

## Towards Culturally Responsive Education: A Qualitative Approach

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### Abstract

By the year 2050, students of color will constitute 57 percent of students in the US (Karanja and Austin, 2014). However, research indicates that most pre-service teachers and even in-service teachers are not ready to teach in cross-cultural classrooms (Marx, 2006). As a result of de facto segregation, teacher candidates have very limited interaction with minority groups. Consequently, understanding the culture of students, using pertinent information in classrooms, and building rapport with the students become challenging issues in their teaching practices. As a response to these concerns, the proposed study aims to create educational models to help teacher candidates become more culturally competent throughout their teaching experiences. My information was gathered from interviews with people who work in public schools, nonprofit organizations, and universities in Florida, US. The findings of this study indicate that social (poverty, racism) and ontological (i.e., teachers' and students' dispositions) issues influence teachers' and students' experiences in classrooms. How teacher candidates perceive educational disparities, racism, and equity traps and respond to them affect the teacher/student relationships and underprivileged students' educational attainment. The findings suggest that teacher education programs need teacher candidates who are knowledgeable about historical and cultural forms of oppression and their effect on students' educational attainment. Discussing the achievement gap without analyzing its reasons from critical lenses only increases this gap and makes students of color internalize this deficit thinking. Finally, it is vital to find ways to attract teacher candidates from underrepresented groups as teachers of color provide more culturally competent discussions in classrooms.

**Keywords:** Culturally responsive education; Teacher Education Programs; US; Deficit Thinking; Teaching

### Introduction

The United States is a highly multicultural country. According to Kauchak and Eggen (2008), 300 ethnic groups reside in the US. While the state categorizes its population into six groups (i.e., White, African-American, Native-American, Pacific Islander, Asian and Native Hawaiian), most Americans identify themselves with different ethnic groups, e.g., German 15.2%, Black 8.8%, Mexican 6.5%, Irish 10.8% (US Census Bureau, 2004). These numbers reflect students' profiles in classrooms. McFarland (2016) argues that there are approximately 4.9 million language minority students in US schools. By the year 2050, students of color will constitute 57 percent of students in the US (Karanja and Austin, 2014).

Contrary to the high number of diverse students in US schools, the teaching workforce consists of a relatively homogenous group: a large majority of teachers are White, middle-class, and female (Yearta, 2016). According to the National Teacher and Principal Survey (2016), "80 percent of all public school teachers were White, 9 percent were Hispanic, 7 percent were Black, and 2 percent were Asian during the 2015-16 school year." These figures have significant impact on the classroom environment. The "habitus" of the teachers (Bourdieu, 1989), such as their dispositions, identities, and tacit knowledge that they have learned throughout their socialization, affect their interaction with their students and the students' educational attainment. However, research indicates that most pre-service teachers and even in-service teachers are not ready to teach in cross-cultural classrooms (Marx, 2006). As McKenzie and Phillips (2016, p. 26) put it, "although a few of the teachers are being somewhat successful with their students, most are not."

As a result of de facto segregation and compartmentalization of lifestyles, teacher candidates have very limited interaction with minority groups. Most of the teacher candidates grew up and live in White neighborhoods, attended predominantly White schools, and have been taught by White teachers (DiAngelo and Sensoy, 2010). Consequently, understanding the

culture of students of color, using pertinent information in classrooms, and building rapport with the students become challenging issues in their teaching practices.

Similarly, Sensoy and DiAngelo (2014) argue that teachers' and students' positionality, self-identification, and cultural and class background influence learning and knowledge production. Including students' cultures in the curriculum, valuing their multiple identities (e.g., racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious) and their home cultures in classrooms and adopting meaningful and relevant educational models and instructional practices (such as multicultural literature and culturally relevant assignments) have positive effects on students' academic performance.

In this vein, teacher candidates should be culturally competent educators. They need to be responsible for learning cultural and social issues, the context of the society, power imbalances, educational/social disparities, and the effects of social and educational problems on students' academic success. Teacher candidates need to enter classrooms with the ability to think critically about their own identities (dominant and subordinate) and their position in relation to the minority groups and students in society. They are responsible for creating safe classrooms and making positive changes in educational settings by developing relevant cultural and educational models and implementing culturally relevant teaching practices.

