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AN EXPLORATION OF TEACHER RESIDENTS' PERCEPTION OF CULTURE AND THEIR USE OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

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A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University (Curriculum, Culture, and Change).

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I dedicate this study to the teacher residents who participated in this study and their cohort. You have made a difference in your residency classrooms, schools, and districts. Your passion for teaching and dedication to the betterment of the education system can continue to make changes that will positively affect students in the future. I admire your hard work and dedication.

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Abstract

AN EXPLORATION OF TEACHER RESIDENTS' PERCEPTION OF CULTURE AND THEIR USE OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

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Urban teacher residency (UTR) programs place residents in urban schools labeled "hard-to-staff" or "under-resourced." Enrollment in residency schools tends to be majority Brown or Black students from various cultures. Teacher residents are from diverse backgrounds and races who have a commitment to teach in Title 1 schools with the support of a residency program that coaches them how to teach using culturally relevant pedagogy. Their journeys are unique from typical student teaching experiences because they co-teach with an experienced teacher for a full school year while attending university classes on pedagogy and theory. This qualitative case study followed seven elementary teacher residents and explored how they perceived the culture of their students and their experiences. Through journal entries and interviews, participants discussed their positionality within their classrooms and how it made a difference (or not) in relationships with students. Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth framework and Ladson-Billings (1995) culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995, Milner, 2011) formed the conceptual framework through which data were inductively coded and thematically analyzed. Residents learned about students through shared experiences in their home lives and lived experiences. Incorporating culturally responsive lessons in the classroom supported their relationships with students and their families. Trusting relationships helped the residents engage the students academically and support them in facing individual traumas and other personal or family situations. The study includes implications for how UTR programs recruit and train

teachers, and how districts support teachers' understanding of culture and cultural practices in the classroom through ongoing professional development.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

As an elementary educator, administrator, university supervisor, higher education instructor, and teacher coach over many years, I have observed multiple classrooms that are diverse in culture, language, race, and ability. Often students and teachers are racially and culturally mismatched. My observations of teachers and their relationships with students in classrooms have been both positive and negative. Some observations have included favorable treatment of students who are the same race as the teacher while students of other races were treated less equitably. Some teachers matched students' race or ethnicity, but I often wondered if a cultural match or mismatch makes a difference in the classroom.

Teachers who are a cultural mismatch to their students may have a more challenging time understanding how to best support students whose culture is different from their own. Through my experiences teaching in both rural and city settings, I found that students' home lives and cultural patterns varied. It took time and effort to learn what students needed, and to support and form relationships with them. Talking to teachers, administrators, and various stakeholders in the communities where I taught helped me understand students' cultures within classrooms. Over the years, I continued to observe teachers' actions and their relationships with students and families, which eventually led to my interest in teaching in a teacher preparation program. I have enjoyed teaching undergraduate, master's, and teacher residency courses that include instruction in classroom culture, culturally responsive pedagogy, community differences, equity, and the importance of funds of knowledge when teaching. The concept of *funds of knowledge* includes "people are competent, they have knowledge, and their life experiences have given them that knowledge" (Gonzalez, et al., 2005, pp. ix-x).

I found that many pre-service teachers have not considered their own culture and positionality and how it can affect their outlook before entering a school. One project I assigned in a Master of Teaching course asked students to use Bronfenbrenner's (2000) ecological systems theory to map out their lives. When finished, I had them map out a child's life—one they knew personally or one from a practicum classroom. I had them compare the two and reflect on what they found and why it is essential to know their students' cultural backgrounds. Our discussions were varied and focused on the fact that many of my White students did not understand that they had a culture. When they compared their lives to a child they knew, they realized there were similarities and differences they had not considered. Further discussion and assignments included learning about cultures, race, ethnicity, and equity in the classroom; the pre-service teachers started to realize the importance of knowing students, including where they came from and how they lived.

Although there is an abundance of research discussing racial/ethnic mismatch of pre-service teachers and teachers with their students, comparatively few researchers have studied the idea of cultural mismatch (Anderson & Stillman, 2011; Collier, 2002; Doyle, 2012; Easton-Brooks, 2019; Guha et al., 2016; Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Kindall-Smith, 2004; Love & Kruger, 2005; Milner & Laughter, 2015; Olmedo, 1997; Thjis et al., 2012). Some educational researchers have focused on racial mismatch and argue that race is a part of the culture and thus addresses cultural mismatch (Heath, 1982; Valenzuela, 1999). Race and culture, although sometimes grouped, are different concepts. Race is a social construct that was formerly assumed to be a biological difference in humans, but contemporary science has debunked this idea. It was the factor that determined who had rights and who did not in social culture and laws. Culture is "behaviors and values that are learned, shared, and exhibited by a group of people" (Yosso, 2005, p. 75). For students of color, culture could be exhibited in various ways, such as

symbolically through language, and can encompass identities around immigration status, gender, phenotype, sexuality, religion, and race and ethnicity (Yosso, 2005). Cultural diversity in the classroom might also help teachers form relationships with students and support implementing culturally responsive teaching. A cultural match between students and teachers could be a positive attribute when working with families, other teachers, and the community.

Studies of racial mismatch have resulted in conflicting findings. Some researchers have found racial mismatch to have a negative impact on academic achievement and teachers' relationships with families (Downey & Pribesh, 2004; McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). Some of this conflict could be due to inequality in the school climate of racism. The racism exhibited by their colleagues could affect teachers' mindsets, causing mistrust of others in the school environment, which is reflected in their teaching and may affect students (Downey & Pribesh, 2004). It could also be due to deficit thinking of teachers who think White middle-class norms are the correct behaviors when, in fact, they are just the ways privileged in schools. Alternatively, a mismatch can be positive or neutral if the teacher effectively implements equity pedagogy, including culturally responsive teaching and respect for students' strengths (Collier, 2002; Milner, 2010).

Teacher candidates in an urban teacher residency (UTR) program might experience greater support for developing cultural responsiveness than candidates in traditional teacher preparation programs because they have an extended internship with a clinically trained coach in hard-to-staff classrooms. Residents serve as co-teachers in a classroom for 1 school year, alongside a Clinical Residency Coach (CRC), in an experience that teaches them how to become effective teachers in hard-to-staff schools. They have the advantage of learning about the community and culture before their first year as a teacher of record in their classrooms (National

Center for Teacher Residencies, 2017; Richmond Teacher Residency, n.d.). However, no researchers have examined teacher residents' preparation on reducing negative impacts of cultural mismatch or candidates' cultural perceptions and the effects of those perceptions on relationships during candidates' residency year.

Statement on urban education

Statement on urban education

The Urban Teacher Residency program (UTR) in this study uses the term *urban* as a descriptor of the characteristics of the schools and the city in which it is situated. The U.S. Census Bureau (2020), defines *urban* as an "urbanized area of 50,000 or more people." While this is a simple term for the geographic area of the UTR, there are more complex characteristics that historically describe urban areas. The deficit-oriented perceptions associated with urban schools include deficit language about the challenges such as low attendance rates, poor student performance, high teacher and administration turnover, inadequate school facilities, a school culture that includes marginalization, and students living in poverty and coping with trauma (DeMatthews, 2014). Welsh and Swain (2020) argued for, "A sociological-oriented definition of urban education is, in some ways, antideficit, antigeneralization, and antiessentialization." Welsh and Swain (2020) stated, "This broader conceptualization of urban education focuses on the causes (the inside and outside of school factors shaping learning) rather than the outcomes associated with urban schools. The crisis in public schools is not simply due to reckless individual choices but rather systemic institutional failures" (p.95). They also suggested,

> Such a conceptualization shifts the conversation from a deficient perspective (blaming the challenges and context of urban schools on the characteristics of people living in

> urban environments) to a sociological perspective rooted in education, economic, health, and social policy and reform over time (Welsh & Swain, 2020, p. 95).

I acknowledge that the term *urban* can invoke negative and deficit implications but that is not the intention of this study. Some urban schools do not face the challenges mentioned above but happen to be situated in an urban environment. Schools with high turnover, deteriorating facilities, etc. can nevertheless have students with enormous community cultural wealth, and be subject to misperceptions that these problems are a reflection of unengaged communities rather than "institutional failures" as mentioned by Welsh and Swain (2020). When citing other researchers and in the narratives of the participants, I use the word *urban* in direct quotes and when summarizing passages in which they used the word.

Welsh and Swain (2020) identified “six categories typically used to define urban education: (a) population/location/ geography, (b) enrollment, (c) demographic composition of students, (d) resources in schools, (e) disparities and educational inequality, and (f) social and economic context." I use (a) population/location/geography to define urban in this study. It also happens to be that the particular UTR urban schools (though not all schools in these districts) also fall into the categories of (d) resources in schools, (e) disparities and educational inequality, and (f) social and economic context. These categories are the reasons these particular schools are chosen for the placements for the UTR residents instead of higher-resourced urban schools in the districts.

The term urban has been known to carry perceptions of “the conditions of cultural conflict grounded in racism and economic oppression” (Chou & Tozer, 2008, p. 1). These authors also discuss the deficit lenses that people use to discuss education in under-resourced schools. The UTR in which this study’s participants are enrolled uses the terms *hard-to-staff* and

high-needs when referring to the schools in the districts with whom they partner in the city and surrounding areas. I use these terms in this paper to align with the teacher residency program that participated in the research study. The UTR also classifies the schools as historically marginalized in their literature. In this study, I have worked to encompass an anti-deficit sociological lens and highlight what the teacher residents were experiencing in the reality of teaching during their residency through their lenses.

Rationale of the Study

During this study, I explored the cultural match or mismatch between teacher residents participating in a UTR program and their students. I addressed how, if at all, the cultural match or mismatch affects the experience of teacher-student relationships; how the cultural competence of the teacher residents affects their experience; and whether and how their perceptions about teaching evolved.

Cultural diversity can be conceptualized in several ways and can have different meanings for different people. As pre-service teachers, the residents mostly had beliefs about teaching in hard-to-staff schools based on their own experiences. Everyone has varied experiences within the schools they have attended, the communities they have lived in, and the culture they grew up with; these experiences shape their views of other schools, communities, and cultures. Prevalent among prospective teachers are "attitudes of *naïve egalitarianism*" (Causey et al., 2000, p. 34). Causey et al. (2000) defined this attitude as:

> Each person is created equal, should have access to equal resources, and should be treated equally. These beliefs can cause them to deny the privileges they may enjoy because of their skin color and social class to discount the effects of past and present discrimination. (p. 34)

Teacher residents might display this type of thinking as they enter a UTR program. With the knowledge learned in program courses and teaching experience, some might grow into a more realistic idea of individual children's varied needs. Due to the variation of teacher residents in culture, background, race, and ethnicity, the idea of being a match or mismatch to their students could be different when seen through the lens of the resident. I examined elementary teacher residency experiences of selected teacher residents who might have a cultural mismatch with their students. Delpit (1995) stated, "we live in a society that nurtures and maintains stereotypes; [teachers] judge [inner-city students'] actions, words, intellects, families, and communities as inadequate at best, as collections of pathologies at worst" (p. xxiv). Doyle (2012) stated that White teachers tend to view their way of living as the norm and the culture of their students in high needs classrooms as "foreign, resulting in racial and cultural tensions that cause difficulty in creating academic connections" (p. 33). Doyle also suggested that a teacher who does not have cultural competence might not see their students' strengths and honor their culture.

Statement of Purpose

The topic of interest includes the effects culture might have on residents' experiences in a hard-to-staff school to gain research-based information that could provide implications for teacher education practices. Outcomes could help pre-service teachers better understand their own cultural identity and grow to understand students' culture. The findings might also contribute to a better understanding of the cultural match or mismatch between pre-service teachers and their students. My study provides an inside look at selected residents' perceptions of their relationships with students in their school. My findings also contribute to the more extensive literature on urban teaching and UTR programs. The gap in literature addressed includes teacher residency experiences in their placements and how they might differ between

residents due to a match or mismatch in culture. The study's additional purpose was to investigate the factors that help teachers grow so that cultural mismatch is no longer a barrier to connecting with students.

There are many factors to consider related to teachers' relationships with students. Although some researchers have investigated this topic in traditional teacher preparation programs, it has not been examined in an elementary UTR program. In addition, many previous studies have been conducted using a narrow focus on the racial or ethnic identities of the teachers and students, not the idea of culture, considering values and behaviors learned within cultures. As teachers learn more about their students' cultures, they can embed teaching practices that support students' emotional and cultural wellbeing. This connection can enhance the relationship between students and teachers by recognizing and honoring students' culture through lessons.

Additionally, my study builds on previous research by further examining factors that arise due to cultural match or mismatch of the teacher resident and how residents implement culturally responsive pedagogy. According to T. C. Howard (2010),

> Culturally responsive pedagogy embodies a professional, political, cultural, ethical, and ideological disposition that supersedes mundane teaching acts; it is centered in fundamental beliefs about teaching, learning, students, their families, and their communities, and an underlying commitment to see student success become less rhetoric and more of a reality. (p. 67)

The practice of culturally responsive pedagogy makes a difference in the relationship between the resident and students when connections to students' lives are considered in lessons. Concerning the resident teacher's culture, my study included consideration of social and cultural

resources and how teachers' resources influenced whether relationships and experiences were positive or negative.

In all areas I have discussed as necessary to the study, teacher-student relationships remain the focus. Relationships in classrooms can look different if there is a match or mismatch of the teacher's culture compared to the students. Ladson-Billings (1995) developed a framework that includes teachers examining their perceptions of themselves as an essential part of being culturally responsive. White teachers are the majority in schools today and work with students from diverse cultures and races (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020, September). When teachers are working with students, it is imperative they know where they fall on the continuum of cultural competence to understand their students and themselves better. "Cultural competence is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enable that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations" (Cross et al., 1989, p. 13). Teachers become culturally competent when they value diversity, self-evaluate their cultural competence, know how cultures interact, have established cultural competence within schools, and teach with respect for cultural diversity (Cross et al., 1989). When teachers possess these values, they can better understand and connect with their students when forming relationships. Teachers who model positive behaviors and maintain high expectations for their students can create "a safe and successful environment where all students are valued for their unique contributions to the classroom culture" (Doyle, 2012, p. 35; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Love & Kruger, 2005). Conversely, teachers who have a negative outlook on their students might be unaware of their own perceptions; focused preparation can help them uncover and deal with unexamined

prejudiced beliefs (van den Bergh et al., 2010), which can affect their relationships with their students.

The study of cultural mismatch is critical because it illuminates significant differences between racially matched teachers and students overlooked in studies that focus only on racial mismatch. For instance, a Black teacher who recently immigrated to the U.S. might experience significant mismatches with Black students who are not immigrants and racially mismatched teachers and students nevertheless share common values and customs as a part of their culture.

Research Background

As the U.S. continues to see more immigrant children arriving and entering schools, adding to the already diverse population, and the teaching force remains over 80% White, fewer teachers share their students' culture (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). The National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force (2004) and the National Center for Education Statistics (2020) report as many as 83% of teachers in PreK–12 public schools are from White middle-class backgrounds that do not match the diverse students in classrooms. Pre-service teachers, teacher residents, and new teachers of record enter classrooms with a mismatch of culture between students and teachers. Whether veteran or new, White teachers have reported that their schools' main challenge is teaching non-White students (Bonner et al., 2018). A study of 641 PreK–12 teachers indicated that many teachers needed more information on teaching culturally and linguistically diverse populations (National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality and Public Agenda, 2008). The study's authors reported that this lack of preparation allowed teachers to enter classrooms with misconceptions about their students and, in turn, have low expectations for their academic abilities. These attitudes have existed for decades, including leading up to the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) case. Students began to

fight for their rights to have equal schools, which then grew into a court case that included desegregation.

The history of discrimination and segregation in education was legally addressed in 1954 with the Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education* (Green, 2015). This decision allowed Black students to attend school with White children to give them an equal education, with access to equal resources (Green, 2015). Black students began attending different schools, with students of a different culture and race. These actions were the start of the cultural and racial mismatch in education where students of color were moved into a school with primarily White teachers. Following this court case for desegregation in education, classrooms continued to be segregated for many years (Green, 2015). During the Civil Rights movement in the U.S., the focus changed to creating inclusive classrooms and the idea of cultural mismatch was beginning to be considered.

Critical race theory (CRT) advocates have given much attention to how White communities have benefited more than Black communities since the time of desegregation, including economically, professionally, and in neighborhoods that excluded or displaced families of color. CRT in education has focused on many of the challenges in schools, including teacher preparation programs working to prepare teachers to work in diverse classrooms. CRT was introduced into education research by Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) to bring about an awareness of racial inequity and injustice in schools and society. CRT scholars had brought attention to the damage done to people of color after *Brown v. Board of Education*, including Black teachers losing their jobs and Black students losing access to a culturally responsive curriculum when they attended White schools. CRT has been used to question the prevailing perception that desegregation benefited students of color.

Teacher and student race, ethnicity, and culture have been studied for many years, with most of the focus being on race (as seen in CRT). Racial matches between teachers and students have been found to positively affect student performance with a higher level of equity (Easton-Brooks, 2019; Stewart et al., 1989). Teachers who honor students' cultures and strengths while working with them hold high expectations and "expect that these expectations can be met" (Easton-Brooks, 2019, p. 63). Foster (1993) suggested that teachers who were a racial match with students showed more commitment to student success and had higher expectations of Black students than teachers who were a racial mismatch. Foster (1993) also discussed how Black teachers exhibited kinship with their students that encouraged a family feel in the classroom. The teachers in Foster's study shared a cultural and ethnic background that helped build relationships in the classroom.

Everyone has cultural resources that affect how they navigate situations and how family, friends, and community members teach one another. Students come to school with the knowledge they have learned in their community and their way of understanding situations, and teachers come in with knowledge from their life situation. These experiences do not always match, making it especially important for teachers to understand their students' cultural resources. Minority students who live in poverty and struggle with academic achievement are looked at through a deficit perspective because of their dominant peers' differences (Marshall, 1996). In turn, non-minority teachers can have the same deficit perspective when beginning to teach in a high-needs school, although this can also happen with teachers of the same race as their students (Marshall, 1996). All of these are important ideas when forming successful relationships that help students with academic achievement and self-esteem.

It is a concern that teachers' deficit perspectives could reproduce inequality for students and communities and affect communication between parents and students from various backgrounds. When there is a match between students and their teacher, "the potential interpersonal benefits associated with cultural match may be due to interactional ease that comes from the familiarity of shared symbols, values, and knowledge" (McGrady & Reynolds, 2013, p. 5). Teachers who are not a match with their students must learn the symbols, values, and knowledge of their students' cultural resources and see their strengths. They can then move forward to build on this knowledge positively and appropriately. An alternative view of culture was discussed by Swidler (1986), who introduced the idea of people in poverty having resources learned in their culture that can be used throughout their lifetime to get what they need. A student's cultural toolkit of resources (Swidler, 1986) can affect their motivation, including whether they will be proactive in knowing when to seek help. Students living in poverty might have unique resources in their cultural toolkit, such as caring for younger siblings at home or helping a sick parent instead of having time to do homework. These tools can positively or negatively affect the effort they put forth in school and outside of school. Teachers could recognize that caring for family members is a form of community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) that is valued in a student's home. Teachers can check in with families and make accommodations for students who help at home to support them and show they care. Schools could make special arrangements for students who are the caregiver by finding community resources that could help the families with their unique needs. Some teachers might not see caretaking as a fund of knowledge and cultural assets if students are absent from or tired during class. However, the student might see this as a part of their culture and family responsibility to care for others before academics. In school, the student might know more than other students

about health and how to restore health in a family member during a science lesson. Being a caregiver could make the student interested in becoming a health care provider and lead them to pursue a degree in the healthcare industry. If caring for family members is not a priority for the teacher's family, then this could cause a cultural mismatch with the student or family.

Teachers also possess cultural resources as a part of their toolkit that may be part of the dominant or non-dominant culture. Regardless of their personal background, teachers might use dominant tendencies as a professional at the school. Carter (2003) researched the idea of the mismatch and challenges through a multidimensional lens of dominant and non-dominant cultural resources. Dominant cultural resources encompass high status, including unique cultural symbols and a sense of power (Carter, 2003). Similarly, "non-dominant cultural resources embody a set of tastes, or schemes of appreciation and understandings, accorded to a lower status group, that include preferences for particular linguistic, musical, or interactional styles" (Carter, 2003, p. 138). Carter explained that students could possess both types of particular resources depending on the situation and code-switch as needed for the environment and situation. An example of this is a student could use academic language during class and then in the hallway use slang or cultural languages with friends. Carter (2003) interviewed students about the two types of cultural resources and found that many students used both, while other students did not have the experience or skills to use both and relied on non-dominant cultural resources linked to lower socioeconomic status. Working with students with diverse cultural resources can be a learning experience for teachers, who must make an effort to reduce the negative consequences of a mismatch.

Researching resident teachers' prior cultural experience and current classroom perceptions could help the field of education to understand better the dynamics of how beginning

teachers position themselves in the school and community. Research has suggested that students have more academic success when their teacher is from the same race and ethnicity, but as previously stated, race is not synonymous with culture (Easton-Brooks, 2019). Some teachers are of a different race than their students but have grown up in a similar community as their students. How might this impact the classroom climate and pre-service teachers' experiences?

Research Questions

The research questions used to guide this qualitative study focus on residents' perceptions of cultural match or mismatch throughout the teacher residents' experience. The central research questions for the study were:

1. How do residents think about culture as it relates to their students?
2. How do residents describe the relative cultural match/mismatch between themselves and their various students?
3. How do they see this match/mismatch affecting their relationships with their students?
4. What effects does the residency program have on preparing the residents to build relationships with students whom they perceive to be a cultural match/mismatch?

Definition of Terms

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a framework used to theorize, examine, and challenge the ways race and racism implicitly and explicitly impact social structures, practices, and discourse. CRT recognizes and celebrates people of color and their lived experiences and goes beyond the boundaries in education to include historical and modern contexts from research in women's studies, sociology, law, film, literature, psychology, and many other fields (Yosso, 2005).

Cultural competence includes ‘‘mastering complex awarenesses and sensitivities, various bodies of knowledge, and a set of skills that taken together, underlie effective cross cultural teaching’’ (Diller & Moule, 2005, p. 5).

Cultural deficit theory includes the perspective that “minority group members are different because their culture is deficient in important ways from the dominant majority group” (Salkind, 2008, p. 217).

Cultural deficit thinking in education, in part, is the way teachers might feel toward minority students and their families due to their low academic achievement because teachers believe they enter school lacking the normative skills and knowledge of the school. These teachers believe that parents of color do not value education or support academic success for their children (Yosso, 2005).

Culturally responsive pedagogy is exemplified by teachers who demonstrate six salient characteristics:

> Such a teacher (a) is socioculturally conscious, that is, recognizes that there are multiple ways of perceiving reality and that these ways are influenced by one’s location in the social order; (b) has affirming views of students from diverse backgrounds, seeing resources for learning in all students rather than viewing differences as problems to be overcome; (c) sees himself or herself as both responsible for and capable of bringing about educational change that will make schools more responsive to all students; (d) understands how learners construct knowledge and is capable of promoting learners’ knowledge construction; (e) knows about the lives of his or her students; and (f) uses his or her knowledge about students’ lives to design instruction that builds on what they

already know while stretching them beyond the familiar (Villegas & Lucas, 2002b, p. 21).

