling evidence to support more systemization in teacher education courses. Findings from the Vanderbilt study reveal that even when teacher educators have a clear objective to further develop teachers’ beliefs about student abilities, coursework that did not create adequate cognitive dissonance to challenge student-teachers’ thinking led to very little growth in student-teacher beliefs about math and learning (Vanderbilt, 2003). The teacher preparation program of the current study typically provides mentoring support, which was not provided at the time of the study but which could potentially afford opportunities for the type of cognitive dissonance that leads to growth.

Building on important recommendations offered by Newman (2013) and others should lead to improved teacher preparation in inclusive settings and in urban, low-
performing schools. Given the tenacity of long held biased beliefs (Nasir, 2008; Shaunessy & McHatton, 2009; Tyler et al., 2010; Watson 2011) and the necessity to provide teachers with course work and meaningful experiences in the classroom (Lenski, Crawford, Crumpler, & Stallworth, 2012) researchers highlight the need to restructure teacher preparation by incorporating the following: Provide opportunities for practice through well-scaffolded field experiences and student-teaching practicums (Conderman, Morin, & Stevens, 2005; NCATE, 2008); and the through the establishment of a professional learning community (PLC) where novices are supported and inducted into teaching “by university faculty and supervisors, mentors, teachers, grade-level teams, …[and] other new teachers” (Newman, p.233).

The findings in this study should lead reformed schools of education to fully understand their commitment to some PDS sites and how placement in these sites should better promote student-teacher growth. Although the teacher education program in the present study was highly committed to better preparation of their student-teachers, more work in the chosen PDS, including observations of the CTs before placement, provision of highly rigorous and structured support via the established, but not enacted mentoring, would have led to a much richer student-teaching experience. The present findings also question the possibility of teacher preparation, in its current form, to lead toward adaptive expertise. Consequently, this study highlights the reality that many of the key concepts in the Bransford and Darling-Hammond (2005) model are aspirational. The presupposed knowledge-base, democratic understanding of curriculum and sociocultural consciousness presented in the model need more thorough student-teacher preparation that would lead to areas of growth in the key concepts.
Discussions around teacher education reform and teacher obligations often omit important considerations about how structural forces, policy and state allocation of funds ultimately helps determine what teachers teach and how they teach it. Unequal schooling is still true today and “the right to learn in ways that develop both competence and community [remains] a myth rather than a reality,” (Darling-Hammond, 1996) yet much of the work done, which looks at teacher education reform fails to account for the realities of structural inequalities that continue to make teaching an extremely complex endeavor. Although teacher education research, like the present study, should continue to investigate ways to improve teacher education courses, student-teacher training and placements, we cannot ignore the reality that teachers are ultimately constricted by and molded by their social milieu and the contexts of their workplace. The advancements in teacher education that have focused “on problems of diversity and equity in individual classrooms [by] assisting teachers to identify and alter classroom practices” have led teachers to study “classroom practices in ways that sometimes lead to more systemic changes at the school level,”(Little, 1993, p. 131). Ultimately, however, we must question the fairness of expecting teachers to do this important work on their own. As stated by Little (1996), reform efforts call, “not [just] for training, but for adequate opportunity to learn (and investigate, experiment, consult, or evaluate) embedded in the routine organization of teachers' workday and work year” (p. 132). For reform efforts to truly create the change-agents required by the Darling-Hammond model (2005) and needed in urban, high-needs schools, the social structure and school cultures should be well-matched with Giroux’s (1998) concept of teachers as intellectuals. The high-stakes testing mandates of urban, high-needs schools, however, do not correspond with the
necessary autonomy for teachers to enact critical pedagogy, and more importantly do not offer the type of “latitude to invent local solutions” or “to discover and develop practices that embody central values and principles” rather than practices, which simply adopt and implement new policies that are often in conflict with the policies already in place. As highlighted by Little (1993), local state control should provide opportunities to create and support authentic reform, yet such reform is often not supported and instead is interpreted and translated into “bureaucratic structures of accountability” (Little, 1993, p. 132).

Given the permanence of unequal schooling, our knowledge of enduring structural inequalities and use of misuse of accountability measures, this study calls for student-teacher preparation vested in preparing teachers for urban, inclusive settings by explicitly teaching student-teachers how to be subversive and how to innovate through adaptation (Bransford & Darling-Hammond, 2005) since, as can be expected, this did not seem to be something easily negotiated by student-teachers.

Limitations

Research studies, due to time constraints, number of participants and various other factors, suffer from limitations that impact the study’s ability to yield significant findings about the studied phenomenon. The current study is no different. Three limitations may lessen the quality of the findings: mandated brevity, limitations imposed by the model and the positionality of the researcher.