As a response to these concerns, the proposed study aims to develop a conceptual framework for understanding the elements of cultural competence in education and create educational models to help teacher candidates become more culturally competent throughout their clinical experiences. This project aims to make positive social changes by concentrating on understanding the challenges of students, as well as hearing the voices of teachers in urban schools (Dana and Yendol-Hoppey, 2009).

### **Objectives**

This project proposes to: (a) incorporate new knowledge about cultural competence in the teacher education programs; (b) generate pedagogical strategies, including skills and techniques, that will help the teacher candidates develop cultural competence in teacher education programs; and (c) foster social change by implementing relevant, meaningful educational tools for students of color.

### **Hypothesis**

The research questions I pose are as follows:

What knowledge should teacher candidates have with regard to cultural competence?

How do teacher candidates acquire knowledge, skills, and techniques with regard to cultural competence over time?

What kind of cultural and educational models could be implemented to help the teacher candidates develop cultural competence while in teacher education programs?

How will the findings of this study affect research on teacher education?

### **1. Main Approaches Towards Cultural Competency**

Cooke and Hill (2017, p. 1) describe developing skills of cultural competence as "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 professions to work effectively in cross-cultural situations." In this regard, acquisition of cultural competence provides pre- and in-service teachers with *relevant knowledge* and skill sets to recognize and respond (Cooke and Hill, 2017) to destructive conditions that affect students who are economically, racially/ethnically, linguistically disadvantaged. Similarly, Pang (2017) defines culturally competent teaching as an educational approach that *values equity and social justice*. Finally, in *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*, Chomsky (1965) differentiates the notion of competence from performance. While Chomsky describes competence as the speaker's knowledge of his/her language, he defines performance as the actual use of language in concrete situations (Chomsky, 1965).

Based on these theoretical perspectives, cultural competence can be interpreted as the teacher's knowledge of the culture of his/her underprivileged students,<sup>1</sup> while performance can be described as the capacity of the teacher to use his/her cultural competence in the classroom, such as by applying culturally relevant and responsive teaching techniques. Therefore, in culturally competent education, competence/knowledge and performance/action should complement each other.

Concepts, examples, activities, and assignments chosen by the teacher determine the teacher's action in classroom, whether it is culturally competent or not. In culturally relevant education<sup>2</sup> "the underlying system of rules" (such as curriculum and lesson plans) should be set according to the realities of students of color. Therefore, culturally competent education should be seen as a multidimensional educational model that includes different elements of teaching such as curriculum, instructional techniques and student-teacher relationships (Dana and Yendol-Hoppey, 2008).

The examination of the terms competence and performance (or knowledge and action) leads us to further investigation of the notion of cultural competence in education. Culturally competent pedagogy, as an approach in education, draws upon various theoretical perspectives such as sociocultural theory and social justice education. Scholars who are proponents of these approaches consistently promote the significance of the cultural context in teaching and learning.

One of the important scholars in the area of culturally relevant pedagogy is Vygotsky, who developed the sociocultural theory of learning and discusses the importance of social interactions in students' cognitive development. According to this view, the nature of the cultural context is salient in the knowledge production process (Pang, 2017). Based on this theoretical perspective, it can be argued that culturally relevant instructional techniques could be created through students' knowledge of culture (such as stories, songs, and literature), interaction patterns, language practices, and learned skills (Lee, 2000). In this regard, for example, accepting the importance of storytelling in Native American students' learning and implementing some relevant and meaningful teaching activities such as discussing a Native American story in small groups would be seen as culturally competent education.

Social justice education is another substantial theory with regard to culturally responsive education. Some of the influential figures of this approach are Sensoy and DiAngelo. According to this perspective, equity and social justice should be made into significant components of culturally responsive education because the education institution, as a state apparatus (Althusser, 2014), teaches dominant values and norms while ignoring or forgetting about marginalized students' values and knowledge. With a social justice education focus, lesson plans should take into account marginalized students' cultural frames of reference and be organized to meet students' interests and expectations accordingly. For example, role playing can be a useful teaching technique to allow students to transmit their experiences and cultural background (Cheng, 1998). Learning the concepts that the students use in their everyday lives, exploring the context in which they live, and using this information in classrooms are the strategies of culturally competent education.