Community cultural wealth is inspired by CRT and "challenges traditional interpretations of cultural capital" by turning the "lens away from a deficit view of communities of color" (Yosso, 2005, p. 70). Yosso (2005) identified six forms of community cultural wealth:

Aspirational capital refers to the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers (p. 77).

Linguistic capital reflects the idea that students of color arrive at school with multiple language and communication skills (p. 78).

Familial capital engages a commitment to community wellbeing and expands the concept of family to include a broader understanding of kinship.

Social capital can be understood as networks of people and community resources. These peers and other social contacts can provide both instrumental and emotional support to navigate society's institutions (p. 79).

Navigational capital refers to the skills of maneuvering through social institutions. Historically, this implies the ability to maneuver through institutions not created with communities of color in mind (p. 80).

Resistant capital refers to those pieces of knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality (p. 80).

Culture is the "behaviors and values that are learned, shared, and exhibited by a group of people" (p. 75). Yosso (2005) explained that for students of color, culture could be exhibited in various ways, such as symbolically through language and encompassing identities around immigration status, gender, phenotype, sexuality, religion, and race and ethnicity.

Historically marginalized students are at risk of educational failure or otherwise in need of special assistance and support, such as students who are living in poverty, who attend high-minority schools, are far below grade level, who have left school before receiving a regular high school diploma, who are at risk of not graduating with a diploma on time, who are homeless, who are in foster care, who have been incarcerated, who have disabilities, or who are English learners (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

Urban, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau (2020), is an "urbanized area of 50,000 or more people."

Urban Teacher Residency (UTR):

Teacher residency programs are, by definition, district-serving teacher education programs that pair a rigorous full-year classroom apprenticeship with teacher education content. Building on the medical residency model, teacher residency programs provide residents with both the underlying theory of effective teaching and a year-long, in-school residency in which they practice and hone their skills and knowledge alongside an effective teacher-mentor in an urban classroom (National Center for Teacher Residencies (2017).

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This chapter reviews topics of cultural match or mismatch and their effects in schools between teachers and students. I review Yosso's (2005) use of critical race theory (CRT) to develop her theory of community cultural wealth. Yosso (2005) focuses on the importance of honoring others' cultures and the resources people bring to various areas of study. In education, possessing cultural competence allows teachers and staff to use culturally responsive pedagogy to support students' learning and achievement. I also discuss sociocultural perspectives and the importance of this lens for teaching diverse students. Last, I review urban teacher residencies (UTRs) that prepare residents to become effective teachers in diverse, hard-to-staff, Title 1 schools.

Critical Race Theory

When examining the cultural mismatches between teachers and students, CRT can help teachers see the strengths and assets in communities of color that might differ from their own. CRT was introduced into education research by Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) to bring awareness of inequity and injustice in schools and society. According to Yosso (2005), the CRT approach to education involves a commitment to developing schools that acknowledge the multiple strengths of communities of color to serve a larger purpose of social and racial justice. Solorzano (1997, 1998) identified five fundamental tenets of CRT in education: the ways racism is entrenched in society, interest convergence, commitment to social justice, the centrality of experiential knowledge, and transdisciplinary perspectives. CRT, as described by Solorzano and Yosso (2002), includes five tenets:

> 1) Critiques separate discourse on race, gender, and class and therefore focuses on the intercentricity of racism with other forms of subordination; 2) challenges dominant

> ideology that supports the deficit theorizing prevalent in education and social science discourse; 3) focuses on the experiences of students and communities of color to learn from their racialized experiences with oppression; 4) works toward social justice education as part of a larger goal to promote a liberatory or transformative solution to racial, gender, and class subordination; and 5) utilizes the interdisciplinary knowledge base of ethnic studies, women's studies, sociology, history, and the law to better understand the experiences of students of color. (p. 156)

Solorzano and Yosso (2002) stated,

> CRT in education is a framework or set of basic insights, perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze, and transform those structural and cultural aspects of education that maintain subordinate and dominant racial positions in and out of the classroom (p. 25).

Teachers need an understanding of CRT and its tenets.

Intersectionality is embedded into CRT when discussing race and poverty in hard-to-staff schools. It is essential to consider how racial identities and other aspects of cultural identity do not operate separately but in interactions with other aspects of our identity. Crenshaw (1991) defined intersectionality as the blending of two or more identities that overlap and allow others to see the marginalization magnified in these identities. In Title 1 schools, for instance, the intersection might be race and poverty or immigration and poverty; when combined, this intersectionality could increase discrimination or disadvantage. When one identity, such as race, is considered oppressed or disadvantaged, it can be hard to deal with, and adding a second identity, such as poverty, can compound how society treats a person. Milner and Laughter (2015)

used a CRT lens to examine teacher education and policy and practice reform to include studies related to the intersectionality of race and poverty.

Milner and Laughter (2015) highlighted that teachers who were considered middle-class and White had mindsets that were oppressive and colorblind and that negated, dishonored, and ignored their students' racial identities and realities. CRT allows teachers to discuss and examine how race can affect students in the institution of education and the classroom in appropriate ways. This movement pushed the framework to go beyond multicultural education to a more radical way of thinking by challenging race and racism in education. Race and racism are prominent features of society, including immigration, class, gender, sexuality, accents, and phenotype, which are layered in our society and influence education in curriculum and classrooms (Solorzano, 1997, 1998). White privilege is challenged (Solorzano, 1997, 1998) when antiracist lenses in research ignore people of color—including claims made about objectivity, color blindness, and race neutrality—in which deficit lenses are apparent. This happens not only in education, but also in other areas of society. Another aspect of the CRT lens includes the larger society and people who vocalize racialized beliefs, stereotypes, and ideologies that then get passed down through the cycle of oppression (Yosso, 2005). The public education system has also been affected by a critical factor in the oppression of students through the redlining of residential boundaries:

> Heterogeneous areas that are broken into smaller, less diverse entities often have large discrepancies in school quality. These disparities are due to differential school funding, parental involvement, teacher quality, student behavior, class size, facilities, or some combination of these factors. (Bischoff, 2008, p. 183)

Siegel-Hawley (2013) found that race and racism are present in boundary lines that segregate students of color from White students in four metro areas. Segregation is prevalent in schools due to district boundaries that continue the cycle of oppression. Stopping the cycle of oppression for students of color begins in the classroom and school with experiences provided by teachers who can appreciate the students as unique individuals and encourage their growth through their academic and cultural strengths. CRT includes social justice practices that support equity and encouragement for all students.

Sociocultural Consciousness

Researchers have discussed the importance of sociocultural consciousness related to how teachers look at themselves, their experiences with students of various cultures, and their biases (Yosso, 2005). Villegas and Lucas (2002a) defined sociocultural consciousness as "awareness that one's worldview is not universal but is profoundly shaped by one's life experiences, as mediated by a variety of factors, chief among them race/ethnicity, social class, and gender" (p. 27). According to Banks (1996), a teacher's positionality—their goals, knowledge, beliefs, strategies, and other normative frames of reference—is a significant factor in the learning experience of students. Sampson and Garrison-Wade (2011) discussed the importance of teachers knowing their own identity, especially if it is different from their students. Some African-American students in their study stated that it does not matter what ethnicity the teacher is if they are passionate about teaching the students' culture and show that they care about it. Other students in the study thought African-American teachers had more in common with them and understood their needs. Students also said they liked their African-American teachers but thought teachers of other races could have the same passion for teaching about their culture and show enthusiasm for it (Sampson & Garrison-Wade, 2011). When teachers examine their own

identities and the community characteristics in which they will be teaching, it can help them better understand their biases and eliminate deficit perspectives. Teacher positionality "acknowledges that we are all raced, classed, and gendered, and that these identities are relational, complex, and fluid positions rather than essential qualities" (Martin & Van Gunten, 2002, p. 46). Awareness of one's positionality is important when teaching, meeting with families, and remaining open-minded and equitable within the community context.

Forms of Capital

According to Yosso (2005), there are six forms of capital, also known as resources, that teachers can look for and acknowledge in students of color: aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capital. *Aspirational capital* refers to the ability to pursue goals for the future in the midst of structural inequality and showing resilience even when a person does not possess the means to attain their goals. Students of color also have *linguistic capital*, including intellectual and social skills learned in their culture, which might include a storytelling tradition, music, poetry, or visual art. *Familial capital* is passed down in cultures through families, and includes memory, community history, and cultural intuition. *Social capital* includes a student's peers, community resources, and networks of people who provide emotional support as they navigate institutions in society, such as school and college preparation. *Navigational capital* acknowledges individual skills used to maneuver through educational and other institutions in society that are often created without people of color in mind. For example, students of color are often not referred for advanced placement and honors courses in which they can succeed. Navigational capital might be knowing which school counselors and teachers could support them in advancing them in acquiring the appropriate referrals. Finally, *resistant capital* is learned at home or in students' home culture and includes learning to resist racism and messages

in society that tell them they are not good enough (Yosso, 2005). All forms of capital can look different depending on cultural norms, societal norms, and educational norms that the dominant society has formed through history. Teachers must learn about and understand their position related to forms of capital within the classroom and school culture to support their students. Part of supporting students and meeting them where they are in lessons and curriculum means planning with cultural relevance in mind.

Cultural Match or Mismatch

Several researchers have shown that teachers who are a racial mismatch to their students might have a more challenging time forming relationships with their students and understanding their home life and community, which in turn can affect student achievement (Delpit, 1995; Downey & Pribesh, 2004; Easton-Brooks, 2019; McGrady & Reynolds, 2013; Milner, 2010). Ladson-Billings (2000) discussed preservice teacher field experiences provided in White middle-class schools yet when they are first year teachers of record they find a different experience when teaching in urban schools with mostly Black students. The trend continues to be majority White teachers teaching many diverse students with whom they might have a hard time connecting. Milner (2010) stated, "cultural conflicts can cause inconsistencies and incongruence between teachers and students, which can make teaching and learning difficult" (p. 14). Milner and Ladson-Billings' research reveals the cultural conflicts in schools resulting from the dominance of White middle-class norms despite the fact many students are not familiar with those norms. For example, Delpit describes how many students do not understand the White middle class norm of veiling commands in the form of questions. These are good examples of how race and culture intertwine to produce the mismatch—it's not just that the teacher is White and students are Black, but Black American parents don't give commands in the form of

questions like White middle class parents often do (Delpit, 1988). She discussed the culture of power within schools as being a "reflection of the rules of the culture of those who have power" (p.283). She argued that "children from other kinds of families operate within perfectly wonderful and viable cultures but not cultures that carry the codes of rules of power" (p. 283). Delpit (1988) also discussed that the teacher "cannot be the only expert in the classroom. To deny students their own expert knowledge *is* to disempower them" (p.288).

McGrady and Reynolds (2013) conducted a longitudinal study of 10th graders that confirmed that mismatch effects are dependent on the racial status of both the teachers and the students. The study included only White teacher to Black student mismatch. When teachers and students were matched racially, the students demonstrated better behavior and showed higher academic achievement (McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). However, White teachers in the study had "more negative views but often equal views of Black and Hispanic students compared to Whites and typically more positive perceptions of Asian students" (p. 13). Similarly, Downey and Pribesh (2004) examined the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study 1998–1999 of kindergarteners and the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 of eighth graders. They found a mismatch of teachers to students and stated that "White teachers tend to evaluate Black students with a bias that favors White students' behavior over that of Black students" (p. 5). In this situation, there could be an unconscious or conscious bias on the part of the teacher. The teacher might not understand the students and their cultural norms and behavior and interpret them incorrectly as behavioral challenges. Delpit (1995) stated, "We all interpret behaviors, information, and situations through our own cultural lenses; these lenses operate involuntarily, below the conscious awareness, making it seem that our own view is simply 'the way it is'" (p. 151). Teachers bring their own experiences into the classroom, and some have more experience

than others from living, working, or having relationships with people from other cultures. These experiences, along with exposure to other cultures through travel or cultural community experiences, might positively influence their understanding of students from various cultures.

As seen in the news over the years, many students of color are treated unfairly in schools—and not always by someone of a different race. Conflicts happen in schools daily with teachers and students of varying experiences and races. Spilt and Hughes (2015) found that African-American students were overrepresented in conflict with teachers. They discussed the mismatch between cultural and racial backgrounds as a key factor due to misunderstandings and intergroup bias that influence the relationships between students and teachers. They also stated, "cultural discontinuity between home and school, as well as perceived discrimination on the part of African American children and their parents, may explain increasing conflict with teachers across the elementary school grades" (p. 312). Many teachers tend to be a mismatch to their students due to the high percentage of White teachers across the United States in classrooms with students of various races. The mismatch may not cause conflict between students and families; in many cases, teachers honor their students' home lives and form good relationships despite racial and cultural mismatches.

Teachers who are a mismatch can show their understanding of the students' cultures in their lessons. Jordan-Irvine (1991) argued that cultural mismatch might occur when Black children do not see themselves in the curriculum and have frequent experiences in which their culture is not honored or accepted. When teachers approach their students with the idea that Black students are valued, intelligent, and can succeed, it can significantly improve their education (Sampson & Garrison-Wade, 2011). Encouragement from teachers can help to build a positive classroom environment that supports student motivation. When teachers tell students

they believe in them and support them in their academics for higher achievement, this can also motivate student learning. The favorable climate helps students value themselves; having culturally responsive classroom experiences can boost their motivation and academic success (Sampson & Garrison-Wade, 2011).

In 1996, Marshall conducted a study to identify teacher candidates' and in-service teachers' concerns about working with diverse populations. The study included 146 pre-service and in-service teachers and revealed that teachers reacted differently during interactions with White students than they did with students of color. Marshall (1996) found that candidates were most concerned about how students would perceive them as teachers, their use of instructional methods for diverse students, how they dealt with intolerance among students, and whether diverse students had appropriate adult role models at home. Marshall (1996) suggested teacher preparation coursework should include concerns about teaching diverse students. She also found that when teachers' and students' cultural backgrounds vary, teachers need to understand their students' needs and backgrounds, possibly because they did not understand their cultural patterns. The differences in culture were reported to "potentially have an enormous influence on teachers' actions in school" (Marshall, 1996, p. 378). In a smaller study of 29 teacher candidates, Olmedo (1997) concluded that after coursework about teaching diverse students and participating in fieldwork in a multicultural school environment, candidates felt more confident teaching diverse populations.

Positive relationships within classrooms are an essential part of teaching. Easton-Brooks (2019) discussed the importance of building relationships with students in high-needs schools and considering the students' backgrounds, "especially students in which social stress, cultural disconnect, and cultural sustainability are subconsciously or consciously perceived as

threatening" (p. 44). He also found that cultural differences in the classroom and fostering relationships gives students confidence, and that teachers must first value their students to bridge the gap between home and school. Building relationships with students at the beginning of the year can help instill trust, allowing students to feel comfortable sharing with their teacher when struggling (Easton-Brooks, 2019). The challenges children bring to the classroom are varied, and teachers often do not know what is happening at home unless a child tells them. When students do open up to teachers, this can help connect them even more and allow the teacher to support the whole child.

Classrooms are diverse and now include more immigrant students to consider when planning lessons and making connections (Bonner, et al., 2018). Cultural differences take more time to understand when students and families do not speak the dominant language of the community in which they reside. Villegas (1988) researched the differences in language and language use for minority children in the classroom:

> Immigrant students are often misunderstood when applying prior knowledge to classroom tasks. Of what use is prior experience to these children if their established ways of using language and making sense of the world are deemed unacceptable or prohibited in the classroom? (p. 254)

Welcoming students and giving them a sense of belonging in the classroom can help build relationships, allowing teachers to learn more about students and their culture. Knowing where the student came from and their culture in their native community can help teachers incorporate the information into lessons and make connections between students' cultures and academics. Teachers must take the time to incorporate this practice to avoid bias against immigrant students.

Downey and Pribesh (2004) found that White teachers in their study reported Black kindergartners as having more problem behaviors due to causes outside of school, such as frequently arguing, getting angry, and fighting, compared to White kindergarteners. The authors also found that Black teachers rated Black students as having fewer problem behaviors than when White teachers assessed students (Downey & Pribesh, 2004). They discussed students who can be negatively affected by this racial mismatch through eighth grade. This consistent racial bias potentially causes students to have less motivation and perform more poorly in school (Downey & Pribesh, 2004).

Many White teachers who graduated from traditional teacher preparation programs have reported feeling unprepared to teach children living in poverty; to an even greater extent, they are concerned about teaching students who are Brown or Black (Milner & Laughter, 2015). These same teachers saw their teaching practices as race-neutral and said things like, "I see all my [Black] students the same," negating the students' racial identities and cultures (p. 343). Relatedly, Hollins and Guzman (2005) found that although White pre-service teachers were open to the idea of cultural diversity, they did not think they would do well teaching in diverse settings. Teachers in the study stated they would feel inadequate and uncomfortable teaching diverse populations. According to Easton-Brooks (2019), one of the biggest challenges for White teachers when forming relationships is finding a way to build meaningful and authentic relationships with students of color. White teachers can strive to be culturally competent in understanding students of color, but due to the many subgroups within cultures, competence is challenging to navigate (Easton-Brooks, 2019). Other researchers have discussed cultural competency as a positive way of highlighting how teachers with a different culture than their students can be competent and successfully use culturally responsive pedagogy in their lessons

(Bonner, et al, 2018,. Easton-Brooks, 2019) suggested that cultural competence implies that a person can act or teach with good intentions, while being culturally responsive implies that a person responds or reacts positively to others' culture. Teachers who have a cultural competent mindset when teaching students of color might see strengths in their cultures and teach culturally appropriate lessons. Yosso (2005) discussed teachers who have deficit thinking toward minority students and their families because of low academic achievement when entering school lacking the school's normative skills and knowledge. These ideas can be due to a belief that parents do not value education or support their children academically. This type of thinking is an essential piece of examining the cultural mismatch between teachers, students, and the communities they serve. Milner (2008) stated:

> I have argued that successful teachers in urban schools envision life beyond their present situations; come to know themselves culturally, linguistically, gendered, racially, economically, and socially in relation to others; speak possibility and not destruction both inside and outside the classroom regarding their students; care and demonstrate care; and change their negative, deficit, counterproductive thinking in order to change their actions in the classroom with students. (p. 1574)

When discussing culture in the study, it is important to point out that it is dynamic, fluid and changes over time. It is not conceptualized as a sealed-off box or as synonymous with race.meant to be a sealed off box nor is it meant to be conflated with race. Gutiérrez and Rogoff (2003) stated, "Unfortunately, categorization of individuals in groups has been treated casually, yielding explanations and expectations of individual skills and behaviors on the basis of category membership, assuming that all group members share the same set of experiences, skills, and interests" (p. 20). I agree that it is important not to treat culture as a group students or teachers

belong to or can be categorized under. In education, this approach is a detriment to the students and classroom community when students have varied lived experiences and values but may have shared interests and learning styles. They also discussed cultural community, as a group of people with some traditions in common that change over time and can affect changes in the community.

Teacher-Student Relationships and Perceptions of Students

At the beginning of each year in schools worldwide, teachers are meeting new students and forming relationships with them during the first weeks of school. Getting to know students can happen informally at recess, snack time, or eating lunch with the students. These strategies, along with more formal questioning, set the stage for the school year and, in turn, help teachers get to know the strengths and challenges students bring to the classroom. Developing these bonds takes work, and the information learned supports teachers in planning lessons to meet all students' needs. Teacher quality has been characterized as the most important influence on school success and achievement, "surpassing socioeconomic status, class size and family background, school context, and all other factors that influence achievement" (Hollins & Guzman, 2005, p. 478).

Other researchers have found similar responses from White teaching candidates, including those with negative attitudes about teaching diverse students, although they were still willing to teach in urban schools (Gilbert, 1995; Shultz et al., 1996). In a similar study, teacher candidates felt a lack of training and confidence due to their negative feelings toward students of color (Gilbert, 1997). Pre-service teachers do not always attend schools that include exposure to various cultures, which can be a factor in their negative feelings toward schools and students that are different from their previous norm of experiences.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Villegas and Lucas (2002a) discussed educating teachers to implement culturally responsive teaching and the importance of this strategy being the goal of academic excellence concerning cultural differences. They also asserted this will better engage students living in poverty while honoring their culture and ethnicity. T. C. Howard (2010) stated that cultural mismatch theory supporters proclaim that students of color encounter cultural discontinuity in schools and classrooms and encourage teachers to use culturally responsive strategies in lessons. When this practice is not implemented in the classroom, it can be a disservice to the students and recreate the inequity in communities (Milner, 2010). Goldenberg (2014) wrote about contextualizing culture in education through the lens of CRT and culturally responsive pedagogy that focused on White teachers and the importance of considering the cultural resources of students of color. If teacher residents understand the varying forms of resources within the classroom, it may help them implement culturally responsive pedagogy. Teaching students about their cultures and then incorporating relevant cultural examples into content lessons supports the student's learning. This strategy helps with content mastery, which is the goal of lessons, and helps students with academic achievement. Connecting lessons to students' culture and community is also called *equity pedagogy*, which exists when teachers employ methods and materials that support diverse and minority students' academic achievement (Banks & Banks, 1995). Banks and Banks (1995) defined equity pedagogy as "teaching strategies and classroom environments that help students from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural groups attain the

knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to function effectively within and help create and perpetuate a just, humane, and democratic society" (p. 152).

Cultural Competence

Cultural competence is the ability to understand and honor cultures other than our own. For teachers, this concept involves teaching diverse students while honoring their cultures to ensure cross-cultural teaching. Cultural competence has been well researched for more than 30 years and has highlighted the significance of teachers being culturally competent and responsive in their teaching (Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2002; G. R. Howard, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002b). Terrell &Lindsey (2009) developed a cultural proficiency continuum that depicts unhealthy and healthy practices; it begins with cultural destructiveness and ends with cultural proficiency. Mills (2013) found that when teachers understand diversity, interacting and responding effectively can positively affect marginalized students' academic achievement and better school experiences. The cultural proficiency continuum showed that people who are new to various cultures refer to those from different cultures as "others," including the school and relationships with people in the community (Terrell & Lindsey, 2009). As they move through the phases of cultural incapacity and blindness, they cause harm by dishonoring cultures other than their own. Transformation for equity moves into healthier practices, including cultural pre-competence, competence, and proficiency. In this phase, teachers become increasingly aware of other cultures and their need to learn more about working with oppressed cultures, changing their values and behaviors, and finally learning to become an advocate for cultural groups with a lens for change (Terrell & Lindsey, 2009). Teachers and leaders who work through these phases

of change with an openness to making positive efforts toward change can make a difference in the lives of their students, schools, and communities.

Teachers with cultural competence can interact better with students and honor their cultures. In the classroom, this is an integral part of students feeling honored and accepted, so they do not become resistant to succeeding in their work due to feeling unaccepted. Student resistance against academics does not always mean that they are resistant to the teacher or the dominant culture, but instead could mean they are trying to hold on to their culture and identity (Goldenberg, 2014). Once teachers begin to recognize this idea, it can become easier for them to appreciate that students have pride in themselves but do not always feel valued, allowing students and teachers to work together and student achievement to rise. Teachers might not see the power adults have in schools that are oppressive. CRT works toward eliminating educational racism by suggesting we move away from colorblind thoughts to reduce feelings of inferiority and dehumanization of minority students.