First, the issue of longevity may pose limitations on study findings. Teacher education research questions the endurance of strategies and pedagogical beliefs during the student-teaching experience (Zeichner and Tabachnik 1981; Adler 2008). Although the present study attempted to collect rich data through student-teaching observations (13
observations, each 90 minutes long) and (20 interviews), the scope of the data can only provide evidence of the key concepts advocated by the model (Bransford & Darling Hammond, 2005) and the constraints to teaching during the student teaching semester. In particular, this study cannot ascertain the extent to which the constraints addressed here will continue to impact how these student-teachers will teach during their first years of teaching.

Additionally, the differing number of lessons (three observations each for Lance, Sheryl and Mark, and four observations for Ophelia) and the fact that the lessons observed were not sequential may have led to different findings, particularly the mandated curriculum or adoption of CT style; I may have seen more attempts at innovation if I had observed sequential lessons.

A second limitation; use of the model by Bransford and Darling-Hammond may detract from the findings since deductive frameworks in qualitative studies, while they allow the researcher to hone in on specific concepts, may also limit the possibility of staying completely open to emerging themes. Although I attempted to account for this through use of inductive and deductive approaches, the model nonetheless restricts the type of data I collected and analyzed.

Finally, qualitative research accepts that the researcher, as a tool for data collection and analysis, is not a neutral observer; gender, ethnicity, class, and theoretical perspective may affect observation, analysis, and interpretation. As posited by Ratner (2002) and Charmaz (2006), subjectivity in qualitative research, however, can also become sensitizing concepts, which allow the researcher greater facility in understanding the phenomenon of study. As an immigrant Latina researcher, my personal experience
with marginalization and the challenges of immigration make my experiences profoundly different from the majority middle class, Anglo-American student-teachers from where the present study drew its participants. As a result of my experiences, my role as a researcher and educator was closely examined during and after interactions with study participants. Although my researcher agenda is more closely aligned to a social constructivist epistemology and a critical theory perspective, the feedback I provided to students at the end of each post-observation interview was supported by what I had observed and aimed to provide suggestions that could help them teach in ways they wanted.

**Directions for Future Research**

In spite of these limitations, the current study provides insight into the process of the student-teaching experience and its role in providing student-teachers opportunity to practice key areas of their knowledgebase. Additionally it provides important information on how the student-teaching context in urban, low-performing schools can highly influence student-teachers’ perceptions of teaching. However, this study also suggests the need for additional research in the field of teacher education and particularly how the student-teaching experience can be used to bridge theory to practice. As posited by Zeichner and Tabachnik (1981) and Adler (2008), studies in student-teaching should be longitudinal. Following participants from their student-teacher training into their first career years would allow researchers to better understand the influence of specific features of teacher preparation and the influence of their placements on their future pedagogy.
Second, as noted by Anderson and Stillman (2013), few studies have investigated the student-teaching experience and the impact of context on their ability to learn within their placements. The findings from this study address the need to further understand how context can restrict the student-teaching experience. Future research must take into account that many student-teachers are children of reform themselves (Brown, 2010), thus they may need even more help in navigating the testing constraints imposed in urban, low-performing schools.

Finally, use of frameworks like the one provided by Bransford and Darling-Hammond (2005), which have organized research and theory into a conceptual model supported by research in evidence-based teacher education, should be used to promote better teacher preparation and to study how teacher preparation is or is not living up to these standards. The findings from this study suggest that the type of curricular coherence advocated by the model and the type of support necessary for student-teachers to become change agents is still fragmented and not sufficiently systematized.

Although Valenzuela (1999), Duncan-Andrade (2007), Ladson-Billings (2002) and Bransford and Darling-Hammond (2005) have provided us with teaching paradigms geared toward mitigating social injustice and classroom inequities, as researchers and teacher educators we still have much to do in promoting and modeling critical teaching. Additionally, our commitment to providing student-teachers with authentic opportunities to practice teaching should make student-teaching a high-priority endeavor, with structured support from university supervisors, CTs and mentors.
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## Appendix A

### STAF Student-Teaching Assessment Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Knowledge of learners and their development in social contexts Definitions</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building background knowledge</td>
<td>Teachers know the importance of building background knowledge and how it facilitates learning and memory. For example, in creating a lesson, the teacher would build and know the importance of activating background knowledge by contextualizing texts and tasks (i.e., teachers should encourage students to think about personal experiences that are relevant to the topic being explored).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of How People Learn (HPL) Framework</td>
<td>Teachers work toward being metacognitive and foster this habit in their students. For example, a teacher would introduce and model metacognition throughout her instructional plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitors for understanding by making students’ thinking visible</td>
<td>Teachers use strategic questions, think-alouds, peer work, classroom dialogue, and/or writing assignments that allow students to demonstrate their thinking process to themselves, to the teacher, and to their peers as a way to monitor their thinking and understanding of a topic. For example, a lesson in scientific processes would build-in tasks that make students’ thinking visible by incorporating areas where students think-out-loud and reason through the process so that they can see just how much they already knew, which builds confidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivates students by creating tasks that are challenging</td>
<td>Teachers create lessons that take into account where students are and that are challenging enough to motivate students and keep them motivated by providing scaffolds that allow students to access challenging material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivates students by providing frequent feedback</td>
<td>Teachers understand how to provide feedback that is meaningful and that seeks to monitor progress and that is specific to the individual student. For example, a teacher praises Maria on her well-developed thesis statement and on Maria’s use of a specific anecdote in her essay rather than merely offering generic praise, as in “good job.”</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Incorporates knowledge of students’ experiences in their learning