The essence of this approach is about respecting students' ethnic/racial background, their social and cultural capital, and their values and incorporating these issues into the school culture. This holistic approach also values students' community, including their families, and affirms reciprocal relationships (Pang, 2017). This in turn leads to culturally relevant, non-authoritarian, student-centered, meaning making processes.

Similarly, in *Culturally Responsive Teaching* (2010) Gay discusses that caring in education is one of the major elements of culturally responsive pedagogy in cross-cultural classrooms. Culturally responsive pedagogy is demonstrated in teachers' attitudes, expectations, and behaviors in regards to their students' performance and skills. It also entails challenging students to develop their potential and skills.

Gay (2010) discusses a research study on the elements of successful teaching in a predominantly African American urban elementary school. According to the findings of the study, students liked their teachers more as the teacher listened to and respected them and encouraged them to express their opinions. The research clearly indicates that students need to have

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<sup>1</sup> In the US context, "underprivileged students" refers to students of color (such as Black, Native American, LatinX) as their identities have been devalued historically, culturally, and institutionally in society.

<sup>2</sup> Culturally competent pedagogy is used interchangeably with concepts such as culturally relevant education and culturally responsive teaching.

connections with their teachers. Reciprocal and empowering relationship between teachers and students is a determinant of effective teaching as well as an element of culturally responsive education.

As a response to this study, Gay reports that most teachers' attitudes towards their students of color is not very affirmative: "Racial biases, ethnic stereotyping, cultural ethnocentrism, and personal rejections cause teachers, who don't care, to devalue, demean, and even fear some African American, Latino, Native American, and Asian American students in their classrooms" (Gay, 2010, p. 20). These negative approaches have harmful effects on students' academic achievement. Racism in education, in this regard, should be explored as racism is a severe barrier to a safe classroom and culturally competent teaching.

Racism, as a form of oppression, perpetuates unequal distribution of resources and asymmetrical power relations between Whites and people of color. Systemic racism, as embedded in the structures of the state's institutions, works invisibly. Anti-racist education emphasizes the detrimental effects of systemic racism in education. It stresses that racism exists at schools where students of color are forced to assimilate into the dominant cultural values and conform to ethno-centric and Euro-centric social and educational norms and values (Sensoy and DiAngelo, 2012). Education, in this regard, reinforces injustices and inequalities rather than empowering students and providing upward mobility.

In addition to a Eurocentric curriculum, some teachers' discriminatory actions should be noted as another reason for the marginalization of students of color in classrooms. It is important to consider a teacher's ethnicity, class, gender, and ideological background to understand his/her perspective on students in the classroom. While there are multiple power dynamics in the classroom, generally a teacher's authority dominates students' dispositions, including their cultural and linguistic capital (Kayaalp, 2013). Dealing with teacher racism to promote culturally responsive pedagogy at schools is one of the most challenging issues for teacher education, as questioning one's own identity, their privileges and power is "deeply personal" (Marx, 2006). Questioning pre- and in-service teachers' White privilege leads to self-defense; denial; and feelings of anger, guilt, and confusion (Helms, 2003).

Confronting systemic racism in educational settings is very complicated, as it goes beyond challenging the individual belief system of the teacher. Confronting racism in the educational setting means interrogating a historical, cultural, and institutional system of oppression that operates in society on a daily basis. McKenzie and Phillips argue (2016, p. 36) that

the structural inequities of the present US were constructed and perpetuated on a history of racism that often disallows the historically marginalized racial groups to merely pull themselves up by individual effort and motivation in a system that has worked against them for centuries.