Challenges in Teaching in Hard-to-Staff Schools

There is a growing need for preparing pre-service teachers to teach in hard-to-staff settings. In many Title 1 schools, challenges include low attendance rates, poor student performance, high teacher and administration turnover, inadequate school facilities, a school culture that includes marginalization, and students living in poverty and coping with trauma (DeMatthews, 2014). The challenges could be in part due to under-funding and issues such as redlining and racism. According to McCaughtry et al. (2006), teachers' challenges include understanding cultural connections with students and their implications for relationships, managing behavioral issues, implementing culturally responsive pedagogy, and understanding diverse cultures and challenges within the community. Overcrowding in schools can also lead to

challenges, including difficulty with concentration, classroom order, and scheduling (Bowers, 2000). Not all Title 1 schools have overcrowded classrooms, and class size does not always determine how challenging a class will be to teach. Previous researchers have found problems in the classroom also include challenges with contacting parents and guardians, relationships with colleagues and principals, inadequate time for preparation, the burden of clerical work, high workload, and insufficient guidance and support (Abbott et al., 2009; Schuck et al., 2012; Veenman, 1984). These challenges seem to be more prevalent in hard-to-staff schools where students come from low-income homes and parents or guardians work schedules often conflict with attending school functions or conferences. Principals might feel they are constantly being watched by the district office for academic and teacher performance, putting more pressure on them. Teachers might have meetings during a time that they could be planning for instruction. They might also feel they are told what to do instead of supported.

Milner and Laughter (2015) called for reform in preservice teacher education classes because many teachers do not understand the stratification in schooling and society. This lack of understanding is detrimental to students living in poverty and those who are racially marginalized, especially Black students. Teacher preparation coursework at universities should be addressing the challenges of race and poverty in hard-to-staff schools, including how it affects students in the classroom. When teachers are unable to connect with students and their community, they tend to leave and teach at a different school or change careers. Pre-service teaching courses could help with this challenge, teaching about culturally responsive pedagogy and implementing it in lessons. Teaching about the communities in which they will be serving and researching them could also support new and pre-service teachers in the classroom.

Abbate-Vaughn et al. (2010) articulated four dimensions of effective urban teaching: focus on relationships and shared authority, linking classroom content with the student experience, incorporation of familiar and culturally compatible communication patterns, and development of counter-narratives that challenge stereotypical conceptions of at-risk students and families. These dimensions could be formed from the teacher's combined experiences in historically marginalized schools as teachers and university supervisors of student teachers. Teacher preparation programs should include these four dimensions when teaching content about understanding hard-to-staff schools and communities. This preparation could be incorporated with culturally responsive teaching practices that includes social justice practices and equity.

Teacher Preparation for Diversity in Schools

Research has suggested a higher level of equity and student performance results when students' teachers matched their ethnicity and shared their culture and social norms (Collier, 2002). Olmedo (1997) also suggested that teacher preparation programs play a critical part in teaching White student candidates from middle- and upper-class upbringing how to teach in schools that are different from what they experienced in their schooling. Placing these teacher candidates in diverse field experiences is essential to help prepare them for teaching in challenging environments and teaching them the importance of equity in education through direct observation. It is not possible to know with certainty how much teacher preparation programs affect teachers' skills and efficacy in working with diverse groups. Students' diversity is changing in culture, language, and national origin, which means teachers need to be prepared to support cultural competencies in their classrooms (Keengwe, 2010). Teachers' cultural competence is essential for teacher preparation programs to incorporate in pre-service field experiences and course content. Pre-service teachers can develop cultural skills and knowledge

to understand the similarities and differences in students' cultures (Keengwe, 2010). Nieto and Bode (2008) suggested school failure was a possible consequence of teachers who do not accept differing development and academic skills of students from a different culture than they are accustomed to living. Multicultural education and culturally responsive pedagogy are also crucial to incorporate in teacher preparation coursework to raise personal awareness and improve how teachers interact with others (Keengwe, 2010).

Urban Teacher Residency Programs

Teacher residency programs across the nation serve urban, rural, and suburban areas where varying cultures are situated. The focus of this study was an urban program. UTR models of teacher preparation have been growing quickly in the United States since their formation in 2004 (Gatti, 2019). Teacher residency programs were formed from the successful medical residency model, in which students who are still taking courses are placed in medical field experiences. The National Center for Teacher Residencies (2017) explained that:

> Teacher residency programs are, by definition, district-serving teacher education programs that pair a rigorous full-year classroom apprenticeship with masters-level education content. Building on the medical residency model, teacher preparation programs provide residents with both the underlying theory of practical teaching and a year-long, in-school "residency" in which they practice and hone their skills and knowledge alongside an effective teacher-mentor in a high needs classroom. New teacher residents receive stipends as they learn to teach and commit to teaching in their districts for three or more years beyond the residency.
>
> The medical residency models are set to have pre-medical students complete 4 years of coursework before entering 3 years of residency in medical settings. The teacher

residency programs are more intensive placing residents in coursework while co-teaching in schools. This is a difficult program that adds a lot of stress to the teacher residents to work all day in schools and then go to school in the evenings and complete lesson planning and homework at the same time. The positive part of this model is that while the residents are learning in classes, they can then implement their new knowledge in their residency classrooms. Teacher residency programs place residents in under-resourced communities in Title 1 schools to prepare them to become effective teachers in the community in which they will work. Many of the teacher residents have not grown up in high-needs areas and are of different ethnicities and are therefore a mismatch with the student population and community where they are placed to teach. Although there is a mismatch and the setting is new to the teacher residents, UTRs have positive effects on teacher retention, with 85% of residents staying in high-needs schools for more than 3 years (Gatti, 2019), compared to about 70% of teachers from traditional teacher preparation programs (Sorenson & Ladd, 2018).

Teacher residency programs place university teacher candidates (including elementary, secondary, and special education) in high-needs schools with an expert mentor teacher for 1 full school year. Teacher residency programs begin with students applying for the program and then being vetted to best select teacher candidates for the program (Guha et al., 2016). The teacher residents teach alongside their mentor teacher (called a clinical residency coach or CRC) and are gradually released to take over teaching and lesson planning on their own, with the support of their CRC (National Center for Teacher Residency, 2017). The CRCs attend coaching training to prepare them to support and observe the teacher resident throughout the school year (National Center for Teacher Residency, 2017). They model their expertise in teaching, caring for, and

supporting students who might be labeled as disadvantaged, marginalized, at-risk, high needs, or oppressed. Residents and their CRCs also work with trained residency coaches from outside of their school who support the dyad throughout the year with observations, reflection meetings, and triad (i.e., teacher resident, CRC, and resident coach) support meetings (National Center for Teacher Residency, 2017). Teacher residency programs teach residents the importance of having a mindset that everyone can learn, regardless of their background. Because most teacher residents begin their residency year in summer courses, the overarching theme is preparing them to teach all students through differentiation, encouragement, and equity.

Teacher residencies pair students with vetted and trained qualified teachers in the field to help train them as effective teachers in high-needs settings. Using this strategy can help with the shortage of effective qualified teachers. Bowers (2000) stated, "Teachers in urban schools [should] beware of promoting a 'pedagogy of poverty,' in which teachers and students are immersed in maintaining the status quo of the students' lives" (p. 237). Teachers can incorporate a set of critical strategies for their classroom—a "pedagogy of success"—that will support students' higher academic achievement (Bowers, 2000). Teacher residents get to see the effects of poverty, trauma, and teaching challenges due to the effects on students with the benefit of learning how various teachers work with the students. These skills have the potential to make them more effective later, as teachers in their own classrooms.

The first field experience is sometimes in a summer school class in the district where residents will teach or a district that closely matches where they will be placed during the residency year. The experience is an important time of introduction to working with high-needs populations and allows residents to practice writing equitable lesson plans and working

one-on-one with students. It also gives the residents a chance to build relationships with students from diverse backgrounds, which are sometimes different from their own.

In their college courses that teach classroom management strategies and communication skills between home and school, teacher residents learn the importance of getting to know their students. These courses, when offered through UTR programs, help residents understand the importance of equitable teaching and professionalism. Other courses in the preparation program include social justice strategies and challenges present in society to encourage a mindset that would break the barriers of deficit thinking. A UTR program works with residents to teach them practices, strategies, and competencies included in culturally responsive teaching. Teacher residents are evaluated during their residency on the use of these practices in their classrooms and schools. Teaching in Title 1 schools can be challenging; understanding the school and community is a crucial part of understanding these challenges and why they exist. Knowledge about their students' home lives can help residents become more effective teachers who can support students' individual needs. Abbate-Vaughn et al. (2010) found that,

> The evaluation for National Board Certification does not include these four dimensions [relationships and shared authority, linking classroom content with student experience, incorporation of familiar and culturally compatible communication patterns, and development of counter-narratives that challenge stereotypical conceptions of at-risk students and families] in the exam and suggests that urban teachers should have additional or different ways of being evaluated due to the unique aspects of teaching in high-needs schools…the lack of high-quality teachers in urban high-needs settings is evident as the achievement gap has remained the same over a long period of time. (pp. 6-7)

The achievement gap is not due solely to the quality of teachers but other factors within and outside schools and the education system (Abbate-Vaughn et al., 2010). Teacher residents might share concerns with their mentor teachers about students who are at-risk as they get to know what their students are going through and form relationships with them. Any mismatch of teacher and student culture can be problematic for a fluid transition for teachers (Abbate-Vaughn et al., 2010).

Traditional teacher preparation programs prepare their students how to teach in multiple settings, while UTR programs teach specifically about the residency district and community settings. Teaching residents about the specific setting in which they will be teaching aids their understanding of the cultures within the community. Most UTR programs work to eliminate deficit thinking in residents by taking the residents into the community with a community member who can give them information about the community, cultural practices, and home lives of families. As the teacher residents gain knowledge of the community and school, they become comfortable knowing how and where to find positive support for their students' and families' success. In most UTR programs, residents learn about collaboration opportunities with the community through their assigned school.

Community connections and learning to advocate for the students and families are essential for the UTR experience. The teacher residents come from diverse cultural backgrounds that might not match the communities and students with whom they work in under-resourced schools. UTR programs prepare their residents specifically to work in Title 1 schools, allowing them to teach and understand the needs of students living in poverty. Whether a mismatch exists, teacher residents have reported feeling unsure about working with students in high poverty areas before entering UTR programs; these residents later report that it did not take them long to

acclimate to the school and students (National Center for Teaching Residencies, 2017). Graduates of UTR programs are usually well-positioned to enter their first solo teaching year in a Title 1 school after a year of guidance in teaching and role modeling (Richmond Teacher Residency Program, n.d.). Most of the school districts in which the residents have been placed in one particular program offer residents a 3-year teaching contract after their first year in the program if there are teaching vacancies (Richmond Teacher Residency Program, n.d.). Teacher residency programs work with community partner school districts to help meet the need for effective teachers in Title 1 schools where teacher attrition rates are high.

According to the National Center for Teacher Residencies (2017), principals who hire and supervise residency graduates report that graduates are exceptionally well prepared for today's classrooms. One survey of more than 70 principals who had hired teachers from UTR programs reported that 90% of residents excelled over new teachers from traditional teacher preparation programs. Academic achievement and student learning were reported to have improved in their classrooms, and the principals said they would recommend other principals hire teachers from UTR programs (National Center for Teacher Residencies, 2017).

UTRs are well situated to address teachers' potential cultural mismatch in their philosophy and the courses required by the university and the residents' long-term field experiences. Research by the National Center for Teacher Residencies (2017) has been conducted in many areas of teacher residency programs. However, less researchers have reported the experience of the cultural match or mismatch of the UTR students. According to Easton-Brooks (2019), traditional teacher preparation programs have less diverse pre-service teachers represented in their field experiences than UTR programs; as a result, traditional pre-service teachers do not expand their cultural competence. In addition, UTR programs allow

residents to spend an entire school year in the same classroom, while traditional student teaching usually consists of about 12-14 weeks in one or two classrooms. These programs allow residents to be immersed in an urban classroom, giving them the experience of getting to know the students as well as their families and community, including their cultural strengths.

Researching resident teachers' prior cultural experience and current classroom perceptions could help the field better understand the dynamics of how beginning teachers position themselves in the school and community. Previous researchers have suggested that students have more academic success when the teacher is from the same race and ethnicity, but as stated previously, academic success is not synonymous with race and ethnicity alone. Similar cultural and social capital between the resident teacher and their students is a dimension that needs further attention. Teacher residents might be of the same race but different cultural backgrounds, yet still be effective teachers due to an understanding of their students' home lives, values, and community assets. This mismatch might be a factor in forming relationships with students, staff, and families. It should be noted that many factors could make a difference in each resident's experience beyond those I have included here.

Summary

My intent for this chapter was to highlight the limited amount of previous research that focuses on cultural mismatch between teachers and students compared to the vast amount of research focused on race and its effects on teacher experience. There are many ways White teachers can teach students of color, and Black teachers can effectively teach White students and students who do not identify as Black or White. Pre-service teachers in UTR programs are preparing to teach in high-needs schools where they may or may not be a mismatch to their

students. My study could help researchers and UTR program leaders better understand how to identify areas within their courses to address topics included in this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Design

My investigation included seven case studies of current teacher residents in a UTR program, and the multiple case study varied by each resident, grade level, and match (or mismatch) of the teacher resident to their students. Qualitative case study design was used to explore the teacher residents' through their perceptions of self-identifying as a cultural match or mismatch with their students. Qualitative case studies reveal lived experiences that quantitative research does not. Maxwell (2013) wrote that qualitative research works with the universe of meanings, motives, aspirations, beliefs, values, and attitudes, which corresponds to a deeper space of relationships, processes, and phenomena that cannot be reduced to the operationalization of variables. The case study design for this study is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (Yin, 2014, p. 16). Hearing participants' voices allowed for detailed descriptions of unique experiences that informed the implications of this study. Findings helped support an area of education that has been less studied and contributed to the literature published thus far.

Participants

The case studies were focused on seven elementary teacher residents who were co-teaching in hard-to-staff schools. Participants were volunteers who were participating in a UTR program at the time of the study and were willing to share their experiences. It would have been ideal to have more diversity, more than one gender represented, and various grade levels and districts represented. The actual sample of participants did include some ethnic and racial diversity but could have included more and only two school districts were represented in the

study. The opportunity was open to all elementary residents who were willing to be open, honest, and self-critical in their narratives.

I chose the elementary UTR group rather than the secondary and special education tracks both for convenience. (I was currently working with this group of residents as their advisor and had taught two of their courses in previous semesters) and because elementary school is the first experience some students have to various cultures, perspectives, and characteristics. The elementary years are formative, not only in schooling, but also in social situations. Students must learn from teachers who might not look like them or have the same cultural background. The elementary group in this particular UTR was a diverse group allowing for many voices and perspectives to be heard. Elementary residents were chosen for the study because of my personal relationship with them; this permitted the necessary trust with them to discuss sensitive issues such as race and cultural mismatch. This group of residents described their preservice teaching experiences as they were happening during the teacher residency, rather than having to remember them later. I chose not to study UTR alumni because they were more established in teaching and navigating teaching in hard-to-staff schools. I was interested in initial encounters and reflections on cultural match or mismatch. Participants' responses gave insightful descriptions of their day-to-day interactions with the students and staff in various high-needs elementary schools in two urban school districts.

Recruiting participants for the study happened through an individual email (Appendix A) to each of the UTR elementary residents inviting them to be a part of the study. My target was a variety of demographics within the elementary resident cohort, including those residents that I thought would be most forthcoming with their input to the study. Because there were only two men in the cohort, I expected to have more women than men in my sample. The cohort was

racially diverse, and I hoped to have a representative sample of various races and cultural backgrounds represented. In recruitment efforts, I described the study as research related to the cultural match or mismatch of pre-service teachers and their students, staff, and community during their internship year working in Title 1 schools. The expectations were explained, including participating in two interviews during January and May 2020 and writing a monthly journal entry based on a prompt I provided. Participants filled out a consent form with a signed statement indicating their willingness to participate in the study. Confidentiality and security of information were addressed in the form, including that participants' real names would not be used, all written documentation would be kept in a secure drive, and any paper copies would be locked in a cabinet in my office. At the end of the study, participants were given a $50 gift card as compensation for participation.

Participant Profiles

The participants discussed in their first journal entry their cultural lived experiences growing up. All of the participants' ages were in their 20's and from various areas of the same state the UTR is situated in the Mid Atlantic region.

Alex

Alex described herself as biracial because one parent is White and one is Black. She also discussed her background growing up in a small town stating,

> I grew up in a smallish town. It was predominately White and it was pretty racially segregated in terms of the neighborhoods and stuff. And since I was biracial I was one of like a few people that were the same. So it was just definitely different there. Culturally I'm not sure that it was much different in terms of practices like religion and things like that. I did a lot of activities. My dad was wanting to get me into sports and so I did dance,

> gymnastics, and then I got into music and I stuck with that through high school just playing various instruments. So pretty much just going around and doing stuff in the community like different festivals and stuff because my parents were pretty big on getting involved in the community and like not staying at home. And then like going to church and stuff. That was a big deal on Wednesday and Sunday all day.

Angela

Angela described herself as an African American and discussed her background that included,

> Sundays were all church music, gospel, and then a big dinner. Every holiday so Thanksgiving, Christmas, Mother's Day, not so much Father's day but I think we did go but I think those were the main holidays when we were there even New Year's too. We brought in the new year at church.

Her parents were divorced and she grew up living with her aunt, grandma, and siblings in a city. She described her years growing up as "unique" and "full of drama."

Ava

Ava described herself as Black and grew up living in a suburban area with her mother and grandmother whom she describes as having a very tight-knit relationship with them. She also remembers being with her cousins a lot and describes her fondest memory with her grandma:

> I would use a stool and she would sit in the chair and I would plait her hair. That was just really nice and that was just something that I really remember doing. I would just plait her scalp. And that was just something we bonded over so I just have a lot of memories combing her hair and plait.

Brian

Brian described himself as White and reflected on his background while growing up in a suburban neighborhood. He identifies as a gay male.

> Growing up I had two older siblings so I kind of matured a little bit earlier I would say in terms of knowing all of the like explicit teenager stuff I started to know when I was twelve for example. So I guess there was a little bit of that dynamic. My parents were a little more permissive with me in terms of their parenting style. My parents were really religious while I was growing up in their household. We would make our own family things to do so we would always make breakfast as a family on Sundays.

Cece

Cece reported that she is biracial, having a White father and an Asian mother and moved to many places due to her family situation. She described her background as:

> I grew up really poor. My father, he um, he still is an alcoholic and so at the age of eleven, I had to raise my siblings while my mom was in Iraq and Afghanistan. She was in the Army. And so my parents were split so I had to live with my dad. And like I said, I grew up really poor and I had to take care of my younger siblings. A lot of times I would not know the next time I would eat and just moved around from house to house. Sometimes we lived in hotels, we lived in cars. So I guess that made me get a sense of appreciation that I have. And so I guess, I had to grow up a lot sooner than most kids and so I never had a chance to be a quote-unquote kid. We had Christmas and things like that. We had the tree sometimes. At my mom's, we did a lot of Asian traditions (and still do) - taking off shoes before entering the house, always having cooked rice available, Buddah's around the house (symbolizes good luck). My mother was very strict growing

up when I was in her household. I do not associate myself with one religion, I am more so spiritual, but a lot of my traditions follow the customs of Christianity. I believe that it is important to be married before having children. I follow the social norms of a female.

Rory

Rory describes herself as half Middle-Eastern and half White from a suburban area. She described her family as very important to her. She stated,

> When I identify myself I say I am an Iranian American. My mother was born here and my father immigrated to the United States when he was 9. My father's side of the family still values and celebrates our culture often. I feel closest to my Iranian heritage when celebrating with my family. I don't speak Farsi but my dad's side of the family does which is sometimes challenging because I wish I knew it. Half of my family is Muslim and the other half is Christian. This has never divided our family though. My family is very close with one another and had to work really hard to make a living in the United States. Because of this, two moral values that are extremely important in my family are hard work and success. My family also values education because it's one reason they moved here.

Sharon

Sharon reported that she is White and was raised in a suburban area practicing the Roman Catholic faith which she no longer practices. She explained her culture:

I would describe my culture (the one I grew up in) as being the more common White, catholic, suburban culture of my time. To be honest, it is hard to describe my "culture" because I have often felt that there is no culture where I come from. My family was very typical in that we lived in a house in the suburbs. My dad was the bread-winner and my mom babysat at home for a

living until we got older, when she began to work outside the house as well. We went to church on Sundays, played sports, and spoke English at home.

Table 1

Participant Information

Name	Ethno-racial Demographics	Hometown	Family Unit	SES	Residency Grade
Alex	Biracial: White/Black	Small town	Only child Married	M	K
Angela	African American	City	Siblings Single parent	W	4
Ava	Black	Suburban	Only child Single parent	W	3
Brian	White	Suburban	Siblings Married	M	4
Cece	Biracial: Asian/American	Suburban	Siblings Divorced	W	5
Rory	Biracial: Iranian-American	Suburban	Siblings Divorced	M	3
Sharon	White	Suburban	Sibling Divorced	M	3

Note. This table displays participants' demographics as self-reported in their narratives. The names of all participants are pseudonyms to protect their anonymity. SES = socioeconomic status; W = working class; M = middle class

My positionality in the study as the interviewer was considered due to my position being an instructor of the residents' UTR seminar and my cultural positioning as a White, cisgender, heterosexual woman. Another potential limitation considered is my identity as a White woman in a social class that might be different from the residents and students they are teaching. My interests and purpose were to illuminate the gap in research about teaching and the importance of teachers' cultural variations as they perceive them, instead of their race, which is seen from the outside. Potential biases and blind spots might stem from my middle-class upbringing, living as a White female in a predominantly White suburban neighborhood, practicing Christian religion, speaking English, and attending schools that were not considered under-resourced. Blind spots might also be within the limits of what I understand about residents' and students' lived

experiences. I acknowledge that the students in hard-to-staff schools with whom the residents were working had different lived experiences than what I experienced outside of school settings. I have experienced diverse cultures and human characteristics through my teaching in various settings. Most of the participants in my study also had different experiences with cultural variations and working with students than I do. While collecting and analyzing data, I honored and respected each of the residents for who they were and the strengths they brought to the group. I did my best to accurately interpret and represent their views, even though my background is different from theirs and I might not view the world in the same way as the participants. I used memoing, offered member checking, and peer debriefing to track my own biases related to my identity positioning (see the Research Ethics, Credibility, and Trustworthiness section for more on this).

Data Collection

In this qualitative study using case study design, the main approaches for collecting data were two interviews and four journal entries per participant. The purpose of the study was to investigate the perceptions of pre-service teachers participating in a UTR program and working, at the time of the study, in hard-to-staff elementary schools. Specifically, I wanted to learn more about how participants felt they fit culturally into various spaces in the residency year. Using a case study design allowed the residents to reveal their lived experiences in their classrooms. Data collection took place from January through May 2020.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Two semi-structured interviews (Appendix C) were conducted with each participant to understand how residents felt they were culturally positioned at the beginning and end of the semester. The participants were given a written document and signed permission for the

interviews to be audio-recorded and transcribed. The interviews took place in January and late March to early April, providing insight about participants' experiences during the months they were teaching independently, compared to when they were co-teaching and observing their CRC. The interviews were flexible, allowing the researcher to guide the order of the topics and add follow-up questions as needed to gain the information needed to make comparisons between and across participants (Bernard et al., 2017). Interviews consisted of open-ended questions with follow-up probing questions as needed to gain insight into the residents' perceptions and experiences within their classrooms, schools, and community. Interviews lasted approximately 30–75 minutes and were held in a neutral setting (either in a public library meeting room or individually by Zoom) to allow the residents to speak freely. The interview protocol for the second interview in late March and early April was derived from the first interview responses. I asked participants to elaborate or discuss any changes from their first responses, and I anonymously raised issues other participants discussed to get their perspective on those issues. Questions asked in the first interview were asked again for a comparison over time. They were transcribed and coded for similar themes.