Teachers use CRI to build on students’ funds of knowledge and links instruction to students’ home/community experiences to help them access text. For example, a teacher may use a popular song to demonstrate to students how much they know about allusions and inferences as a way to set up and prepare students for analyzing literary allusions in a poem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge of subject matter and curriculum goals: Subject matter, skills, and social purposes of schooling</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Code</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparing students for democratic citizenship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding responsibilities of inclusive settings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Differentiating instruction for students with disabilities</td>
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<td>Curricular knowledge</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Knowledge of teaching: Designing classrooms that enable diverse students to learn challenging content</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Codes</strong></td>
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</table>
| Uses CRI and knowledge of inclusive curriculum to create a democratic classroom | Teachers may display cultural competence by validating student language, even when the language does not adhere to standard forms of English, choose activities and tasks that either align with the student’s culture or which take that culture
| Behaves in ways that are indicative of being “culturally competent” | Teachers create student-centered lessons that encourage collaboration and not competition in the classroom. For example, instead of giving a PPT that introduces a new unit with an assignment where students are later asked to memorize information and are rewarded for their individual effort, the teacher creates questions for the unit and then has students in groups look up the introductory information and present it to the class as groups. |
| Creates lessons and tasks that emphasize cooperation and not competition | Teachers not only have a large repertoire of pedagogical strategies for their subject matter but understand which of those strategies would work most effectively for her students. For example, in engaging students with complicated text a teacher would have students read aloud, produce visual representations, talk about the text in class, act things out, and would provide scaffolds that help students visualize the text, make comparisons, and make predictions. |
| Creates multiple opportunities for students to engage in collaborative dialogue | Teachers select and/or introduce text that prompts students to critically analyze the text and its historic significance. For example, a teacher would select texts that enable her mostly African American students to recognize African American agency behind the Civil Rights movement. |
| Creates curriculum that connects to their perspective students’ cultures | Teachers view their students from a funds of knowledge approach and use their students’ strengths and experiences to connect content to learners. |
| Effectively conveys goals and grading criteria to students | Teachers clearly explain the goals of learning for each task using its specific features and clearly state expectations to students. For example, a writing assignment would first be modeled or would at least include the study of an anchor writing as well as include a well-articulated rubric, and explanation of the criteria that make up that rubric. |
Appendix B

First - Interview Protocol

Knowledge of learners: Tell me what your impression is of urban schools. Or tell me what you know about urban schools (prompt: can you give me an example of that?....) What about this particular school? What do you know about it? What would you like to know more about? Tell about your perceptions of students with disabilities. Or tell me what you know about teaching student with disabilities.

Pedagogy: What do you think will be the most important skills or strategies you’ll need in teaching at Booker T? What do you think will the most important skills or strategies you’ll need in teaching in an inclusive classroom? What teaching philosophy will underlie your approach? What challenges and strengths do you feel you have in embarking on student teaching at this school? What do you hope to learn in developing your own pedagogy?

Curriculum content: How do you feel about the curriculum you’re going to be teaching? Which aspects of it do you feel strongest in? Any weak spots? How do you think you’ll set about engaging the students in the curriculum content?

*These questions are asked at the end of the interview Adapted from Castro (2010)

Teaching for Democratic Principles

1. Does knowing about the oppression of different cultural groups play in the development of good citizens? (If so, what role does it play?) Explain.

2. What does democracy mean to you? How successful is the United States at being a model for democracy? What role should the public schools play in fostering democracy? What about the teaching of your subject area?
Interview Protocol (2)

1. *How has your philosophy and approach to teaching changed since you began the apprentice teaching semester? (What accounts for the stability/change?)*


3. *Describe your cooperating teacher’s philosophy/approach to teaching her/his subject matter? In what ways was your cooperating teacher’s philosophy/approach to teaching similar to and different from your approach?*

*The rest of questions will be exactly the same as the first interview and will be used to gauge change or lack thereof in attitudes/beliefs/perceptions after the student teaching experience.*
Reflective Interviews protocol

Reflective Interviews will be conducted after teaching observations: The interviewer will ask questions that use the interactions between the student-teacher, clinical-teacher and curriculum as it was just observed. Questions will draw from the codes and analysis of field notes using the student-teaching framework of interview and observation data built on the Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) model based on fit/lack of fit with what was observed.