One of the problems of the cultural deficit theory is its own deficiency in explaining the inequalities in society. Cultural deficit theory explains academic failures of students of color through factors that are internal to students' identity (e.g., hard to teach) (Marx, 2006), while ignoring structural and systemic inequities such as racism, poverty in the US. According to this perspective, the students are responsible for their failures/success as they live in an egalitarian, meritocratic society in which everyone has equal access to resources regardless of their race, ethnicity, and class. However, as research indicates (Hurst, 2008; Ozlem and DiAngelo, 2012) people's social categories such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, determine their access to institutions, including their position, power, and privileges in society. In this vein, providing teacher candidates with knowledge about culturally responsive teaching in diverse schools is necessary. Through such knowledge and practices, pre- and in-service teachers should be able to recognize and respond to the equity traps in their teaching practices, understand what/how they are teaching (Dana and Yendol-Hoppey, 2009), and finally make their students' educational experiences more positive, relevant, and meaningful.

## **2. Research Design and Data Collection**

In this study I adopted a qualitative approach. This approach enabled me to gather data in the form of interviews. Research indicates that interviews always comprise value judgment (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Therefore, the main problem is not whether an interview is "neutral," and "objective," but what kinds of judgment ("true" or "false") it involves and how "true" and "false" judgments are defined and divorced from each other.

Moreover, choices of methods and methodologies cannot be reduced simply to "pragmatic matters" (e.g., qualitative research as "subjective" and quantitative research as "objective"), since the choice of the methodology is a political action. In other words, the researcher's paradigm, his/her epistemological (what is the relationship between the inquirer and the

known?), ontological (what is the nature of reality?) and methodological (how do we know the world?) perspective shapes the entire research process (Denzin and Lincoln; 2005), from the relationship between the participants and the researcher to the results. As a result, despite its limitations and partial nature, interviews develop a refined analysis of subject matter, and thus they are salient knowledge production tools in a qualitative inquiry.

In my study I interviewed community and faculty members and teachers to explore their understanding of culturally competent pedagogy. Interviews were conducted from May 2018 to May 2019 with 12 people who work in public schools, nonprofit organizations, and two different universities in Florida (University of North Florida and University of South Florida). In addition to the structured interviews, I conducted a literature review focusing on the issues of cultural competence, teachers' racism, systemic racism, and social justice. I also analyzed secondary data, including College of Education and Human Services (COEHS) field syllabi and internship data collected by two faculty members in 2018.

Interview questions were clustered around three themes: 1) cultural competence; 2) incorporation of culturally relevant knowledge, techniques, and skills into the curriculum (field syllabi and lesson plans); and 3) ontological and cultural issues related to culturally responsive pedagogy (such as teacher and student identities and systemic racism).

### 3. Discussion

#### Cultural competence

Most participants explained cultural competence in relation to the concept of culture. They underlined the fact that culture is a complex issue with many dimensions. Helping teacher candidates understand the meaning of culture (such as the shared values, norms, customs in a society), and its aspects (material, immaterial culture and the invisible part of it) is necessary. As one of the participants, Amy<sup>1</sup>, reports:

In different cultures there are different values and beliefs about time, and relationships. This is important partly because students begin to uncover that their ways of thinking really are not the only ways they are connected with parents, kids. It is not a deficit, rather people operate from different perspectives and dimensions of culture. And the most important part of it is the knowledge of themselves and their culture. That is, who am I, and who am I culturally? What does that mean, and how did this affect my life as well as my teaching? How is my culture different than the children I work with?

Amy emphasizes the danger of ethnocentrism, that is, the tendency to interpret other cultures from the perspective of one's own culture. Teacher candidates should learn that culture is not neutral. It is connected to the issues of power and privilege in society. Someone's position, values, and beliefs shape that person's understanding of his or her culture and other cultures. Therefore, understanding other cultures should start with the discovery of one's own identity. That is, the question of who I am and how I am connected to other cultures. Similarly, Gul argues:

[A] cultural competent teacher should recognize the default in the society, that is, the association of culture with White culture. The teacher should disrupt the dominant curriculum (e.g., which authors we use in classrooms). Also, the teacher needs to see culturally deficit perspectives and biases.