Journal Entries

Journal entries can reveal how people make sense of what is happening around them and allow personal insight into their thoughts (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The journals and one-on-one interviews disclosed information more personally and individually than completing a survey. The journals were a private way for the teacher residents to provide information that was kept anonymous, allowing for feelings and perceptions to be conveyed privately. The journal entries were prompted by open-ended questions and statements from the researcher (Appendix B) that addressed the perceptions of teacher residents' cultural identity compared to those of the

students they were teaching. Participants wrote four journal entries and gave real examples of navigating the feelings and perceptions of cultural match or mismatch to their students and school staff. Journal entries were prompted in four phases that helped address participants' initial attitudes toward teaching students from different backgrounds than their own, cultural misunderstandings in the residency experience, the UTR program's influence on the experience, and future implications as a teacher of record. The journal prompts also included how residents self-identified in ethnicity and cultural variations, how they formed relationships with students, how they felt they were working with the students, and their efforts to get to know the community. The prompts were provided to the participants by email with responses returned to me in a Google Doc and placed in a Google folder that each resident set up and shared with me. I asked that each response was at least one single-spaced page.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted through inductive coding interview transcripts and journal entries from the residents. Inductive coding required close reading of the texts to find context meanings relevant to the research questions, allowing themes to be identified (Thomas, 2006). Once themes were found, and categories were created, actual phrases were chosen to highlight the themes and were used in the presentation of findings (Thomas, 2006). Thematic analysis was used to look for common themes to help make sense of the potential cultural mismatch. This method helped me identify common ways the residents discussed their experiences with students with whom they were a mismatch (Braun & Clarke, 2012). I analyzed the data forming themes from the first interview before conducting the second round of interviews. These themes informed the development questions for the second interview (Appendix C) and allowed for further investigation of participants' narratives to find meaning and make comparisons between

experiences. Profile matrices were used to keep track of data codes for the journal entries to show similarities and differences between the residents (Bernard et al., 2017). Data analysis included coding the data in Google Sheets and hand-coding for themes, such as *cultural awareness*, *mismatch*, *relationships*, *growth over time as a teacher resident in a high-needs school*, and other themes that emerged inductively. For example, emergent themes included *cultural and life experiences of the students*, *lesson integration of student interests*, and *working with English Language Learners*. Patterns emerged in the way residents wrote or talked about how they were feeling, what they were observing in teachers, or how their mismatch or match made a difference in their experiences. Referring to my research questions, I found if and how the questions were being answered to build on previous literature (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

Data analysis also included writing notes of themes found when coding narratives that helped to form questions to pursue in further analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). While coding the data, it was also important to know when there was a point of saturation that revealed no new information. I analyzed interview transcripts for specific events and their sequence, timing, the meaning of actions of the residents and their students, and how the narrative ended (Labov, 1982). According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the "process of meaning-making happens when consolidating, reducing and determining what people have said" (p. 202). Interviews were audio-recorded with each participant's permission and later transcribed by me listening and typing the interviews then coded using Google Sheets and hand-coding. Codes were used for constant comparison by thinking about themes and checking whether they had emerged in previous journal entries or narratives (Bernard et al., 2017).

One of the challenges in using qualitative case study methods is the researcher must remain flexible to what emerges from the participants that might guide the research in a new or

different direction than anticipated. It was important to remain open-minded with the data collected from the participants' narratives when using inductive narrative analysis with the possibility of finding themes that did not align with every participant. The writing prompts for journaling might have, in some instances, been interpreted differently by the participants and led them in a different direction than I had intended. A few narratives revealed a topic requiring more investigation and led to more substantial information to support teacher preparation change or other areas. Qualitative analysis allowed participants' lived experiences to emerge.

Pilot Test

Pilot testing was conducted to ensure journal prompts and interview questions were clear and that the participants would understand them the way I intended. Pilot testing is an essential part of research investigating potential problems before beginning a study with participants (Haasan et al., 2006). Two past UTR residents, who are now teachers of record, participated in the pilot study. They completed the journal entries by reflecting on the time before entering the UTR and their perceptions of working with diverse students in Title 1 schools and then in the second semester of their residency year. I went through the first set of interview questions with them as I did with the current UTR students. When pilot testing was complete, I asked testers about the questions' clarity. Next, I asked if the cultural mismatch issue was clear and what could help with highlighting cultural mismatch. Their answers led to a few minor revisions needed to clarify the journal prompts and interview questions.

Research Ethics, Credibility, and Trustworthiness

This study included collecting narrative data from teacher residents with whom I had a good rapport. I believed they would be honest and wanted to help with my investigation. They volunteered to be study participants and could withdraw at any time during the study. I assured

the residents that their decision to participate or not, as well as any responses they gave, would not in any way influence their standing in the program. I explained to the teacher residents that their journals and interviews would be deidentified, and they could choose a pseudonym or be assigned one so they would have anonymity in the study.

Using more than one source of data in this study helped with the credibility of the data collected through triangulation. Participants had two ways of reflecting: individual written narratives and interviews that allowed me to use probing questions as needed to understand better what was said. Member checking was offered to the participants to allow them to read the transcripts of the interviews and preliminary findings to check for accuracy and provide feedback (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 2013). No participants provided feedback on their interview transcripts. Maxwell (2013) stated that member checking is the

> single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspective they have on what is going on, as well as being an important way of identifying your own biases and misunderstanding of what you observed. (pp. 126-127)

Although the interpretations were mine, it was imperative to give participants a chance to give feedback to correct anything they saw as misinterpreted. I was flexible with evidence that did not fit with what I thought I knew and reviewed it to determine whether this was a normal variation to the situation or setting (Bernard et al., 2017). At times, a researcher might not understand what a participant has said, and this should lead to following up to be sure information was clearly understood. I did not follow up with any of the participants after the journal entries and interviews were completed.

Possible Limitations

Possible limitations to this study included working with the complicated nature of the participants' varying cultures and the students they are working with. The varying cultures and characteristics in every classroom led participating teacher residents to perceive themselves as being a cultural mismatch, in most cases, to their class and school. I would have preferred variability in participant gender and race, but there were few males in the resident cohort. Peoples' cultures can be a sensitive subject. I acknowledged the possibility that residents might not be entirely honest or forthcoming with themselves or me when discussing sensitive matters like culture.

Prior to the study, I was the residents' professor, which was helpful because I have good relationships with each resident. At the time of the study, I was no longer their professor, but I worked with them in a seminar group discussing the residency and assigned a pass/fail grade at the end of the semester. Although I knew that I would be fair and assign the grade each student deserved in the class, the residents might have answered questions for the study that they thought would make them look good due to a human's general desire for social acceptance with anyone, not just their instructors (Nguyen, et al., 2018). Another limitation is that these findings are not generalizable to teachers in other preparation programs—even other UTR programs—or teachers in secondary and special education tracks.

Finally, the study's timing was a limitation due to tracking changes of the participants over 4–5 months, which is only the second half of the school year. When schools were closed due to COVID-19, the study was cut shorter. The small sample size, with only seven participants, did not allow generalizability to other teaching preparation experiences. The study began with

eight participants, but one withdrew at the beginning of data collection after writing the first journal entry that was not included in the data analysis.

Chapter 4: Findings

Pre-service teacher residents who participated in this study discussed many areas of their experience in a UTR program, ranging from their beginning perceptions of working with students in hard-to-staff schools to their lived experiences during the residency year. Some participants' perceptions changed over time, while others reported their perceptions were the same at the end of their residency year. A few participants had grown up living some of the same experiences as their students and felt better able to relate to the students; these participants showed less of a change in their perceptions over time. Other residents reported learning a lot during their residency experiences that opened their eyes when teaching in a Title 1 school and ways of living that they had not been exposed to previously. It became apparent that relationships between the residents and their students were significant to their success as pre-service teachers. They worked to get to know students better and incorporate culturally responsive pedagogy into their lessons. All participants realized that being a teacher is more than just teaching subject content and involves relationships and connectedness.

Culturally responsive pedagogy was incorporated differently in the residents' classrooms, including examples of sharing cultural foods, traditions, religion, and community resources in their lessons and classroom culture. Other examples included fact and opinion lessons related to cultural characteristics and setting up a cultural night during which families could bring in food that represented their family traditions and share stories with one another. This event was canceled due to COVID-19 restrictions, but the intent and planning had happened to celebrate diversity among the families in the community. Residents also embedded cultural information into their lessons to widen the lens of acceptance of one another and to teach the importance of getting to know each other for a sense of belonging. They were also conscious of calling on all

students to answer questions and engage with the subject material. There were extensive discussions about how they got to know their students throughout the year and shared their home lives and school experiences. They have high demands to teach to the test due to high stakes testing which leads to stress in the classroom. While culturally responsive teaching is important, it is not always easy to implement when teaching the standards set by the state. These constraints do not always allow students and teachers to flourish in their learning and practice which is a reality in education. Residents are placed in schools that need improvement in test scores and better support for learning which is a challenge when feeling pressure to teach to the test because the tests have high-stakes attached to them.

Residents taught students from various home lives and cultural practices and found a challenge in the inequity of receiving support for students who were English Language Learners. This finding was also a part of the mismatch between the students and residents. In their efforts to be culturally responsive to each student, some participants implemented their own unique supports within their limits, although school support from specialists was lacking. Residents also reported a lack of resources and equity related to behavior and emotional support. They discussed working with students who had trauma in their lives, which led to challenges with classroom behavior. School social workers were not viewed as supportive, so residents worked with their students to provide individualized support that decreased challenging behaviors, including fighting, emotional outbursts during class, and overall disruption and disengagement due to varied learning needs. The residents worked individually to ensure that each student received what they needed to succeed in their classroom, initiating conditions and resources to support each student.

The study began with residents journaling about their pre-residency perceptions of teaching elementary students within historically marginalized communities. All participants shared challenges they expected to encounter teaching their students. Most were excited to have the opportunity to be a part of a residency program that allowed them to teach with a mentor teacher for a school year. There were some concerns about how students and staff would perceive them. Although this concern was apparent pre-residency, participants quickly realized they would get to know the staff and students and build relationships. Because they recognized cultural strengths and differences between themselves and their students, participants used culturally responsive pedagogy in their lessons and classroom culture. By the shortened end of the year (due to COVID-19), the residents realized how much their residency coursework supported their experiences in the schools.

Perceptions of the Students Pre-Residency

In response to the first research question that asked how the residents thought about culture (see definition by Yosso, 2005) related to their students, participant responses varied. Residents had varying perceptions of what the students would be like in under-resourced schools. Their perceptions came from how they grew up in their own homes and towns, what had been told to them previously about urban environments, and from their own experiences in schools.

Most participants discussed growing up in different circumstances and cultures than their students. Some comments exposed a deficit perspective with the biases that they held that influenced their perceptions before entering the teacher residency program. Many were concerned about not understanding cultural differences with their students or that the students would not understand them. Past experiences of the students that might have induced trauma were another set of factors that made them feel nervous or anxious before meeting the students.

Concerning possible past traumatic experiences, the residents were concerned about behavior problems or, as Ava stated, "angry kids" in the classroom. They even imagined the lives of the students as "chaotic" and "tumultuous" (Alex) or worried that they "face poverty" (Cece). When revealing how they felt about how the students' cultures and home lives would be apparent in the classroom, the participants discussed challenges they anticipated. The residents constructed their ideas in a variety of ways before entering the teacher residency program.

Challenges Became Assets

Before their work in the residency program, the residents shared their expectations in both the journal entries and the interview questions. The journal entries began 4 months into the school year. They reflected on their memories of what they felt before they began the residency and completed the rest of the journals during their residency year. The first interviews took place 4 months into the school year. Second interviews took place 4-5 months after the first interviews Regardless of the participants' ethnicity or race, they all had perceptions of the students and the students' lives before meeting them. Prior to entering a school in a city school, the teacher residents had already shaped their views of the community, students, and families in their minds, which might have affected their relationships. Some residents were unsure where they derived their ideas of what it would be like working in city communities, while others were aware of who or what had shaped their perceptions.

Angela discussed her perceptions of working with students in a hard-to-staff school from the perspective that she had grown up in the same area and attended a school in the district as a child. Angela stated in an interview:

> Since I grew up [in the area] and am a product of the school district and an urban setting, I was excited to be able to do this. A lot of the things I know my students would be

> dealing with, I've already dealt with, if not still dealing with. I think the only interactions I didn't have a lot of before entering the program were with Hispanic children, only because of my previous practicum experience and, growing up, there weren't that many of them in my school. I perceive those students as students who most have unfortunate circumstances, who want an equal chance at life and good quality education. They want to be loved and cared about and shown the possibilities of making it in the world.

Ava also discussed a cultural similarity between her and her students in the classroom. Growing up, Ava was taught to speak up as a young Black girl. She discussed this as a part of her Black culture and saw this as a strength that was also reflected in her students. Discussing students speaking up in the classroom, Ava stated in an interview,

> [Discussing students speaking up in the classroom.] Ya know that's something that has benefited them, or they're very, um, quick to say, "I don't get this" or "I need help." That has a big impact on our class. They will just tell us, ya know, "Ms. Ava, I don't understand this." Or "Can you help me?" So, I will say that has, well that's the culture that they come from. I feel as a Black culture, we will always say "speak up when you need help." Ya know. It's always that thing, especially with boys, "we can't read your mind." It's a culture thing, like, ya know, speak out and tell me what's wrong. And I think that's for any race, but I think it's something more—that speak up and tell me because I can't read your mind.

Ava's familiarity with Black culture allowed her to recognize and value her students' willingness to easily ask for help. She viewed this as a cultural asset in that she perceived speaking up to improve student learning.

Cece anticipated that her background of growing up in poverty, with parents who were not together, and the trauma of raising her young siblings would be similar to her students' upbringings. [This is not a part of culture, but rather of her lived experience with poverty that some of her students shared too]. These intersections from her life experience helped her to relate to her students and support them with empathy. As a White woman, she expected to relate to her students' experiences with socioeconomic status, but not their race. She had previous experience working with students in an after school program. Cece commented,

> I could relate to the poverty and issues that most students have to carry with them on a daily basis. But as a White female in America, I could not relate to them but so much because most of them are African American and Hispanic. They deal with the inequities from their home life and because of the color of their skin and what they look like.

Ava wrote about her perceptions of her students, focusing on areas of concern:

> There will be behavioral interactions and problems with angry kids even though they are just kids. They have gone through a lot. I know they will more than likely be minorities due to the location of the school. They will be segregated due to zones or neighborhoods. They will still be kids regardless of the urban setting. Their challenges may be different, but they still have the responsibility of being a child in a school. I had heard horror stories about events that took place in schools. I was nervous because I didn't know what to expect. They have gone through a lot and [may be] angry and have behavioral problems. They are just kids. I have to remember they all haven't gone through horrible events and not to assume. I will need to build relationships and a solid foundation.

Ava's expectations that the students might be angry or exhibit behavior challenges seemed to come from what other people had told her. She connected these challenges to students' home

lives and the community they live in and alluded to the trauma they might have experienced, either as a part of poverty or home experiences. Ava's deficit thinking of the students and their homelives is evident in her perceptions and expectation of connecting with the students to support them in emotions they may bring to the classroom.

Brian shared his perceptions of the students and their communities, which came from his father, who had been in the field of education in a different district than his residency. These were perceptions Brian learned at home, although he later discussed that they changed when he was studying sociology in his university courses before entering the UTR program. Brian said,

> So, part of my initial understanding was that my dad would sort of talk about these kids and their families in kind of a very, to put it plainly, kind of a White savior mindset—that these kids need all the help. So it's not like they need support, but like they needed to be saved. So, I kind of got that idea, and then he had sort of a racist lens towards it as well in terms of behavior, and that's kind of like the first thing that I was introduced to was that in poorer communities that somehow children misbehave more or acted out more. There is some disproportion in that sense and so that was the first understanding I had in terms of communities that were segregated from where I grew up.

Brian also discussed sociological ideas he had learned before the residency (in his undergraduate program) and during the residency. Brian mentioned,

> I think a lot of it was I was trying to—I thought that there were these very specific teaching tools that I would need to use that would limit the racist in action [being culturally and socially conscious] that I thought would be a lot of [the practice of teaching]. But it was just being socially conscious as a teacher. [Being aware of] the meaning your social identities have on the classroom and being an authority figure. So

> that was the perception that, before I came in, was something that I was starting to understand. I had a competency background, but that's just a piece of it. [He is starting to have an understanding of his social identity and that it is more than just implementing teaching tools to be a culturally responsive teacher.] I guess I had those ideas [about White saviors] coming in, and again, like I've said, as a sociology major, I was taught to sort of unlearn those things… I think it was Patricia Hill Collins. She's a Black feminist scholar who talked about the idea of controlling images. And so did Bettina Love. I think in her talk [during the residency program] too, she had that picture of an African American boy that was like, "Whom do you see?" kind of thing. So her idea of controlling images was just another wake-up call for me and direct. And I think so powerful to this day and how powerful it is when you combat [the effect of these controlling images], meaning that you are conscious of it…those racial stereotypes with drugs or violence or other things that Black people get pinned on.

In the above quote, Brian revealed that he was coming to new realizations by processing his sociology background and connecting it to his perceptions of students in under-resourced schools. As he learned through coursework and speaking engagements he attended, he had a "wake-up call" that influenced how he approached the residency classroom and school. His perceptions of home lives related to his students' experiences changed his perception as he became more aware and familiar with the students, families, and community in which he was situated. During the residency, as he learned more about ideas of teaching in under-resourced schools and his awareness of what his students needed from their teachers, he was more conscious of the importance of his socio-cultural identity.

Excitement

Rory was the only resident who explicitly expressed excitement about working with diverse students in Title 1 schools. Rory said,

> My perception of working with diverse students was excitement because I had worked with students in urban communities before. I was also interested to see how [the city] was different from [another city I had worked in], because not all urban communities are the same. The thing I was most worried about was behavior management because I was used to working one-on-one with students. I didn't have any perceptions aside from the students I had worked with in the past. The students I worked with faced trauma situations.

Similarly, Angela viewed the opportunity to work with culturally diverse students as a positive challenge. She said,

> In a way, I look at having students with different cultural backgrounds as a positive challenge for me. It'll allow me to become a diverse teacher. The more I learn about my students' backgrounds, the more I can incorporate them in the lessons and around the classroom. Having students whose backgrounds are different allows for me to learn more about them, and in a way, about myself as well. I am all for creating a classroom climate that embraces cultural diversity. Understanding where my students come from and the experiences they have with their families allows me to be more creative and build an even better relationship with my students.

One participant expressed excitement about working with students in an under-resourced school, in contrast to the other residents. However, this resident followed her expression of excitement with a concern similar to those shared by other residents. Another resident expressed

the positive challenge of working with students from different cultural backgrounds as a way for her to grow and become a culturally competent teacher.

White Teacher Concerns

While discussing the perceptions the residents had related to students pre-residency, Sharon wrote,

> I worked with diverse students prior to entering the residency program, but before that, I can say that I was very naive. I was worried that the students would not want a White middle-class woman in their classroom, and I thought I had nothing in common to share with them. I also was ignorant of the fact that, although many of them come from low socioeconomic backgrounds, they still have their own thriving community. I was honestly a little intimidated at the aspect of working with students who were so different from me. Not because I was scared of them, but because I was worried that they would see me as someone too different from them. I didn't think they would want a White woman teaching them or telling them what to do. I was worried that I would feel pushed out of teaching in such a setting.

Similarly, Cece discussed what made her nervous before entering the residency program by saying, "I am nervous about interacting with parents and classroom management and what people would think of when they saw their child has a White female teacher."

Both participants expressed their nervousness about being a White teacher in schools with predominantly Black and Brown students Sharon revealed that she felt the school might push her out due to her race. She worried that her perceptions of being different from her students and concerns over their perceptions of her would make her feel intimidated even before entering the residency year. Cece expressed nervousness about interactions with parents due to

their perceptions of her. Cece also expected classroom management to be a challenge in her classroom, which was a common theme across the participants' narratives.

Savior Complex

A few residents, including some who were not White, mentioned a "savior complex." Participants referred to a general savior complex that means a person would want to go in and fix perceived social problems in a setting where there are inequities. For example, Ava stated, "I never wanted to be a 'savior.' I just wanted to love and teach the kids." Brian described,

> Going through college, and I guess later in high school people would talk about these words like "in the trenches," "you're teaching in the trenches," "you're teaching in rough neighborhoods," and what have you—whatever race concept they put on it. Again it [implies] that what you are doing, you are a White savior and racist at the same time.

Sharon expressed,

> I also, unfortunately, think that I did have a bit of a "savior complex," mostly because I was naive and ignorant to many of the concepts that I have learned since then, and I hadn't experienced working in the community yet.

Most residents expressed the perceptions they had heard from others, that they were aware of the ideas and did not want to be a savior. However, Sharon admitted she did have a savior complex going to serve in a hard-to-staff school. The idea of having a savior complex connects to the racial and cultural mismatch between the students and the participants when they believe they need to make changes they believe would be better for the students or community. The racial and cultural mismatch is related to deficit thinking to "saving" students from their community.

Inexperience With Cultural Awareness

Many residents had little experience with students from diverse cultures and backgrounds. In some cases, the residency year was their only experience working with students from low socioeconomic backgrounds or diverse cultures in schools. Alex wrote,

> My perceptions were shaped by reflecting on my own time as a K-12 student and my work with a Girl Scout troop [in a city setting]. My perception was characterized by difference, as in it was different from what I knew, so I was concerned about making assumptions about their lives outside of school [this includes their cultural traditions and values]. I perceived that their lives may be more chaotic or tumultuous depending on their home life [i.e., who their guardian is, their guardian's occupation, where they live, siblings, struggles with their family members].

Alex had little previous experience or knowledge about working in a Title 1 school or with students living in different circumstances than she was accustomed to. She had preconceived perceptions of the students and their home lives before entering the residency program and was concerned about assuming their home lives would be chaotic. Similarly, Rory shared:

> One thing I worried about was not understanding some cultural references. One instance I can recall was more of a teaching moment for me! One of my girl students had a doll that she had brought into school to play with during recess. I called the doll's [hair] buns cute, and one of my other girl students explained to me that they were Bantu knots. My students were able to teach me a lot, and I really appreciated that!

Cultural awareness varied among the residents, beginning with their perceptions of working with students whose culture might be different from their own (most participants). The narratives showed that, although they expressed some deficit perspectives, they also shared an

idea of the reality of teaching in under-resourced schools. A few participants shared stories about learning from students about their culture (Rory) or from academic speakers and scholars (Brian) that taught them to see through a new lens to work in a city community.

Getting to Know Students

Students' perceptions emerged from residents' later journal entries and interviews. After residents started working with students in the classrooms during the residency, they shared what they learned about their students' home lives. Many of the residents reported the students being very close to or living with relatives. Family makeup was a common theme that made a difference in knowing their students and working with parents living in separate homes. Low socioeconomic status was discussed, along with trauma the students experienced. Participants worked with students who were English Language Learners, with most speaking Spanish as a first language.

As the residents got to know their students and their needs, they realized how important it was to support them and their families during the school year. Knowing a student's schedule, when they were at each parent's home, and who to call for an emergency was a repeated situation in the narratives. The residents' knowledge about their students and families helped them establish a relationship and partnership with not only the student, but also their families and guardians to better meet students' needs.

Knowledge of Neighborhood and Community

Alex explained that the town of her residency was small, and people often knew each other by familial relationships or close friendships. She said,

> They are, well, the town [seems] very small. It is very close-knit because all or a lot of them have cousins or really close family friends, aunts or uncles, and cousins that are in

> grades above and below them. And a lot of the parents know each other and things like that. Um, it's obviously a lower socioeconomic area. So it's not like there's a neighboring town that has a lot of chain gas stations and a lot of fast-food restaurants. And when you go 5 minutes, the other direction in the town is like it only has two fast-food restaurants that I can think of. Two or three like within the city limits. There's not really a lot going on, and so it's definitely like a big contrast like when you get off the highway, it's pretty slow-moving. Not a lot going on. It, ya know, it's like a sleepy sort of town when you just drive by. A lot of them, their parents are either not together, so mom and dad are in different houses, or a lot of their parents aren't married, so different last names. A lot of them also either live with their grandparents, or their grandparents are the ones picking them up or taking them to school.

Alex gained knowledge about the community of her residency so that she could understand more about the students and the resources to which they have access. She also got to know the families and who cares for them during the day so that she could best support her students. This information helped her understand parts of the students' home lives, which helped her realize that her earlier perceptions were not correct. This example illustrates students' home lives and the ways in which Alex was not correct in her previous perceptions.

Knowledge of Language

During the first interview, Angela reported that she was still getting to know the students' cultures and backgrounds while learning to work with students with whom she had a language barrier. Angela stated,

> I'm still getting used to that. I just know that, um, like I just know that about half of my class is [English Language Learners], so families in the home speak Spanish. So it's kind

> of hard for some of my students to understand what they are learning because of the language issue. Um, but I know for sure they are speaking Spanish, so whenever we have to do assignments or stuff like that, so, it gets translated. So if I need to make a phone call to them, I need the Communities in Schools person to kind of come and translate what I'm trying to say, so they understand. And all I can really do as a teacher is to support them because I understood that some of my [English Language Learners] didn't have access to the internet. But me not knowing the language for my Hispanic children, I didn't really know anything about their families until I would have personal conversations with them or until I had to [have the child] communicate [with them for me] to talk to mom or dad to see if they had access to a computer or internet or even an email address or anything like that.

Other participants also mentioned language barriers (explained in later findings) as a part of understanding students' cultures. They learned to use various types of supports to translate for the students, as they were able within their means, with the support of translators, applications on phones or computers, and sometimes asking the student to translate information to the parents or guardians when needed.

Overall, differences between the residents and students were discussed much more than cultural similarities between them. Sharon was the only participant who discussed a cultural difference focused on the language difference between her and her students. She described,

> I'm definitely feeling like I'm more aware of the fact that I'm different than them because, like, I don't want them—if they are speaking in a certain way—I don't want to tell them that it's wrong, because that's how in their culture they speak. If we're talking and it's during class, and we're using academic language, then yes, things like that that

> you wouldn't have to think of much [if the students are answering questions or talking about subject content] if I was teaching kids that grew up in the same area as me because I would be used to the way they are talking [referring to the use of slang or language used in their cultures].

Sharon felt different from her students and highlighted her students' speech and the use of cultural slang. She was not used to this and had to learn when to have them use "academic language" and when to let them speak to each other using language they use in their homes and community.

Knowledge of Family Structures and Experiences

Participants discussed learning about students and their families through discussions with them or asking them questions throughout the day. Angela shared,

> But based on our conversations, you just kind of get to see what's going on. Even if it's just a conversation like, "Hey, did you eat today?" Some may say "no," or I may see a student sharing food with another student. They are not supposed to share food but then you know when you ask them, and they say, you know, we don't have much at home. So I can just get kind of what's going on in the household, and I've had to deal with that in part of my life, so I understand. They are regular kids. They like video games, movies, music that I listen to. They're, they're interesting. They like to see me be interested in what they like. They enjoy that…For my students who are Black, except for like one of them, they come with a lot of trauma, abuse, and just a lot of other stuff. And so I know that they are carrying all of this anger, hurt, and just like a lot of extra baggage. So I know that some days they are having a rough day, and I don't necessarily know what's going on, and sometimes they may share with me, and sometimes they don't.

Ava shared what she came to know about her students' lived experiences as she spent more time with them, getting to know who they were and what they had experienced. She shared,

> A lot of them, and it's a neighborhood school, so a lot of them have just been with each other since kindergarten. So they've grown up with each other at this point, so a lot of them have been in the same classes since kindergarten, been on the same football teams, um, and basketball teams. Their siblings know each other, their cousins and families within families are going to school with [them]. Um, definitely some trauma, definitely, of course, some things have happened to them at the age of 8 and 9, with that someone close to them has passed. Definitely, a lot more death, I will say. A lot of family, and dads, and moms have passed away. Brothers have passed away. More deaths than I was kind of exposed to. Kind of, yeah, a lot of them have experienced the loss of a mom or dad or grandma. Somebody who raised them. Early in their life, a lot of loss or the people that are raising them are not their biological moms. They have a lot of grandmas and aunties raising them. Some violence, but I will say some, the ones that I know, were violence, I will say, but a couple of them were an illness. Just sick, but both just kind of like trauma, but those are the ones that are raised by grandmas and aunties. Ya know, parents are on drugs, or ya know they did pass away or they just didn't want them, so it goes both ways.

Ava learned about the family situations in her class. Many of her students lived with or close to extended family members and had experienced a lot of death in their lives, which caused trauma for them.

Cece discussed specific family structures and experiences that were brought into the classroom and affected learning. She stated,

> A lot of my students live with their grandparents. A lot of my students have older siblings that they...that they have taken the role of taking care of them and things like that. Um, surprisingly enough, a lot of my kids—um, the reason I say surprisingly is because before I got into this program, I had my biases where people told me, "Ya know, the parents in this demographic don't care about the education"—But every single one of my students, their parents care. They are really on top of the kids with their education and things like that. So I know that every single one of my kids and their parents care about their education, which is really cool.

The student who asked for the teacher to sing a worship hymn was sharing a part of his religious culture in the school setting. Cece also learned from this experience that many of her other students practiced religion in their family. If this situation had not occurred in the classroom, she might not have learned about her students' religious beliefs. Cece's lived experience proved that her preconceived ideas that parents do not care was not true in her class. Cece's contact with parents was mostly through phone calls and a teacher app that allowed parents to respond to messages from teachers. She did not always have in-person contact with the parents.

Sharon discussed how she got to know her students, including one of her students who was a challenge to get to know at first and was exhibiting attention-seeking behavior in the classroom. Sharon said,

> I know a little bit just based on being around them and just getting to understand their family life a little bit more. Most of the kids in my class have one parent or one guardian. Um, I think there's one kid who has like, she lives with her mom and her dad. Um, but

> most of them it's one parent. I feel like they…I don't know. Like I'm not sure if they do, like a lot of the kids will ask me like, "What do you eat when you go home? Do you do this, or do you do that?" Like, I don't know that they had as many family dinners as I had when I was younger, which was probably more so because of a money issue more than anything. [One of my students] basically, well, it actually helped me realize why she has so many behavior issues. She basically goes home, and her mom is home but studying. She's in school for nursing, so she told me that she has to text her mom. I think I asked her if her mom helps her with her homework, and she said, "Yeah, but I have to text her." And I was like, "What?" And she told me that she has to text her mom because her mom stays in the other room with the door shut, and so the only way they can communicate is through text because she doesn't want to be disturbed. So she spends a lot of time alone, I think. She has a brother, but she said they don't really play together, so I think they just kind of hang out on their phones most of the time, is what it seems like.

Sharon did not attempt to have a conversation with this student's parent. This did not give her the whole context of the situation, which could have informed how to support the family better and understand the student's home life.

The knowledge residents gained about students and their families was varied and included realizations that many students had traumatic experiences in their lives; diverse family structures, such as single-parent families; and students who did not eat before coming to school. All of the information the residents learned about the families helped them understand and support the students during school.

Knowledge of Students' Interests and Learning Preferences

Cece discussed what she learned about the culture of her students as she got to know them. She also discussed using a tool from the residency program to initiate getting to know the students using a questioning strategy. Cece shared,

> I know that they're technologically based, so everything is on social media. Their big thing is Tik Tok and Instagram. They all listen to the same type of music. They all wear the same type of shoes. I know that a lot of them believe in God. Nothing [else] religion-specific that I've heard. I got to know how they like to learn as well. So like one student, he doesn't like waiting for the teacher to go over things and read questions. He likes to do it himself. So I give him the assignments ahead of time, and he gets to work at his pace, and then when we go over it, he has to go over it too; so it's like our little deal that he has to go over it too and make sure his answers are right. But he has no patience, so I learned that. So I'm like, "Ok, here ya go." Some of my students learn by me repeating, so they go through and repeat, so I make sure I go through and repeat; then they repeat. Another student, for some reason, has to get up and walk around and do the worksheet, so I let them do that as long as they [aren't] distracting to [anybody]…the two really helped me to know what kind of learners they are.

Sharon learned about the music her students liked, which was not appropriate for school, but they listened to at home. She took the knowledge she gained from the students and made adaptations based on their learning preferences, giving credit to the students for helping her do this. Sharon stated,

> Um, they love rap music. They are trying to get me to play this really funny song, and I say, "I can't play this [because of the mature content]." Um, so, it's really funny. I mostly learned about their interests [from talking to them], some of them. I think a lot of them

> are very resilient…the lower kids who are really struggling with basic things, they still try when it comes to action verbs, and it's really complex, and they have to read 10 pages this week for 1 day. So, I know it's super overwhelming for them, but they get through it. So, it just takes extra support, obviously.

In addition, Rory found that her female students had been taught to speak up for themselves and to stand up for themselves. She commented,

> When it comes to especially the girls in our classroom, they are really—not assertive, because that's not the right word—they just stand their ground. They are very like, of course, they're fourth graders, so they're like, they don't have a total sense of themselves yet, but like they're not afraid to speak up for themselves. I feel like that's such an asset, because that's, like you really need that as a woman. Ya know? And to have that at such a young age, of course, you need to learn that and have control of it. We have a lot of kids that are highly interested in specific things, whether it be a sport or whether it be art so those things. While they may not know what they want to do yet, it seems it could definitely help to lead them in the future, I guess.

As the residents worked with the students, they understood their family structures, home lives, and interests. All of this added to the knowledge teachers need to support their students and families during the school year. As they learned more about the families, they saw a bigger picture of their culture and how students live at home. It also gave an idea of students' support systems and who they spend their time with outside of school.

Personal Life Experiences

Life experiences varied among residents and their students and were recognized in various ways during the residency year. Many residents found that their students had been

exposed to more death in their childhoods than the resident had experienced in their lifetime so far. The narratives revealed how residents thought about lived experiences rather than describing what they perceive as differences between their own and their students' lived experiences. Cece explained,

> A lot of my students grew up with violence. Um, you know they're not immune to violence, and I was lucky enough not to have to deal with violence like they have to deal with. My students have seen more dead bodies than I ever have. So I know for a lot of these kids, school is their safe place. So it's very important to me that we are in a safe place, whether it's with my classroom for the 7 hours they are in there.
>
> I know one of my students, his uncle, just passed away, and he asked [my CRC] if he knew any worship songs because his uncle used to sing him worship songs. So [my CRC] was like, 'Yeah, so do you know this song?' And he was like, 'I love that song. Can you please sing it to me?' Yeah, it was just so sweet. I know a lot of my kids grew up without a mom or a dad, just a single parent.

Cece found that many of her students had experienced death in their families and community.

As the residents learned more about the students and their personal experiences, they helped them work through it. Residents learned about the personal sides of teaching that intersect at school; learning how to handle these situations was an important part of maintaining trust with their students.

Recognizing Strengths of the Students

Residents discussed what they learned about their student's academic, personal, and cultural strengths. This was a finding in many of the narratives. The residents pinpointed the strengths of their students and supported them throughout the school year. Angela expressed,

> They are determined. I would definitely say they are determined. They value their teacher. They value the relationship. They really want to make you happy. I can say that about all of my students. There was one student I kind of knew he attached to me immediately, and I also know he, like, had an emotional attachment issue. Then he would give me hugs, like, all the time…Then another one of my students just wants a hug from me. Then I was like, "I wasn't expecting this one," and it was like "You can come get a hug from me, no problem." And so they really want that relationship and to be cared about by their teacher. I get that from all of them. They definitely want to learn. They want to be great. Sometimes they get frustrated, and they shut down, but as long as you are one of those people that you encourage them, and you try to help them. They're gonna be ok. They want to learn. They want to be happy.

Ava experienced her students being open about what they needed in class. They would speak up for themselves, which was a strength in the classroom that they seemed to learn from home. She appreciated their willingness to say what they were thinking so she could support them in what they needed. Ava mentioned,

> I think they all have a mind of their own, and they're very, um, strong-willed. I will say that. They know what they want. A lot of them have siblings, so you know they speak up a lot. Ya know if they don't like something. And in their situations, I think they know when to say something, ya know, they'll speak up.

Similarly, Brian found many strengths in his students and focused on the girls and the attributes they brought to the classroom. Discussing strengths of the students, Brian shared,

> I would say the passion that some of my girls bring into class. Especially one of my girls. She's such a natural leader. She speaks her mind and…when we have a conversation

> about a passage or something, she will be like, "I disagree with that…This is what I think." So it's really cool when you are getting to this point with your kids, and they're starting to understand a perspective and being able to disagree with other students with a reason for it. Granted, that is only a few students. Um, particularly with some of my girls, they are, they bring a lot of passion into school, which is really, really cool. Other strengths that I find from my students…I think that for some of my [English Language Learners], they are just navigating, and being they have to code switch and being bilingual, that is incredible. Like, you see how quick they are with things, and they have to be doing translations automatically in their head and then sometimes explaining it to their other students. One of our students, he's very good at that, and he's so smart. So I see bilingualism as obviously a strength with my [English Language Learners].

Brian mainly focused on the girls in his classroom and the strength of one being a "natural born leader" and the strength of another student who was bilingual and could quickly translate English and Spanish. He also admired his students' capability to take a perspective, articulate it, and then respectfully disagree and back up their reasoning. While the language barrier with the ELL students was a cultural mismatch, Brian still honored his students strengths.

The focus on the strengths of the students is an important aspect of teaching. The residents observed resilience after trauma, learning a new language, students supporting one another, and recognizing when students have talents and are proud to show them. When the students' cultures and home lives did not match those of the residents, they viewed their differences not as deficits (which often happens), but as strengths.

Life Differences

Participants also shared how they felt about the differences between them and their students and how changes over time made a difference. Differences connected to home lives and

upbringings were not always related to culture but were important for understanding the students. Ava revealed,

> We all have our own trauma, but I think it's different with them. It's more heightened, like some of the things they have to do and go through [are] just more challenging and different, and I'm like, "ok, it's a lot, it's a lot." And then their expectations of school work [are] also different. The school, with testing, with what's expected in third grade at 8 and 9 [years old], that plays a big role. They really can't be kids. I actually talked about that today with my CRC. They can't be kids anymore. It's reports and data, and we need you for data, and you're in a Title 1 school, so let's run you. But they are tired. They get burned out like you know school should be, it is fun, but it should be a place to learn, and you want to have that.

Ava found that her student's home experiences were different than her own. She saw students struggling with trauma or a lack of attention from home that they expressed in various ways in the classroom. Ava's residency experience allowed her to see the effects of home life in school and realized that the pressures of education might compound student's stresses.

Cece shared about a life difference she observed with her students. This involved the social advancement of students who were not prepared to take on the content of the next grade level, a practice that was the norm among the schools in which participants were placed. Cece stated,

> A lot of my students have moved grades regardless of their reading skills and math skills and stuff like that. Whereas the schools that I've went to, it's a lot different. Like you were held back if you do not know something. Things like that. I feel like the schools that

> I grew up in had more support with children who were not on the right reading level or things like that.

Cece saw a difference in typical school cultural practices of advancing students before they were ready to move to the next grade level with an advanced curriculum. This aspect affected the students negatively in their success in the next grade level because they did not retain the information from the previous grade to apply in the next school year.

Academic and Cultural Differences With ELL Students

When asked about cultural differences, some participants discussed ELL students, but they focused on the academic absence of support rather than their culture. They saw language as a difference between themselves and their students. The residents found it a challenge to communicate with students who spoke Spanish or other languages. Although they found ways to do their best to communicate, it was a cultural difference between them that stuck out as a challenging part of their work during the residency year. Angela shared,

> Being at a school that there is a predominantly Spanish-speaking population has its cons when you aren't fluent in any other languages [besides English]. Contacting parents by phone was a struggle because I knew they didn't understand what I was saying and vice versa. Sometimes I would rely on their children to interpret for me or use another resource that was provided during the school year. Thankfully my school was equipped with enough resources so that all the information they needed to know was already translated into Spanish. There's more of a lot of differences with my [English Language Learners] only because I don't speak the language. So I don't really know much about their background, nor do I really have any Hispanic friends.

Angela found that she did not know very much about the cultures and backgrounds of ELL students. She found she had to rely on the students sometimes for help interpreting information for her because she did not speak Spanish. Cece said,

> My ELL learners, which, um, they need a lot of support. This one little girl, she barely knows English, and I feel so bad because she's in fifth grade, and she's so behind. And so that right there, her speaking Spanish and not really knowing English. You know, I know as much Spanish as I know is a lot of Google translate, and they teach me a lot too. My English learning students—we have six of them—four of them…could speak English. If they could speak English, then they knew what we were talking about, but two of them did not know English at all. And that was so rough for me to see because they did not get the resources that they deserve. And there was a bind on what I could give them. Like for some reason, I cannot give all of my worksheets in Spanish to them, I had to give it to them in English, and that's not fair. They cannot even read them.

Cece discussed her frustration with not knowing Spanish and not being able to translate worksheets for her students. This challenge was hard for her because the students were not learning what other students were. These differences in language for both Angela and Cece were challenges they faced as residents who wanted to support their students but were unable to do so.

Home Influences

Participants shared observations about their students' home norms and values in various narrative data that highlighted differences between the residents and their students. They discussed how students' home environments and what their parents or guardians said carried over into the classroom and affected students' work and behavior. Some participants believed students did not learn about the consequences of their behavior at home. Brian shared an

example when a student fight broke out and one student chose to act upon an “eye for an eye” belief that he learned from home in a disagreement, making it difficult to resolve the conflict.

Ava felt the frustration of classroom management when students choose to do what they want rather than follow directions. She felt they did not understand that their actions would result in consequences. Ava believed these actions stemmed from a lack of attention at home, potentially due to large families and sibling dynamics. She shared,

> It’s still those basic things and principles and I just think a lot of it is at home. Our kids just don’t get a lot of corrections. It’s just free for all, so when they get with us, they’re just like used to it, and with us, it’s just uhhhhh. Well, in the real world, you can’t just get a job and do whatever you want. Or if you are just walking and someone tells you to do something, it’s just, “Oh, I’ll do whatever I want.” It’s consequences, it’s consequences in the real world. And consequences sound so harsh, but it's your actions. It’s cause and effect. It’s just like what you do has an effect on however you act. Um, I can’t assume, but ya know, when you do have nine siblings, the attention can’t be all on you. So I know if you have five siblings, six—a lot of my kids, they are the sixth or eighth child. They’re babied. They’re big families. Or there are little babies that have come into the picture, and now mommy is not well. You’re not the focus anymore because now you are older or the oldest. You know, so they’re going through different changes, but I will say the biggest thing is definitely attention. Certain ones, if your family dynamic is different, you feel the need to have my, you know, always need my, “Oh you can do it.” And I always tell them, I won’t always be here to say you can do it.

Ava believed some students might be using attention-seeking behaviors at school because they did not receive adequate attention at home because they have many siblings or a new baby in the family.

Brian shared another example about how what parents teach their students at home does not always match school expectations. He explained,

> I know that some African American students, their parents a lot of times will communicate conflict resolution messages in terms of if someone is saying something to you or if someone tries to hit you, there's no other response [according to the parent] than to respond to them or hit them back, or not really being combative, but just stick up for yourself. There's nothing wrong with defending yourself, and it is sort of that dissonance they approach when they get to school. Then there are rules and we can't let students fight because it's not safe, and I think that's a hard message for students to really internalize. It's difficult for them to process at first because a lot of times, I think when teachers respond to it—that I've even found myself, it's very direct and punitive on the spot. You have to say, "No, that's unacceptable." But they don't fully understand why it is unacceptable at school. So I know that I've already recognized and I validate and affirm whenever I respond to a student who says, "My dad said I could hit him back," and I say, "ok, that's completely ok, but when we're at school, we can't engage in that." We need to make sure that everyone is safe, and the only way to do that is to make sure that we don't fight back too. That's our school rule, that's our community school rule.

Brian honored the family's approach at home while also upholding the school community rule. Brian also discussed his sexuality as a life experience that was different from his students and the

situation in which this became an internal challenge. Brian identifies as a gay male but did not disclose this information to his class. He shared,

> Some of the boys are already saying the F word [fuck] to the other students, calling each other gay and using it in a way to harmfully bring other students down…There is a misconception that particularly Black communities are homophobic, which is a very strong and very inaccurate misconception to pin that on something about the culture's race is completely incorrect. However, recognizing when I hear those words from Black boys, for example, that that's not coming necessarily from a homophobic place. Those are words that they're hearing. Like, for example, yesterday, I was very stern with a student who walked by, and I heard it, and he kind of like pushed his chair and was like "gay" and went back to his seat. And I was about to start social studies, and right after we had recess, so I was like, I just gave him a stare for about 5 seconds, and he knew what that meant, and then…at recess we pulled both of them aside wanting to make sure that the other student wasn't involved initially. And was just really firm with him being like, "Why would you even say that?" He was like, "I don't know." and I said, "Exactly. Like you don't know what those words mean, so why are you using them?" and that kind of thing. The way I framed the conversation, and I know there's more emotional regulation on my part because it is difficult still to remain composed when it's personal. Yet, you are also engaging in something in a behavior management sense into the political sense. I don't necessarily find people that are very Christian and religious and abide by Christian morals, and one of them being that they think that a woman and man should be married like I can't tell them that they're wrong. Ya know? Like that affects me personally and politically. It's something that I still have to respect that that is their moral value system.

> That is their own. That's their culture, within a religious sense. That's where I'm saying that it's very hard to know that I'm not sending these students home saying, "You can't say the word gay because that's offensive to gay people. Being gay is totally ok, and there's nothing wrong with it." And then they're going home, and their families are being like, "No, I believe that only men and women should be attracted to each other." Ya know, like that's…it's very difficult. But I think that when we are saying they are harmful words, that they have effects, that's something that's a teaching thing. It's not getting into the sticky place.

Brian discussed this profoundly personal encounter with his students that connected to a political lens that he acknowledged he could not discuss at school with his students. He understood that a part of his identity included being gay and that his beliefs are most likely different than his students' families. The students did not know that he identified as gay, and Brian acknowledged that they might not even truly understand what the word means. Brian exemplified culturally responsive teaching, and he did not let students' hurtful words interfere with his sincere desire to build trusting and caring relationships with them. He responded in a way that would not cause conflict between his students and their families based on the possible family values regarding the gay community. Brian made sure his students knew not to use hurtful language within the school and hopefully in the community. Even though he did not perceive the students as homophobic, their comments revealed a cultural difference. His reaction was informed by his knowledge of their backgrounds and avoidance of adhering to stereotypes about Black communities being homophobic.

Sharon also discussed the cultural differences between home and school. She found that receiving respect from the students was difficult. Sharon stated,

> I think the biggest challenge I have is, and I don't want to say this as a part of their culture, but you say it can be affected by their culture and home life. There are some kids that are just very defiant, and I feel like it's just because at home they haven't been given the attention, and…they haven't been guided by whoever is raising them to respect adults. Just some of them I can tell they don't have that as a part of their family values because it's just really difficult for me to get respect from them. One of the students' dad told her that White people don't like it when Black people are smart. So I was like, "Wow!" And I said, "That's really upsetting to me because I love it when you are smart, and that's the whole reason why I am here is because I want to help you be smarter."

Sharon exposed deficit thinking in this situation by interpreting the student's behavior as defiant and that this was a result of not having been taught to respect adults. This is an example of her cultural mismatch with her students. Another explanation for why she said this is because she may have been taught at home to always be respectful to adults growing up.

Ava might have overlooked possible differences between families' home behavioral expectations and school expectations. Brian tried to balance school norms with cultural norms, which can be a fine line as a teacher. Sharon attributed what might be a cultural mismatch between her and her students to a lack of students learning respect for adults. Ava discussed the large families her students came from and suggested students might not be getting the attention they needed at home. This might explain their attention-seeking behaviors in the classroom that were a challenge for her.

Experience of Resident-Student Relationships

Connecting with students is an essential part of every teacher's agenda. The teacher residents are no exception to this practice. They worked in various ways to get to know and

connect with their students to form relationships that would be beneficial to working with the students and their families. This process took time and effort that they realized were key to their success or challenges in the classroom. The residents could see that the differences between them and their students were positive, making their relationships stronger as they learned more about each other and honored the differences.

Building Relationships With Students

Each resident found ways to build relationships with their students, and many found that time during the school day was an important factor in how well they were able to connect with their students. They were creative about when and how they engaged with their students. Angela discussed being an introvert and working to build relationships with her students and how she and the students worked together to get to know each other. She shared,

> I'm very introverted and [only] outgoing around people I know personally, so at the beginning of the year, trying to build those relationships was hard for me. Forcing myself to come out of my shell and build those relationships allowed me to become a better teacher, coworker, and leader. My relationships with my students were trial and error. Some of my relationships with my students were easy to make because they were outgoing, and some took a little bit more time, but getting to know them and having fun with them allowed me to create [good relationships]. For example, with one of my female students, we built a relationship through shared interests. She loved my hairstyles, the way I dress during dress-up days, and music. So our relationship got stronger as the school year went on. I also let my guard down and became very dramatic when it came to teaching certain lessons, so they saw a side of me that they enjoyed, and I got to see them trust me more and get excited to learn.

Ava helped with after school activities to get to know her students better and show her support. She also took time getting to know families and being open with them. Ava stated,

> My experience in working to build relationships with students….was simply being present. I was involved in school plays, concerts, and other forms of activities that would allow me the opportunity to build relationships. Another important component was being myself. I felt that my energy and being open-minded and positive reflected back on students and the guardians of students. This allowed them to feel comfortable and be willing to get to know me. I was also aware of the fact that there could potentially be people who weren't fans of me, but I would still show love. Building a rapport and I think just asking them questions about what they live, what they like to do, where they are from. Just basic questions. Eating lunch with them was a good thing that I did to build relationships so during lunch and sometimes recess.

Cece also worked to gain the trust of the students by eating lunch with them, asking questions, and having conversations with them at dismissal time. She stated,

> How can a teacher teach a student and expect them to strive if the environment is hostile, if the student has yet to gain trust, [or] if the student does not know you as a teacher? Because of my belief in this, my first goal was, and will always be, to build relationships—not only with students, but [also] with staff and the guardians of students. I worked overtime in developing relationships with my students. I got to know them, and they got to know me. I was honest with them, and they started trusting me. I asked them personal questions, and I asked them small talk questions. I made every effort I could to get to know my students. I invited six students each day to sit with me at lunch. They loved it! I loved it! I got to talk to them about unrelated things that had nothing to do with

> school. During dismissal, we bonded. My experiences will impact me as a teacher in building relationships with students from cultural backgrounds that differ from my own in the future by making the effort to get to know my students on a level that creates collective efficacy in my classroom. My experience has shown me that it is so important to get to know my students and to build those relationships. My experience has shown me that doing this will help me with not only my classroom management but also the desire for my students to want to do well. I know that some of our backgrounds differ and to embrace those differences, but a lot of our upbringings are relatable in a sense, and I can relate to my students and be that positive role model. I believe wholeheartedly that the foundation of teaching is to create these bonds with the students. It makes everything run smoother, and when you show your students that you respect them and care for them, they start to respect you right back.

The narratives revealed how the similarities and differences between the residents and their students affected their relationships by indicating the time they spent bonding despite differences between them. Students responded to the residents in positive ways once trust was established between them. Sometimes, small things were influential for the students, such as eating lunch together, playing outside at recess, and sharing common interests.

A few residents found that establishing relationships was not easy for them. Some challenges included age because the residents are older than their students, differing gender of the resident and students, establishing boundaries, or students not wanting to open up to the resident about themselves. Alex, who taught kindergarteners during her residency, reported it was challenging to get to know them. She wanted to create a boundary between being the teacher and being their friend. She described,

> I think with the students obviously, the age difference and the power dynamics are challenging. It is not just like you can be super great friends with them or spend a lot of time talking with them because you've got to move on [to teaching].

Alex felt that working with kindergarteners made it harder to establish relationships because the students were so little and teachers had to teach all day. Ava found similar challenges establishing authority as a teacher, despite teaching older students. She stated,

> I would say challenges for relationships with students are just keeping the relationship real, so "I am still your teacher" and just knowing when I can't be their friend. So just knowing that it's easy, so you know, you just know when it's a certain line there. Like, "You can't tell me everything, but you know I'm here if you need me." So just making sure that I had drawn that line in the beginning and not being rude about it but making sure they understood my role. Like, "Yeah, we have a good relationship, but I'm not your friend; I'm your teacher."

Brian reported that it was challenging to find time to get to know students during the school day. He found that some students were harder to get to know, possibly because he is a male teacher, and he observed that his Hispanic female students were shy. Brian expressed,

> You know, I have a handful of students that will literally run up to me with any question that is on their mind, and that's easy to engage with those students because there's always something to talk about. With the more quiet and introverted students, and a lot with my Hispanic girl students too, they tend to be more shy and reserved. They don't see themselves as this really, well all the time they don't see themselves, at least from what I have observed, as these really smart and intelligent and powerful people. And when they grow up because of those gender and race stereotypes that have been ingrained…to me,

> [it] has been harder to communicate and possibly affirm that growth mindset and that ability to be powerful people.

Brian also alluded to gender and race stereotypes as being ingrained in some students as a barrier to get to know the students. Brian is assuming things about the students he commented wouldn't' talk to him much. This deficit thinking about the stereotypes he has of the students and how they were growing up is further evidence of a cultural mismatch with the students.

Sharon found that it was difficult to have discussions with the students because they did not give a lot of information that she was hoping to receive. She did find out what some of the students liked to do outside of class. Sharon said,

> With the students, it was difficult because you want different [more in-depth] answers than what they give you. You know? I don't know. Sometimes just the way they explain their lives to me is just like—it literally makes no sense—and I don't know what they are saying. I guess it's just harder to get [answers to] the deeper questions with the kids. And they are still young, so you can't just be like, "What's your culture?" A lot of it goes back to just wanting to talk about playing video games, especially the boys.

Sharon did find out about the students' cultures when they shared their music and video game preferences that they enjoyed playing outside of school. She seemed to be saying she did not find out about their cultures but she actually had by learning their interests outside of school.

Challenges included finding time to spend getting to know students during busy days and staying on top of teaching and lessons (e.g., Brian). Alex mentioned the age difference and power dynamic working with kindergartners. Young students like to talk, and she felt as though when they wanted to tell her things during lessons, she just had to move on with teaching.

Another challenge that some residents mentioned was the language barrier with their students and the frustration in getting to know them which is a part of the cultural mismatch.

For some residents, relationship building was challenging for various reasons, including establishing boundaries between being the teacher and being a friend to the students. This is consistent with previous research from Rushton (2003), who found that student teachers found themselves trying to be friends with their students and have to work toward balancing being a teacher and maintaining classroom expectations. Some students in my study had a hard time opening up to the residents, or the residents found it was difficult to get to know the students due to time constraints or feeling as though a power dynamic was a barrier.

Cultural and Homelife Influence on Relationships

Many residents discussed the influence of their own culture or upbringing and values or that of their students on their relationships. Some of the themes overlapped between culture and homelives. Angela explained that she valued honesty and had a situation where a student lied, and it bothered Angela because of what she learned growing up. She expected respect in her classroom culture. She said,

> I value respect and honesty, and growing up, I was never one of the ones who got in trouble for lying. I didn't really see the need in it, but I was more like, you will honor me and respect me. And that's how I was in my household because I didn't really value the whole being rude and stuff like that in the classroom. If I'm here, then you should be respecting me, and I should be respecting you in this classroom. If I'm not yelling at you and I get that you are frustrated, you do not need to yell at me. I'm just not really that type of person. If you want to be treated a certain way, then I should be treated that way as well.

Similarly, Ava had high expectations for her students and showed that she believed in them and their ability to do the work. She reflected,

> It's just keeping them at those expectations, the high expectations because…certain students, they're at this standstill and they're not really progressing, but I still have to hold you to a standard. You know, I can't lower things for you all the time. And especially in third grade, I can't because of the future I see. So in third grade, I can't give you first-grade things. I just can't. I have to just hold you to the expectation. I still have to think, "I know you can do it," but it's just easy to go into the mindset that, "Oh, I feel bad." You know, I can't feel bad. I have sympathy…I know you are going through a lot, and I feel bad, but you still have to do the work… I just think it's an expectation that, you know, "I love you. I understand." But there's a *but*…you still have to do what I ask you, you still have to go in the right directions, and you still have to be corrected, and you still have to know how to talk to people in this class. You still have to talk to teachers in this class and adults.

Cece discussed learning to step back sometimes to realize that the classwork did not come as easily for some of her students because they had other things on their mind. She learned to check on their wellbeing first and then work with them on the subject-area content next. She found a balance between pushing the students when they were not ready to learn and keeping high expectations. Cece stated,

> I would not say it's necessarily hard, but I think it humbles me really quickly and so before I get, I guess, agitated with the students. I just pause and know what they are going through at home, relax, and I approach a lot of things differently than I would have if, you know, then if I was oblivious to what they are going through. So a lot of times, I just

> take a step back and ask a student, ya know, "Why are you doing this?" Like, "What happened to you? Are you ok?" Things like that. Now. Instead of just, "Sit down, I don't care." You know what I mean? So that had to be a big wake-up call for me because, ya know, I can get at the students all day and things like that, but at the end of the day, there will be some behavioral issues because of what they go through. And just finding new ways to approach what meets their needs not only with content but like, physically, emotionally, and things like that.
>
> Cece's understanding of her students and what they needed both supported them emotionally and the students trusted her for being open with them. Her approaches were caring and effective examples of culturally responsive teaching.

The residents and students often came from different upbringings that made a difference in how they handled situations that arose in the classroom. Residents typically expected respect and honesty and had high expectations for their students. As Cece pointed out, she needed to learn what the students were going through and keep in mind that behaviors being exhibited were happening for a reason, often other than what she was thinking. All of the narratives show the importance of relationships with the students to support their learning and the resident's teaching.

Privilege as a Difference

A few residents discussed the importance of recognizing their privilege when they are teaching and understanding the impact it could have on the classroom culture. Brian found that recognizing that his own upbringing and cultural identity was different than his students was an important part of working with them. He shared,

> I think my cultural identity that I need to know is that there is a set of advantages that aren't normal that I am recognizing because of my privilege. When I reflect on my race

> and gender identity, too…they may see a White man already as an authority figure because of gender and race stereotypes. I just have to make sure that my cultural identity doesn't influence them…I think the biggest part of that is that I have a working definition of privilege that I use. Peggy McIntosh's definition. It's a set of unearned advantages and disadvantages. That's the idea of privilege of honor and a set of advantages and disadvantages—but knowing that those intersections come in a very different complex way. And so, I think that my cultural identity that I need to know is if there is a set of advantages that aren't normal, that I am recognizing because of my privilege.

Brian had to recognize his privilege and that his students did not have what he was used to so that he did not impress that on his students.

Alex also discussed her privilege and how it helped her realize her positionality in the school and community in which she was teaching during the residency year. She said,

> As a result of taking classes as a part of the residency program and talking to professors and colleagues, the idea of recognizing my privilege and where I'm situated in society is an important first step when teaching diverse students. I think this serves as a beneficial reflective practice. Our training was also focused on creating spaces where differences can exist cohesively as opposed to ostracizing them or "norming" certain students.

Alex referred to the practice of norming, which residency students learned referred to making one type of student seem normal and other students, who do not meet that criteria, abnormal. She recognized her privilege as a difference from her students.

Participants discussed their perceptions of how the similarities and differences between themselves and their students affected their relationships with them. Overall, residents valued relationships, and they worked to create safe spaces and trusting relationships for the students,

which was beneficial to their teaching practice. The connections they built with students helped residents create culturally responsive lessons, demonstrating their appreciation of and care for students in the classroom. Although the residents had varied approaches to getting to know their students, such as having lunch with them or playing with them at recess, they revealed how vital that effort was to their residency experience. They also realized that making relationships with students took time and effort. Only one resident, Sharon, discussed relationship-building as "trial and error." She seemed to struggle a bit to make connections with her students possibly because of her cultural mismatch between them.

Cultural Responsiveness in the Classroom

Overall, residents felt that the UTR program helped them learn to build relationships with students who had different backgrounds than their own. Some residents felt the program helped them to connect with students, which also improved their teaching in a culturally responsive manner.

Cultural Variations in the Classroom

Residents learned in their coursework the importance of students seeing themselves and their cultural variations in their classroom environment. A few discussed how they accomplished this, including hanging artwork and adding books about people who looked like their students and who they could relate to. Angela discussed bringing the students' identity into the classroom to honor her students. She shared,

> Having their artwork up in the classroom. So like if they did a drawing or something like that, we would post it up near our desk. As for culture, we would have different types of books. I know I brought in a couple of books. It was uh um, it had African American children on the front of it, but we've had other books that were brought in by somebody

> that we had on our bookshelf. Ya know, that had my students' families or something similar.

Angela honored her student's by displaying their artwork and being culturally responsive with her choices of books in the classroom library.

Sharon's approach to honoring her students' learning preferences and interests included encouraging student choice, using choice boards and allowing students to choose videos to watch. She explained,

> I think that we are honoring their culture by allowing room for choice. So, whether it was choosing an assignment that we started doing with more like choice boards for them, um, and then I tried to find other ways to just be more a lot more into their culture and to get them more excited about being in school. Um, if I found a video on YouTube or something, we might show that during a brain break or during a morning meeting. I know I told you about the little violinist, the hip hop violin, and the kids really loved that.

Sharon allowed the students to choose cultural music that they liked to play in the classroom, when appropriate, and showed videos of a hip-hop violinist that the students loved.

Cece honored her students by featuring various role models in her classroom and implementing a Spanish-to-English bulletin board to create a classroom culture of unity. She stated,

> In the classroom, we had a big wall of different role models. African-American role models. Men and women. And then, I noticed that we did not have any Hispanics or Spanish people on the walls, which we did have six students who are English learners. And so I actually asked them [about] people they look up to, like famous people. And we printed out pictures and created a wall for them and then also our Spanish speaking

> students. I had them create a wall where they put up, for instance, "hola," and in the other column, they put "hello." And so they filled that up with everyday words that they used and new words that they learned in our lessons and things like that. So not only would our other students get to read it and stuff, but our other students were actually starting to speak Spanish to them. So they could relate to one another. It was really awesome. So that was fun for me.

Overall, residents were conscious of including students' cultural variations in their classrooms through lessons, pictures in the classroom representing students, playing videos that the students could connect with, and teaching Spanish words to the whole class. Cece implemented a Spanish to English word wall in the classroom so the students could talk to each other using Spanish words and make a connection for relationships and honoring the students' culture.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Residents discussed embedding culture into their lessons to encourage connections for the students to relate to. They also used strategies that allowed the students to be successful by providing them choices and relating content to students' background and social cultures. Residents learned to incorporate what they knew about their students into their lessons in their residency courses. For example, Alex was aware that her students might not have been to cities or towns close to them that she included in her lessons. She took the time to teach them and show pictures to connect with the content she was teaching. Alex said,

> Just thinking of what they have been exposed to and what they would have experience with is like they might have never left [their town], so they wouldn't know anything about [a city close to them] or like what [the city] looks like or what um, [the capital city]

> looks like. You have to explain that, and it's not the expectation that "Oh, they have traveled to the city." That's not the case.

Alex realized that students knew cultural traditions from the area they lived in but had not been able to see nearby areas with similarities and differences. She was able to show them pictures of a nearby city to expose them to different places that are close to where they live.

Angela found that in some lessons, she was more easily able to incorporate culturally responsive pedagogy than in others. She explained,

> For some of the lesson plans, yes, but for some of them, not really. Like for math…you can add culture into it, but with numbers and shapes, it's really nothing like having a conversation about culture. Or anything like that. But I feel like for [state] studies in a sense—but like, for language arts, definitely, because some of the stuff they learn about you can have a conversation. Let me see if I can give an example. Um, when we were working on the fact and opinion side [of the worksheet],…I would say things that would be related to them and their background. Then they would have to tell me which sentence is a fact and which sentence is an opinion depending on what they know about their likes and what they know about themselves. So that would kind of get them to think about their own backgrounds and stuff like that…Reading, it's just kind of their interests, so whatever the topic is, it just depends on how our conversation goes. So for fact and opinion, it was giving facts about these certain kinds of foods or certain types of games or basketball players, which I remember doing too…they know more than I do, so they can tell me what the facts and opinions are.

Angela incorporated as much culturally relevant information into her lessons as she could. There were some lessons that were harder to incorporate cultural characteristics but she tried.

Rory discussed the importance of knowing the students' interests outside of school to add to lessons to make them more relevant and engaging for the students. Rory described,

> You're always learning. That's one thing. But you are also just trying to find ways to put that into lesson plans and just really keep that interest. Yeah, I just think it's really important to gather what's important about culture from your students and also what interests them to make things more interesting in the classroom. Because if I'm just bringing what I have from my culture, then it's not going to be as interesting. If I were to say, well, these are the things that I'm interested in, and this is what my kids are interested in, then I need to find a way to bring that into everyday school life. So, if I were to pick something that was culturally appropriate and of cultural interest to my students, then they will be more invested in their learning than if it is something that seemed totally different…I just think it's important for them to see versions of themselves in the things that we do.

Cece's narrative highlights the bias she found in the learning standards she was mandated to teach, and how she had to add to her lessons vocabulary that was unknown to her students. Background knowledge was a strategy she needed to use in her lessons to be culturally responsive to students' learning needs. She shared,

> Like, our goal is for the kids to pass [the state standardized test] and things like that. Standards to me are very biased…to the point where I have to scaffold. A lot of my kids have not been outside the city, let alone their neighborhood. And so, when for instance, talking about wheat. One of the questions was about wheat. "Ms. [Cece], what is this word?" And I'm like, "Can you sound it out?" "Wheat?" "I'm like, yeah, wheat. Do you know what wheat is?" "No, I do not." "Ok." So making sure, ya know, I not only teach

> them like the standards and all of that content, but also making sure they have that background knowledge, which a lot of times they do not. It's as simple as wheat. They don't know what wheat is. My kids, they've eaten wheat before, but they have not held wheat before, ya know? So it's things like that. One hundred percent, I feel like it's about their culture and upbringing and things like that.

Cece learned that her students had not been exposed to certain words and content as she was teaching. She quickly stopped the lesson to teach them what they did not understand before moving on. This example of culturally responsive teaching is important because it helps students connect to the lesson.

Cece also worked diligently to establish a trusting relationship with each student by getting to know who they were as a person and not only as students. She taught some students coping strategies when they were feeling angry, frustrated, or sad. These strategies made a big impact on not only her relationship with the students but also helped with their well-being. Cece said,

> Um, I feel like um, there's a special bond within my students because of their upbringing, which makes them bond with one another and that it's like we are a family. And so when we did some writing prompt at the beginning of the year, and that's when that was a "whew" moment for me because our prompt was "Write about a moment that you would never forget and why." Almost all of my students wrote about someone passing in their life. Yes, very upsetting. So I asked them, "Do you mind if I say something to the class? I'm not going to throw your name out there or anything, but I want to say something." Every student was like, "Ok. Yeah, Ms. Cece, you can." So I told them that every single person wrote about someone they love passing away. Then they were like, "Oh my gosh,

> there's another person my age going through the same thing." And so it was like they had this special bond, and you can see it, too, because ya know one student his defense mechanisms are fighting. You would not know that that was his defense mechanism looking at him now versus at the beginning of the year. To the point where the students, they check each other in a respectful way. They're like, "Hey, chill out. You're ok. Breathe. You're fine. Go get some fresh air." And stuff like that, and it's just unforgettable.

Cece discussed a student who fought as a defense mechanism when he would get angry. She worked with the student giving him strategies to help him calm down. The student stopped fighting because of the strategies she taught him. Although Cece did not share students' background of having lost loved ones at a young age, she still built relationships with her students by leveraging their shared experiences, being sensitive, and showing care.

Participants used more culturally responsive pedagogies in their lessons and teaching to engage and honor their students because of their relationships with the students. They also found a variety of strategies to incorporate into their classroom norms to honor their students. Coursework during the residency program helped to support the residents to fulfill these varying ways of culturally responsive teaching.

Course Preparation for Building Relationships

During the residency program, residents took courses at a university and attended a seminar twice a month to explore various topics related to preparing the residents to become teachers in hard-to-staff schools and how to build relationships. Their coursework at the university also included culturally responsive teaching, social justice, and creating positive and engaging classroom environments. During the residency, teaching experience is when residents

put the course content and social justice framework into practice. Their content coursework and seminars were happening in tandem with the residency experience, allowing them to practice what they were learning. Most participants said this prepared them well to become equitable teachers in the classroom and community. Through these experiences, most of the residents learned to use the relationship-building practices to create a classroom feeling of trust.

Cece's narrative revealed her appreciation for the UTR program supporting her and training her to become a teacher. She enjoyed having challenges and learning through her experiences and coursework to build relationships with the students. Realizing that not everything goes perfectly was another lesson she learned. Cece shared,

> Oh my gosh, it prepared me so well! Whew! Everything I've learned I would give credit to the residency program. You know, like before going into the residency program, I knew that creating relationships with students was very important and things like that. But I didn't know to the extent that I made it out to be. And I just feel like the residency program prepared me for not only how to teach classroom management or anything like that, but it's like you get a full support system, and we were going into a classroom for what was supposed to be the whole year. But I thought I learned so much…I'm glad that I did not go to a traditional program because that's what I needed to know and grow as a teacher. But as a person, I needed to be thrown in there, I needed to be challenged, I needed to be shown all of the stuff first hand because not everything is, you know, fairytales and butterflies. I needed to be shown the real-life world when it came to teaching in [the city]. So I feel like it prepared me for beyond, like beyond what I ever imagined.

Cece learned culturally responsive pedagogy in her coursework and implemented the strategies in her residency classroom that positively impacted her students and classroom culture.

Rory expressed feeling grateful for having a coach for a year and being able to observe other teachers in the building see their classroom culture and teaching styles. She found the experience helpful for going into her first year of teaching. Rory said,

> I think the residency program did really give me a lot of hands-on behavior management and seeing different forms of behavior management. I was able to observe other teachers too and just be like, "Ok, how did they deal with a behavior in the classroom that's similar to what I might have seen in my class?" I think it's also just given me that first year of experience. Like, I'm so grateful for the coaching model because I even think that prior to this, you know, I worked at a high-needs school, but I worked one-on-one with the kids, and that's so much different. So working with 20-25 kids, with so many personalities, it just gave me that experience instead of me just being thrown in my first year of teaching and being like, "Oh my God, what's going on?"

Sharon found that the UTR program prepared her to think beyond what she thought she knew about teaching in a city school. She felt supported through her CRC and the other residents as they navigated their residency year. Sharon also found she felt more prepared to teach in her first classroom the following year. She said,

> I think it's prepared me in a lot of different ways. I think ,like, you have to really understand…the problems that are in public schools and having teachers that aren't aware of trauma-informed practices or don't care or don't take that culture back to the teaching in the classroom. I think that you really have to have a good understanding of those things to be a teacher in an urban school. Uh, so I think the residency program prepared

> me a lot just as far as talking about things like that. Um, obviously, it's important that you get through it with the people in your cohort and your advisors, and your co-teacher. I think that's huge. Without that, I think you would be walking into a school as a new teacher, and it would be, I don't know. It would be really bad, honestly. I don't know where I'd be without this program. So yeah, it's also just great that we have a diverse group of people in our program, so we can talk about these kinds of things with each other.

The UTR program prepared residents in various ways for becoming a teacher in what they refer to as high-needs schools, preparing them with the skills needed to recognize social injustice and inequities within their schools. As the residents gained these skills, they were able to apply them in the classroom, allowing them to build relationships with their students and support them individually in their academics. As trust was gained between the residents and their students, they were better to connect their teaching and social-emotional support and advocate for support and resources as needed.

Participants consistently mentioned the importance of cohort support, knowing trauma-informed practices, classroom culture, and the importance of building relationships with their students. They appreciated having an entire year observing, learning, and teaching in the same classroom, which is an experience that traditional programs for student teachers do not allow. Coursework and seminars provided much of what the residents needed to feel prepared to enter their first year of teaching students with backgrounds that might be different from their own. Residents learned about the students, their home lives, and their backgrounds as they built relationships.

Relationship Changes With Students

For some residents, the UTR program taught them the importance of building relationships with students and being able to support them and their learning. These relationships also led to understanding families and the differences that were strengths in the students. Residents found that the perceptions they had at the beginning of the residency related to the challenges of teaching in high-needs schools were not accurate, and there were more positive encounters than they had expected. For example, addressing her students directly, Angela shared,

> [The UTR program] has allowed me to get out of my comfort zone, and don't mess around there. You have to be stuck with me for a year, and I have to have you for a year. I want to get to know you so that we can make this year go by easily and so that you know that yes, I am your teacher. You can trust me. You can come to me and let me know what's going on.

She went on to share,

> I do feel like [the UTR program] gave me the opportunity to just see what worked best in getting to know them, what doesn't, and just really trying to get to know them. And seeing how these relationships get built…that day we went to the basketball game. That's all they talked about every time we had a small group and all the girls and me dancing. And they would look forward to small group, and they were just like, "Is it our turn?" and I'd say, "No." But they're eager because they want to learn so, but then they would just want to talk about how it was at the game, so it was like we build these relationships, and they become close to me, so they are so excited to hear what I have going on. It happened naturally. Like, I didn't force anything, and some of my children just gravitated toward me, and I don't think I personally did anything. It just happened. It kind of really just

> showed me that you don't really have to force a relationship with them. Just be yourself and just, ya know, show them that learning can be fun, and I like to have fun. I like to use food and stuff like that. I like to joke, and I like to laugh, and they see it. You know I have to work on it sometimes when it's not funny, but I like to laugh a lot, and I know that going forward, I have to have on my teacher face sometimes. Even though they have me where it's 2 minutes of me laughing when I shouldn't, but yeah. I think that just prepares me for what I have to do, just coming up in my career for sure.

Angela found that patience in creating relationships with her students was helpful because some students needed time to trust her before they could open up. The changes she saw over the school year were positive.

Residency Coursework Impact

Residents took courses at the university that helped prepare them to be teachers, including content-area courses and ethics, assessment, and social justice-themed courses. They took what they learned and applied it to their teaching right away in the classrooms in a way that helped them build relationships with students. For example, Ava learned that students in all schools have universal struggles and felt prepared to teach in any school environment. She learned to think beyond children's behaviors and consider which actions might support them best. Ava shared,

> [The UTR program] helped develop my resilience, understanding, and framework for how I can teach my kids. My belief with teaching students in an urban environment would be the same in a rural environment because kids are kids. The demographics may be different, but no matter the race, there are universal struggles that everyone goes through. The most important concept of teaching that I learned through residency was

> being creative in how I taught students whose trauma or behavioral issues were more prominent. I was forced to brainstorm and dig deep into the "why" of the actions of these students. I feel prepared to teach in any environment because of [the UTR program].

Similarly, Brian learned the importance of using various strategies to teach the content areas and have students do project-based work to learn. He voiced,

> I think back to social studies, the projects, big project-based work, and utilizing, like, a lot of different engagement strategies with the content. Um, it really helped me understand the disconnect that was happening, at least the way it was taught, and how important that is. Like it could actually be like the time they are looking forward to. I think in science and social studies, there are kind of areas that enhance their math and reading abilities, but at the same time, the areas that they gain content knowledge just in specific areas.

Through her UTR coursework, Cece learned to recognize her own biases and privilege to center herself for teaching. She learned strategies that were beneficial for behavior intervention and that allowed both parties involved to heal from the situation. Hearing from a variety of speakers who are experts on various educational subjects was also helpful for her. Cece shared,

> It helped me not only with content, you know, ideas and different ways to approach lesson plans, but it also taught me to do things like restorative justice circles and, you know, classroom management, and just different ideas. And then having people come in and speak about their own experiences and their own ideas that I took and put into my own classroom…I got to see multiple sides from multiple perspectives. The [UTR] program prepared me to teach diverse students in an urban environment in many ways. My classes taught me not only content or ideas to put into lesson plans but also about

> checking my own biases and White privilege and how important it is for my students to feel heard and represented, not only in the classroom, but also in the content that is to be taught…Learning from one another and outcomes that have happened and hearing from one another in our cohort prepared me for future scenarios. I knew what to do because of my cohort's experience. My residency year, working side by side with an experienced teacher, and being thrown into the classroom gave me the best experience of all. I now know what to do and what to expect from Day 1 all the way to the last day of school. I am not sure what is being asked by the mismatch issue, but I can maybe assume that the mismatch issue may be me being a White woman coming into work in an urban environment. My training did help with that…I got to check my own biases, check my own privilege, and also be more aware of my differences with my students but embracing all of those differences. My CRC trained me a lot, and we would have those tough conversations, and I would make sure that we had the type of relationship where he could give me advice and show me ways to implement my students' culture and backgrounds into our lessons.

Cece was able to take theory and strategies from various coursework and speakers in the UTR program and incorporate them into her classroom. Her CRC was a great role model for her and taught her how to work with the students in positive ways with high expectations.

Sharon learned about various perspectives in the ethics of education and the inequities within various communities. The UTR program also taught her to advocate for the community, schools, and students for equity. Like Cece, she learned from guest speakers included in the program, specifically about being an ally and co-conspirator for her Black students. Sharon stated,

> In our ethics class, we talked about, and we each read about what we had to teach a lesson on…just reading about the charter schools in New Jersey and how these public school systems fall into the hands of these rich people that might have the best, might have good intentions, or might not have good intentions. And just how severe it is when they won't listen to the voices of the people in the community. So that part of it had a big impact on me. Just reading that book and really getting into it. [The book] opened my eyes to the distrust [institutional oppression in public school] creates from low-income urban communities. Through reading and discussing this book, I truly felt the need to get the community (in my case, the students and their families) involved in decision making and [make sure they] feel heard when making decisions regarding the students' education…Another of my favorite experiences was the Bettina Love event, during which Dr. Love explained the issue with "White rage" and the need for not just allies but co-conspirators. I feel that the residency program did a good job at preparing us for a possible cultural mismatch. Obviously, there is no way for me to ever truly understand the Black experience in America, but [UTR] helped me enter school feeling as educated on the topic as possible.

Sharon learned a lot in the coursework and from speakers and was able to see her own privilege and how social justice ideas could be incorporated into her advocacy for students.

Rory also found her experience to be helpful in preparing her for teaching through the support of her CRC and working with students who helped her grow as a teacher. She was thankful for the coaching advice that supported her and prepared her for the first year of teaching. Rory explained,

> One thing that really prepared me to teach diverse students was how much experience I was able to receive before taking on my own classroom. Prior to this year, I worked in an urban environment but not as a classroom teacher. I loved my students so much and knew I wanted to be a classroom teacher after working there for 2 years as a tutor. Being a classroom teacher is a lot different, though, and I am so happy I was able to experience teaching with a coach before I had to teach all by myself. Having a coach really helped with classroom management strategies and receiving constant feedback. This has allowed me to learn and grow so much as an educator.

Rory mentioned one course that she did not have to take as a part of her program but would have been helpful to her experience stating, "What I think was obviously beneficial was classroom management…I kind of wish that we could have taken…The Home and Schools class. I think that would have been really beneficial to teaching kids in high-needs schools."

Rory was in a certificate program that did not have a class about working with family partnerships through the school. She mentioned it would have been helpful to take this course although learned through the residency year how important those partnerships are.

All of the residents discussed the coursework's positive and vital influence on their residency experience in the classroom. They learned the importance of social justice and realizing their own biases and how they can affect the classroom. The guest speakers also influenced their philosophy of teaching and provided a broader perspective of teaching. Having a coach for the year to support their teaching practice was a large part of their experience in honing their skills for the first year of teaching. One resident, Rory, wished she had taken a course on the topic of working with families and making home and school connections. This was not a

required course in her program of study in the graduate certificate program that she was enrolled in, but was required for the Master of Teaching program residents.

COVID-19 Implications on Relationships

The end of the school year was cut short due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Students were released for a 2-week Spring Break instead of a 1-week break. This allowed teachers to transition their classes to online learning quickly. The CRCs had not taught online, so this was a big learning curve for them. School districts gave webinars for the teachers to learn how to use the virtual platforms, but this took time. Many students did not have computers or internet access, so the schools had to order computers and remote Wi-Fi hotspots and distribute them quickly. Although the residents were involved in distributing supplies to students, once this was complete, some of them did not have as much daily contact with their CRC. The last 4 months of the school year switched to virtual learning in all schools in the districts where the residents were working. This switch from in-person teaching to virtual was hard on everyone, and the residents discussed how this affected their relationships with the students and their CRCs.

Angela discussed how COVID-19 protocols affected her relationships with her CRC and students. She said it had not changed much, but they did not talk as much as they did when they were in person at the school. At the time of our second interview, they were still trying to get all of the students computers and hot spots to join virtual learning. Discussing her relationship with her CRC, Angela shared,

> [Discussing her relationship with her CRC] No, it really has just been how it always has been the entire time. It hasn't really changed. We don't talk as much, but it's the same. I called her when we had our seminar, and I updated her every day, and we talked

> later…she made it known to me that, you know, even though I'm not going to be on her grade level, I'm still here for you if I need anything.

Rory experienced a big change when school went virtual. She was not able to talk to all of her students. She felt the challenge of the inequities of students not having access to computers and hot spots for access to their virtual classroom. Rory said,

> I think the big change is because of the Coronavirus. There are a lot of students I haven't been able to talk to, but then a lot of my students, I would say I probably have talked to a lot of them on the phone but not consistently. I do have a few students who will just reach out to me all the time. I think it's hard just because there's not really a means for us to communicate. Some students have phones, and some don't; some have laptops, some don't. It's not that easy to all be on board. It's not like I'm going to be like, "Oh, here's a Zoom and everyone join." I mean, I try and do that with all the kids, but I know everyone doesn't have access, so it's just like a double edge sword.

Similarly, Sharon found that she was not able to talk to her students very much and ended up offering tutoring sessions to support the students. The relationship between her and her students suffered because she was not able to be with them in person, and they did not all have computer access for Zoom sessions. Sharon shared,

> I haven't really been able to talk to most of [the students], so it just went from daily interaction to nothing. Um, I finally was able to do a little Zoom tutoring session with one of our students, and it was really sweet, and it just reminded me that she was exactly the same…I guess if I had the chance to talk to all of them, I don't know how much would change about our relationship, but it's just the fact that I'm not able to be with them and I can't talk to all of them. It makes a big difference.

Overall, the residents experienced big changes in their relationships with students once COVID-19 arrived in the United States and the school closed. They felt the frustration of not seeing their students daily, and in some cases their communication and relationships with their CRCs phased out. The switch to virtual teaching was new to all teachers and residents, making this a hard transition. A few residents were able to keep in touch with students and tutor them or see them periodically on Zoom. Ending the year was not typical for a school year, and there were no real good-byes, good luck wishes, and hugs at the end of the year like they were expecting.

The findings in the study were related to recognizing a cultural match or mismatch between the residents and the students. Starting with the perceptions residents expressed before entering the residency year that included biases from past experiences and some with excitement and hope for the residency year. As residents got to know the students and recognize their cultural strengths, they also noticed cultural and home life differences between the students and themselves. Relationships were formed with the students that grew stronger as trust was established. Culturally responsive teaching became an important part of lesson planning, caring for students, and connecting with families. Working with ELL students was a challenge for some residents although they found strengths in what they brought to the classroom. The residency coursework helped support the residents in all of these areas and helped the residents know themselves and their positionality before getting to know their students.

In Chapter 5, I revealed implications for teacher preparation programs and understanding the findings and how they can be understood. Limitations were revealed during the study that could be helpful in future research. Suggestions for future research are explained that could support the current study and would benefit teacher residency programs, schools, school districts, Department of Education, and teacher preparation programs.

Chapter 5: Discussion

In this study, I have presented narratives of seven teacher residents highlighting their journey from pre-residency perceptions through their journey of building relationships to the end of the school year that was unlike anything they had expected due to COVID-19. The residents focused on students' home life situations more than culture, and they expressed various elements of culturally responsive pedagogy that helped them forge relationships. Similar themes crossed most participant narratives while others were only experienced or discussed by a single or few residents. This finding could be due to the resident's level of understanding of cultural competence or their lack of understanding of what culture encompasses. After discussing how the findings expand on existing literature, I discuss implications of my findings and suggest directions for future research.

Residents first reflected on their own identity and positionality, including the experiences that led them to their preconceived notions of the students and school community in which they would work. In this study, the variation in diversity among the residents, including their various lived and cultural experiences, revealed similarities and differences between themselves and their students. Their limited cultural awareness at the beginning of the study made a difference during the resident's first few months of experiences in the development of the relationships with students. The cultural match or mismatch of the residents was more evident at the beginning of the study as they learned about the school community and students; it became less of a barrier in later months of the school year. Residents' identity of race, culture, gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic status also affected their views of the students and their perceptions of the residency experience. With all of the factors in consideration, the residents employed various

strategies to get to know their students. They built positive relationships with their students using culturally responsive pedagogy.

More research is needed to reveal the influence of teacher preparation programs and what course content meets the need to teach diverse students with equity and effectiveness. Teacher preparation can be a starting point to encourage pre-service teachers to examine their positionality in various school environments. Confronting their goals, knowledge, beliefs, and forms of reference from experience might help them enter future classrooms with an understanding of the positionality and cultures of their students.

Cultural Perspectives

Participants' pre-residency perceptions about their future students included disrupted home lives due to living with one parent or guardian, trauma, behavior challenges, and many other factors. The residents in this study came from various backgrounds that influenced their thoughts of what it would be like to work with students in high-needs schools. Residents entered the UTR program with confidence in their knowledge of what they knew about hard-to-staff schools. As they got to know their students, these preconceptions were changed for most and confirmed for a few residents. They confirmed perceptions by observing and working with the students, validating student strengths such as willingness to learn, students experiencing homelives that differed from residents' upbringing, and a need for extra support with some students. I had hoped to find changing perceptions for residents who discussed students with a deficit lens pre-residency. The changing perceptions occurred as relationships with the students became stronger and residents continued to learn more about their students. Some residents also learned more about themselves through the residency.

Beyond the Match/Mismatch Binary

As this study progressed, findings began to challenge the ideas of a binary cultural match or mismatch theory as Easton-Brooks (2019) suggested. Some residents possessed areas of both cultural mismatch and match, but these areas did not interfere with their ability to connect with and teach students from different cultural backgrounds than themselves. In my study, Black residents—although they might have identified with students similarly in terms of race—found areas of mismatch due to lived experiences and going to school in a different decade and community than their students. A cultural understanding can help the teacher and students connect, although "just because a student and teacher identify with the same racial or ethnic group, they do not inherently hold corresponding beliefs or values" (Redding, 2019, p. 4). Matching by race might be a benefit in residents' relationship building with students, families, and the community. Prior research suggests that students tend to perform better academically when their teacher is matched racially (Easton-Brooks, 2019; Redding, 2019; Stewart et al., 1989). However ethnicities between the teacher and the students could still be a mismatch, complicating the relationships. Participants in the current study who did not match racially, but who had strong relationships with their students, reported high student engagement and more effort academically.

One unique example was Angela who grew up and attended the same school as her residency students. Her background had many of the same traumas and lived experiences as the students she was teaching, and she shared the racial identification of her students. She shared that although the context was similar, her family's responses were different from that of many of her students. Additionally, she recognized that certain values and traditions within her family and home community were not the same as her students.

Kozlowski (2015) found that students who are culturally mismatched with their teachers might not reach out to their teachers as much as those who shared a cultural background. Further, those who

shared cultural beliefs with their teacher were more effectively supported in their academic needs than other students. Angela found that she had great relationships with her students and was able to connect learning with their cultures; however, a few of her students were less apt to reach out to her. While she matched with the students in many ways, there were some students who were not as forthcoming, leaving the binary idea of match or mismatch more fluid. Paris and Alim's (2014) model of culturally sustaining pedagogy expanded on Ladson-Billings's (1995) earlier framework, with attention to how cultures include "fluid identities [that] continue to emerge and evolve" over time and do not remain static (Paris & Alim, p. 91). Communities change and cultures evolve over time; thus, the differences expressed by this particular resident might be due to the time period in which the resident grew up in the community. Inconsistency across time could lead to a mismatch that is not racially related but rather indicative of a generation gap. Gutiérrez and Rogoff (2003) argued,

> ...it is more useful to consider differences in the children's, families', and their communities' histories of engaging in particular endeavors organized in contrasting manners. This avoids the implication that the characteristic is "built in" to the individual (or a group) in a stable manner that extends across time and situations, and it recognizes the circumstances relevant to an individual's likelihood of acting in certain ways. (p. 22).

In contrast to a binary notion of cultural match or mismatch, this study demonstrates the impact of partial matches—for example, residents and students might share similar beliefs, language, racial identity, and socioeconomic status but have different lived experiences. This could imply that teachers, no matter their degree of match or mismatch, need an understanding of culturally sustaining pedagogy that would support an asset-based outlook on a student's race, culture, and language. Teacher educators and school leaders should not expect teacher candidates who share racial identities with their students to

automatically feel culturally similar or naturally able to relate better than candidates who do not share these identities (Limarys, 2017; Yosso, 2005).

While I began the study with the intention of focusing on a cultural match or mismatch, I found that the idea is not binary and has many implications with culture that is a fluid rather than static notion. Culture consists of a tool box of ideas and historical implications surrounding communities and traditions that get passed down from generation to generation. This does not mean that future generations will continue the traditions and ideas because social ideas are always evolving with many choices for people to make about how they live their lives as individuals. To say that one community of people have the same identities and characteristics would be inaccurate and not honor individuals.

Disentangling Cultural Perceptions

Some residents did not explore culture in depth when getting to know their students and their cultures. Participants at the beginning of the year needed to dismantle their harmful cultural knowledge to have an awareness of affirming the cultures and backgrounds of the students. They learned throughout the school year about the students and their home lives. Some of their students shared more than others and some residents made less of an effort than others to learn about the various cultures within their class and community. Recall from Chapter 4 that Sharon discussed getting to know her students was a struggle because she did not know how to talk to the students about their culture. Although I shared Yosso's (2005) definition of culture with participants before the journal entries and interviews, some participants still had limited discussions of in-depth culture. A few residents were reluctant to start a conversation about culture with their students because they did not know how to approach the subject with individual students. These residents felt that because their students were very young, they would not understand what was being asked. Another resident was teaching older students but did not

know how to approach the topic of their culture. However, they still learned about the students' interests. They learned about family situations and lived experiences of their students that led to trust between the resident and students.

Some residents did not have course content that addressed family situations and lived experiences, instead presenting these other topics as distinct concepts. Spilt and Hughes (2015) discussed how the mismatch between cultural and racial backgrounds can be a crucial factor due to misunderstanding and intergroup bias that influences relationships between students and teachers. They argued that influences of cultural mismatch are seen across the United States due to the high number of White teachers in schools. There is a need for examples or case studies about culture with explicit discussion about cultural variations and teaching students how to explore their cultures in teaching preparation programs, an idea supported by my findings.

Similarly, Starnes (2006) found that when she went to teach in a Cherokee community, she mistakenly thought she was prepared to teach students from a different culture than her own. She found that she had a lot to learn to sufficiently and effectively teach them. She carried a White perspective about Indian history, which was inaccurate and incomplete. Understanding their culture and the depth of what her students' families and ancestors had been through was challenging without the correct historical facts. Her narrative highlighted that a cultural mismatch can be detrimental to students when teachers are not appropriately prepared to teach students of a different cultural background. In her self-study, Starnes' (2006) noted several negative impacts, including having access to few materials and books that reflected her students' culture, preventing her from teaching in a culturally responsive way and not understanding the spiritual and cultural narratives of the tribe. They are all such an ingrained part of the students' culture that until she learned more from community members she was not able to honor them

appropriately (Starnes, 2006). Teachers should create a safe space within their classrooms and find mentors in the community who can support them. Researching the community in which they intend to teach, along with the school and the cultural background of the students they will teach, are essential practices for all new teachers.

Pre-service teachers sometimes overgeneralize about cultures and individuals from similar cultural backgrounds will have the same characteristics as a result of these shared cultural backgrounds. The focus on cultural similarities and differences in my study are highlighted because when teachers understand why and how their students and families function a certain way, it can help them support their students. When teachers identify with people and understand their culture, they can better sympathize with them (Cross et al., 1989, Doyle, 2012; Hammond, 2015; T. C. Howard, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2006). Knowing home traditions and situations is not always enough to understand student's lives (Hammond, 2015). Culture and social characteristics are a part of who students are and how and why they do and say the things they do.

Understanding students' trauma due to what they were experiencing outside of the classroom helped the residents in this study to support the students in the classroom more effectively by offering coping strategies. Blitz et al. (2016) discussed the importance of using culturally responsive, trauma informed practices in schools. They found that forming relationships with students and families after implementing trauma informed strategies successfully taught students to develop healthy coping strategies. A few of the residents implemented trauma informed practices strategies to support students who were working through current and past trauma in their lives. Other residents perceived student behaviors as disruptive to the classroom environment but did not talk to the child about what might be causing the

behavior. When culturally responsive strategies were implemented (Hammond, 2015), residents talked to students about disruptive behaviors and supported them in practicing how to cope in a healing way. For example, Cece was able to talk to a few of her students about what was troubling them and how they could take breaks to walk to the bathroom or get a drink when they started feeling upset or angry. This changed her classroom culture for the better.

Understanding Cultural Backgrounds of Latinx and Black Students

Participants in this study seemed to have limited understanding of Latinx immigrants' cultures as compared to their understanding of the Black students' experiences and identities. This might be, in part, because of the Latinx student language barrier. Although ELL students, and particularly Spanish speakers in U.S. schools, have often been viewed through a deficit lens by teachers (Flores, 2005), the participants in the present study focused on the strengths of their ELL students, such as their bilingualism and resilience. The residents in my study found these strengths in their ELL students benefited non-ELL classmates; for example, when ELL students asked clarifying questions or answered questions posed to the class, this reinforced learning for all students in the class. An example is Cece's bilingual word wall she incorporated in her classroom. Yosso's (2005) theory of linguistic, social, and navigational capital connects to this finding from the teacher residents. Residents recognized the forms of capital that Yosso (2005) argues are generally neglected in schools serving low-income students of color. The residents honored the language of ELL students, respected Black students who spoke up and were sometimes loud as a strength, and recognized the resilience of ELL students. Each resident's class had different dynamics that included many strengths. Some examples included students who loved to dance or sing, students who liked to share recipes they made at home, sharing drawings they made, and sharing a YouTube video they made. All of these efforts are evidence

that the participants had made efforts to understand the students' cultures and experiences. Cultural responsiveness in the classroom strengthened teachers' relationships with their students, supporting a trusting classroom environment (Hammond, 2015). These examples of support are evidence of the residents getting to know and recognize the strengths within each student. Students shared their experiences with residents, helping them form a bond with one another.

Relationships between the residents and the ELL students were slower to develop due to the residents not knowing the cultural origin of most of the ELL students. They also did not Spanish and could not fully communicate with their Spanish-speaking students or their families. Vaughn (2005) found that some preservice teachers have misconceptions, false beliefs, or stereotypes about various cultures and would benefit from learning about the different backgrounds of students. It is possible the course content in the UTR program did not adequately address specific case studies and situations to support working with immigrant families and students. Mellom et al. (2018) studied pre-service teachers implementing culturally responsive pedagogy in classrooms with large ELL populations. The researchers found that the strategies were helpful for the pre-service teachers in getting to know their students and teaching lessons that connected to the students' lives. Adding culturally responsive pedagogy that includes working with ELL students and families would be essential for teacher preparation programs, including teacher residency programs. In Kelly's (2018) study, even teachers who expressed positive views of diversity sometimes voiced reluctance to have ELL students in their classes due to not knowing how to speak students' language. Participants in the present study seemed to feel similarly as in Mellom et al.'s (2018) and Kelly's (2018) studies. Residents tried using translation applications on their phones to communicate with their ELL students or learned a few Spanish words. Other residents said they did not speak the language of the students so they could not help

them. One resident created a bulletin board in the classroom and added Spanish and English words so the students could communicate with one another by learning each other's primary languages.

Keengwe (2010) found that the program in which he worked with pre-service teachers was successful in implementing a semester partnership experience with ELL students. The pre-service teachers in his study reported the main challenge was the language barrier. He also found that it was helpful for teachers to learn about various cultures and to learn to speak in a language new to them. This idea could be beneficial to UTR programs, allowing residents to learn more about supporting ELL students, which is a missing piece of many teacher preparation programs. This would also be a chance for residents to learn and understand other cultures and the importance of valuing the strengths that students bring to the classroom.

Prior research has highlighted how lack of teacher preparation has impacts on school staff, parents and ELL students (Hutchinson, 2013; Lucas et al., 2015). States or accreditation agencies should consider requiring that all teacher preparation programs include a course to confront this problem and educate future teachers to be more prepared to work with students who are ELL. This would support learners in the classroom and within the community. Teachers differentiate their lessons every day for most learners; however, the ELL community might be left out of this effort in some cases.

Teacher residents examined their own identities and how their positionality could affect their classroom. Their positionality within the classroom evolved over time and allowed the students to see who the residents were as a person and as a teacher. In the beginning some residents were concerned about not being respected by both the students and families. Eventually the residents became comfortable and stated positive views of their relationships with most

students and their families. Goldenberg (2014) found that teachers of the same race are not necessarily excellent teachers and still need to understand the cultures of their students. The present study supports Goldenberg's (2014) recommendations that teachers need to get to know their students to support engagement and relationships while incorporating responsive teaching.

Cultural Responsiveness and Competence

Many themes in the findings related to culturally responsive teaching and the tenets within the strategies used to connect with the students and teach through student-centered lessons. Culturally responsive pedagogy served as a connection to the students for the participants, whose backgrounds differed from the students. Hammond's (2015) definition of culturally responsive pedagogy was seen throughout the narratives of all of the residents in various forms. Participants were caring and created a community of trust in their classrooms, allowing students to feel safe. Relationships were a focus of the participants at the beginning of the year and continued throughout teaching and learning.

Through the practice of culturally responsive teaching, the residents showed they cared for the students through lessons they could relate to, time spent talking to them about their lives and interests, and getting to know them as they helped them individually. Hammond (2015) stated, "In addition to building trust through acts of caring and authentic listening, we can build trust by being more authentic, vulnerable, and in sync with our students" (p. 79). She also framed these actions as "trust generators" that enhance relationship building, which includes "selective vulnerability, familiarity, similarity of interests, concern, and competence" (p. 79). Residents used these actions as they gained the trust of their students and families during the school year. These trust generators were taught in their seminar class that was geared towards teaching practices.

Abbate-Vaughn et al. (2010) discussed four characteristics of strong urban teachers: relationships and shared authority, linking classroom content with student experience, incorporation of familiar and culturally compatible communication patterns, and development of counter-narratives that challenge stereotypical conceptions of at-risk students and families. Participants in the current study formed relationships with students in the classroom while sharing authority as a co-teacher. Using culturally responsive pedagogy, they connected content to the student experience by using parts of students' culture and interests in lessons. All of the residents developed counterarguments to challenge perceptions of working with students in high-needs schools. For example, through forming relationships with students and their families, they found and honored many strengths and academic attributes in students' lives. Residents also discussed how they were able to support students through challenging times in their lives.

While the residents took time getting to know their students, they worked to establish trust and a caring environment in their classrooms. Being responsive to students as individuals made a difference in the students' sense of belonging with their teacher. Residents used words, hugs, high fives, and verbal affirmations each day. Previous researchers have discussed implementing culturally responsive pedagogy and socially just pedagogy as the most important strategies to support caring relationships (Gay, 2002; Hammond, 2015; Mills, 2013; Milner, 2011). The present study participants implemented the strategies supported in prior research.

The residents reached various levels of cultural competency within the residency year in their classrooms. Those who developed a deeper understanding of culture were benefiting their students by uplifting them and honoring them for who they were.

A compelling finding highlights a contrast within the participants' narratives; there was a disconnect between not possessing a solid understanding at times of what culture encompasses

and the ability to implement culturally responsive pedagogy. Although residents spent almost a whole school year in the classroom, their understanding of culture was sometimes blurred with lived experiences or the characteristics of students. They demonstrated a lack of nuanced understanding of culture, but understood lived experiences and they commented on the use of culturally responsive teaching. Their narratives demonstrated a good understanding of culturally responsive teaching, implementing the practice through lessons made with their planning team and CRC. Previous research on preparing teachers to use culturally responsive teaching supports findings in the current study evidenced in the narratives that some teachers know how to write and teach culturally responsive lessons (Hammond, 2015; T. C. Howard, 2010; Villegas & Lucas, 2002b). Angela, Cece, and Ava showed stronger evidence of implementing culturally responsive pedagogy into their lessons, possibly due to past field experience in classrooms that were connected to coursework in the master's program from which they entered the residency program. Their experiences included tutoring in high-needs schools and practicum placements for a semester before entering or during the UTR program. Other residents were learning how to implement the practice of culturally responsive teaching. The concern with this disconnect is when the residents have their own classrooms they might still be learning to incorporate culturally responsive practices. Future implications to explore include: How much impact will the disconnect have on their teaching? How can teacher preparation programs help mitigate this issue? Can teachers truly embrace culturally responsive pedagogy without fully understanding what constitutes culture and how it is distinct from lived experiences?

Implications for Teacher Preparation Influence

The teacher preparation program affects residents by supporting them in understanding diversity and equity in preparation to work in hard-to-staff schools. Keeping teachers in their

hometown schools could be an implication to consider moving forward for schools to have educators who understand the community and school system in which they work. Gist et al. (2019) supported grow-your-own initiatives for recruiting teachers of color to remain in their communities. They reported high retention rates in the programs. These programs could support school districts that see high attrition rates in hard-to-staff schools. UTR programs should focus on recruiting teachers from within the communities of the schools with whom they work. Although this should be a part of recruitment, it should not be the only concentration when recruiting candidates for the program. High school classes, community colleges, universities, and several other avenues should also be explored in recruiting efforts. Attracting and retaining high quality individuals from these communities might also require changes to funding structures to ensure salaries and working conditions are equitable. Teacher preparation programs should continue to teach culturally responsive teaching, actions, practices of caring, and relational skills to be used in the classroom to support relationships with students and families (Gay, 2002). Instructors can model these practices and have pre-service teachers practice with one another before implementing them in the classroom. Case studies, videos, and articles can support the learning and use of these strategies.

My study revealed that Biracial and White teachers can connect with students and families from across races. Since teachers will not always be the same race as their students, and because sharing a racial identification alone does not guarantee cultural responsiveness, the implication is that all teachers need strong training in cultural responsiveness. Since UTR programs already generally attempt to teach culturally responsive pedagogy, they could allow for more practice in summer coursework to allow residents to write more lessons that include these strategies. Residents could be taught to find inequities in the curriculum and work around them

while advocating for a more just and equitable curriculum. An equity audit of curriculum would support developing strategies for shortcomings in the curriculum.

Implications for School Districts

Socio-cultural consciousness is important when teachers look at themselves and how they identify through their experiences with students of diverse backgrounds and consider any biases they might have (Yosso, 2005). Villegas and Lucas (2002b) defined socio-cultural consciousness as "awareness that one's worldview is not universal but is profoundly shaped by one's life experiences, as mediated by a variety of factors, chief among them race/ethnicity, social class, and gender" (p. 27). The scenario that Brian encountered, when students were using the word gay, highlights a finding that there are situations that arise during teaching that teachers might not be fully prepared to handle. A forum for what it looks like to navigate school systems, districts, and school administration policies would inform residents who to seek out for various support. School districts should have human resources provide an opportunity for educators during their induction periods with career coaches who would be assigned to support new teachers in the district.

When considering the importance of relationships within classrooms and schools, state and local districts might want to consider implementing either professional development or continuing education that is specific to the school population and community. Incorporating professional development could include creating teacher learning groups within districts to stay informed about changes, such as situations in the community or school that could affect culturally responsive teaching and the need for care and support. Parkhouse et al. (2019) researched multicultural education professional development that suggests professional development should focus on the specific school population. A community of practice could

discuss sensitive topics and allow teachers to learn from each other's experiences, especially from teachers in the same school serving the same population of students would be a system of support.

Ingersoll et al. (2014) mentioned that teachers in high-needs schools who had graduated from certain teacher preparation programs were given support in their first years of teaching and were retained longer than those from other programs. Career coaches, who support residents during their first few years of teaching, as used in teacher residency programs, are helpful in supporting teachers and their practice in the first year of teaching.

Implications for Policy

Policy change in teacher licensing to require previous field experience and training in Title 1 schools before teaching in hard-to-staff schools could support more teachers being prepared to teach and help reduce turnover in these schools. The policy might state that all teacher preparation candidates must have previous field experience in Title 1 schools before being offered a position in a hard-to-staff school. Freedman and Appleman (2009) discussed that when teachers were trained for the specific community in which they would teach that they tended to stay in the teaching profession longer. They also found that many students in high-needs schools did not have a teacher with more than 3 years of teaching experience (Freedman & Appleman, 2009). Teachers with less teaching experience may contribute to inequity or poor academic outcomes for the students.

Limitations and Future Research

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the research plan at the end of the school year and caused disruptions in relationships that the residents had worked to develop. Not all of the elementary students had computers and internet access when they went home for a 2-week spring

break. The 2-week spring break evolved into virtual learning for the rest of the school year. Families and schools were unprepared for an online teaching setting, which was inequitable in the communities in which the residents were teaching. Data collection for my study was interrupted as a result of the school closures.

Narratives in my study included journal entries and interviews. Observations with the specific focus of comparing the beginning perceptions of the residents and working in a hard-to-staff school would have been helpful for investigating the effects and changes made during the school year. The narratives were personal and thoughtful, but gathering more data could have helped to validate or disprove whether residents' perceptions had changed or stayed the same. These data would have also been helpful for future research in hard-to-staff schools. Observations from the CRCs would have also been helpful data to include because they worked with the residents throughout the year and would have seen if there was a transformation and how it unfolded.

Future researchers might examine the features of programs or courses that prepare candidates to use culturally responsive strategies for ELL students as well as non-ELL students whose cultural backgrounds differ from the candidates.

The sample size was small for the study, with seven volunteer participants from a cohort of 19. A larger sample size would have given a broader perspective of experiences with the cultural aspects of teaching in hard-to-staff schools during the residency. It would have been compelling to hear how other residents were working with their students and what types of relationships they had developed. One possible factor for the low rate of volunteering for the study might have been the demands of taking a full course load at the university while also teaching full time. The extra time to participate in the study, while a small amount during the

school year, could have seemed overwhelming to some residents. Future researchers could offer more incentives for the participants' time and efforts or remove the journal writing and only use interviews and observations to collect data. The data I received were in-depth and ranged between participants, school districts, and classroom experiences. This provided for a good study with supportive implications for future research and improving coursework within teacher preparation programs.

The implications of the study could make a positive change in the field of education by first training teachers to be culturally responsive and competent by embedding these into the curriculum in higher education. Programs that prepare pre-service teachers to examine their perceptions of working in specific environments and with students who have various cultural backgrounds should include these topics in their training. Policy changes mentioned for training and district consideration to support new teachers as well as experienced teachers can be a positive change for the school and classroom environment. Future research could include studying whether teachers from specific neighborhoods or communities have an easier time enacting culturally responsive teaching when they have lived and attended school in the same neighborhood. Teacher preparation programs, teacher residencies, and grow-your-own organizations can implement more training on understanding cultures such as their own culture and their students' cultures. Due to teachers having notions of culture that position culture as a social category rather than a dynamic toolbox. It is important that teachers understand that culture is not something that can be designated as a "match" or "mismatch" with students. Newer conceptualizations of culture see it as more dynamic, fluid, and emergent because it does not stay the same over time.

The intersectionality framework is important to explore moving forward in complicating the intersectional identities of teacher residents. Although the participants in this study had intersectional identities, this was not the focus of the study and therefore future research might examine this more closely. Crenshaw (1991) discussed intersectionality to mean the blending of two or more identities that overlap and allow others to see the marginalization that is magnified in these identities. The residents found that working with students from varied intersections, including diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, was a positive experience and helped them realize that the differences in the students' backgrounds were strengths. My findings shed limited light on residents' understanding of intersectionality, so future studies should ask more pointed questions on this topic to better understand to what extent residents are thinking in these terms. Future research that studies intersectionality in pre-service teaching might specifically ask about how teachers are thinking about constructs related to cultural variations and cultural competence.

Questions left unanswered in my study for future research included: Is it a cultural match or mismatch or a difference or similarity in lived experiences that make a difference in connecting with students? How do residents identify between culture and lived experiences? A closer examination of the differences in culture and lived experiences including teacher residents and students could provide a clearer picture of why residents combined the two topics as one.

I was not able to interview the elementary students for their perspective of the relationship they had with their teacher resident. The districts would not allow anyone outside of the district to interview students. This might have given a perspective that could have validated or negated the feelings the residents had about their relationships and caring for their students. The CRCs were also not interviewed for their observations of the residents' culturally responsive teaching. Their observations of connecting the written lessons to what residents actually taught

would have been helpful data. CRCs' perceptions of the relationships between the students and the resident would have been interesting data to compare with the narratives of the participants.

Another limitation included the data in the study that might have looked different if an external researcher, outside of the UTR program, had conducted the study. An external evaluator might have asked different questions, looked at the idea of cultural match or mismatch through a different lens, or added observations to their method of collecting data. While I was working with the residents in a seminar class and observing them in their residency setting, I felt able to remain neutral in conducting the interviews and writing the research. I offered member-checking to all residents to ensure that I transcribed their interviews correctly and to see if they had anything to add or correct. As a long-time instructor within the UTR program, I might have a harder time identifying flaws in the program than an outsider would. I also had an interest in seeing these residents succeed, since their success was a reflection of my teaching of them.

A final limitation is that I only tracked residents for 6 months, rather than a full school year. I could have continued into their first years of teaching. The first year of teaching would have provided a more indepth look at whether and how they continued to incorporate what they learned in the residency year. I recommend that future research continue into participants' first year as teachers of record.

Conclusion

When I started this journey, it was not just for science but wanting to understand why and how to make educational change for pre-service teachers. Teacher preparation programs should be an equitable and liberating experience for all teachers. I found tension between theory and practice. The theory taught in the classroom sounds easy to incorporate into classrooms, but new teachers need to see, hear, and feel this. Pre-service teachers can sit in a class and internalize the

strategies and theories of teaching, but it is a much different experience once they are in their classrooms. When they have not had hands-on experience in a classroom setting of children with diverse backgrounds and educational needs, they have a harder time knowing where to begin the year. More structure might help pre-service teachers make connections and reflect on them during the residency. This study illuminates tensions within teacher preparation programs overall, not just UTR programs. Teachers need more preparation distinguishing between culture and life experiences while drawing on both as part of their culturally responsive approaches.

APPENDIX A

Participant Interest Letter

Dear (name),

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study I will be conducting about the experience of preservice teachers and the experience of being a cultural mismatch or match to the students they are teaching, their cooperating teacher, and the community in which they are in for their externship.

The purpose of the study will be to investigate the perceptions of preservice teachers regarding their self-identified cultural mismatch or match throughout the second half of the school year. This study is important to examine how pre-service teachers' perceptions of a cultural mismatch (or match) between them and their students affect their experience in the classroom and the community in which they are placed for their internship. The participants will be asked to participate in two in-person interviews (one in late January and one in early to mid-May). There will be journaling in response to four prompts from me once a month between January and May. Participation in the study is voluntary and can be rescinded at any time. Participants will receive a gift card for their time and participation.

In order to participate, you must meet the following requirements:

- Be a part of the Richmond Teacher Residency program in the elementary track
- Be working with a Clinical Residency Coach
- Be willing to participate in the interviews and journal writing prompts monthly

Please respond to this email letting me know if you are interested in participating.

Thank you for your consideration of being a part of the study.

Sincerely,
Jodi Larson
Co-Principal Investigator

APPENDIX B

Participant Journal Prompts

Culture encompasses the set of beliefs, moral values, traditions, language, and laws (or rules of behavior) held in common by a nation, a community, or other defined group of people. Culturally determined characteristics include: the language spoken at home; religious observances; customs (including marriage customs that often accompany religious and other beliefs); acceptable gender roles and occupations; dietary practices; intellectual, artistic, and leisure-time pursuits; and other aspects of behavior. In the United States, and in other nations with large immigrant populations, there is a wide range of cultural diversity, religious beliefs, customs, and values, reflecting the scattered origins of the people.

For the first journal entry, I am looking for a detailed account of your perceptions of working with diverse students in a hard-to-staff setting.

Entry 1a:

How do you self-identify your race, ethnicity and culture?

As an initial specific example, please describe your perceptions of working with students in a hard-to-staff setting before entering RTR?

Please describe your perceptions of working with students who come from cultural backgrounds different than your own before entering RTR.

I am interested in your perspective after beginning RTR.

Entry 2:

Describe your experiences in working to build relationships with students, staff, and guardians. Have any of these experiences included a cultural misunderstanding between you and staff, students, or students' guardians? If so, please describe the situation.

For the following journal entries, my interest includes the impact of RTR including attitude, knowledge, skills with experiences of staff, students and guardians with the addition of considering the cultural mismatch between you and others mentioned in the prompt.

Entry 3:

In what ways did the Teacher Residency program prepare you to teach diverse students in an urban environment? Did any of your training help address the mismatch issue? What else could have been done to prepare you for mismatch issues?

Entry 4:

How do you think your experiences will impact you as a teacher when building relationships with students from cultural backgrounds that differ from your own in the future?

APPENDIX C
Interview Questions

First interview questions (January):

1. Describe for me how, if at all, you worked to establish relationships with students in the first few months of your residency.
   Describe for me how, if at all, you worked to establish relationships with your CRC in the first few months of your residency.
   Describe for me how, if at all, you worked to establish relationships with other staff in the first few months of your residency.

2. What challenges have you encountered in trying to establish these relationships with students, CRC, or staff?

3. Describe for me a story from your upbringing that illustrates your culture.
   a. What was your family like growing up?

4. What do you know about your students' cultures? (What did you learn from the Getting to Know Students tool about your students?)

5. Describe similarities and differences you see between you and your students.

6. How do you think your own cultural identity influences your relationships?

7. Describe for me the experience of teaching students whose culture differs from yours.

8. Do you think the culture of the students makes a difference in your lesson planning? How so or why not?

9. Do you think the culture of the students makes a difference in your teaching? How so or why not?

10. What are the cultural characteristics of your students that are strengths in your classroom? Can you give me an example?

11. What cultural characteristics pose challenges in your classroom, if any? Can you give me an example?

12. How do you include the students' interests and background in your instruction?

Second interview questions (May):
The second interview questions will mostly be constructed from the information expressed in the journal entries and from the first interviews conducted in January. Some example questions I might ask include:

Describe your classroom management strategies and style. Why have you chosen these strategies?

In what ways does your classroom environment honor student's culture and strengths?

In what ways have your relationships with students changed, if at all, since January?
In what ways have your relationships with your CRC changed, if at all, since January?
In what ways have your relationships with staff changed, if at all, since January?

Have you had any challenges with relationships? If so, how have they changed since January?

How, if at all, has your perception of cultures and identities of the students changed since January?

Describe for me the experience of teaching students who are similar or different from you.

Do you think the similarity or difference of the students is integral in your lesson planning? How so or why not?

Do you think the diversity of the students makes a difference in your teaching? How so or why not?

What student characteristics pose challenges in your classroom, if any? Can you give me an example?

How have you included the students' interests and background in your instruction?

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