Also Alyssa discusses the mainstream values and norms in the curriculum and their effect on diverse students. Alyssa reports:

When it comes to the curriculum, it is very white, middle-class targeted. They don't know [her diverse students] Snow White, or other white fairytales. I ask myself, is this relevant to my class? Can I integrate their cultures into the curriculum? So they feel like they are wanted and important in my classroom. It is also important to be aware of lifestyle differences. My four Burmese students don't use beds. If I show them that this is the American bed, they would feel left out, and feel like an outsider. So we started an activity with a great resource called dollarstreet.com, where you can see homes from all over the world; it is so eye opening. It shows what people from that culture eat, where they sleep. So, we looked at this before we started the activity and we looked at different beds. They [the students] all knew that their bed might not look like an American one. We gave them the option to draw their own bed. It wasn't weird anymore because we just looked at 55 different types of beds. As an intern, think about this and being aware. So, I would say awareness.

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<sup>1</sup> I used pseudonyms in this paper.

April's remarks echo those of Alyssa:

Reading should be related to their lives, and immigration experiences. We used a novel, *Esperanza Rising*, in my class. Occasionally they would use Spanish words in the novel. And instead of me reading aloud, I would let them [the students] read the Spanish parts. They know something. They want to read it. They want to be a part of it. They got to shine by reading Spanish parts.

The participants' accounts indicate the interrelationship between culture, cultural competence, and the teacher's understanding of his/her culture. Culturally competent teachers should critically analyze the dominant cultural values and determine ways to incorporate the rich culture and heritage of their students into the classroom and learning experience. Multicultural literature gives teacher candidates different perspectives and can empower their students.

### **Incorporation of culturally relevant knowledge, techniques, and skills into the curriculum**

Knowing oneself and engaging in critical self-reflection are ways to acquire culturally relevant pedagogy. To be able to do self-reflection, however, some conditions should be met for teacher candidates: 1) an environment that fosters engaging conversations; 2) opportunities to work with diverse students in class; 3) support by teacher educators who push them to practice critical reflection and critical thinking; 4) practice in critical reading, so they can connect to the story and make assumptions and reflections that may lead them to start deeper conversations; 5) showing videos about cultural competence in education, and having them do case studies, and participating in role playing activities may give them the awareness to be more equitable.

The participants repeatedly emphasized the significance of making relationships with students and their community, including their family members, for successful culturally responsive teaching. Multiple field experiences are helpful with this, as teacher candidates cannot make connections with the students without knowing them. Therefore, some observational activities such as interviewing the students and asking questions about their lives can be helpful in building rapport. Field experiences can help them notice possible areas to develop in their cultural competence (such as who is participating and who is not) and get away from color-blind philosophy. This will help them understand the culture in their classrooms.

Similarly, the participants reported that teacher candidates need greater awareness of and consideration for the individual differences among students—such as class, gender, and religion, among many others—though they may belong to the same racial category. Also teacher candidates need to accommodate those differences in class. To do this, pre-service teachers need to create an individualized inventory (i.e., child history). They need to work one on one with each student, collect data about students, find the students' interests, and design a lesson plan factoring in each child. Teacher candidates need to listen to their students and learn what works for them.

Differentiated instruction can be another way to implement culturally responsive techniques in class (e.g., asking students which videos they like to watch). Similarly, October reports how she uses different teaching techniques in her classroom: "I teach math in two-three different ways. I know my students and give them tools and pieces. I use songs, colors."

### **Ontological and cultural issues related to culturally responsive pedagogy**

The participants' accounts indicated that making teacher candidates understand their students' background and identities along cultural lines is vital in culturally competent pedagogy. How "acting out" or "bad behavior" is perceived and explained by teacher candidates could be related to their own identities and cultural background. It is the teacher educator's responsibility to ask critical questions—such as what is the bad behavior? How could that be connected to your values? --of teacher candidates to uncover the relationship between the candidate's own cultural values and his/her perceptions towards others' behaviors. McKenzie and Phillips (2017) discuss how most teacher candidates explain students' lack of motivation and the underperformance of students of color as something inherent to the students rather than making any critical analysis about the social and educational disparities in society. In this vein, it is significant to examine the COEHS Intern Data (2018) with regard to teacher candidates and their explanations about students who underperform at urban schools in Jacksonville.

According to the findings of the study, most teacher candidates report that home life—specifically a lack of parental involvement in students' academic lives—is the reason for students' academic failure. One of the interns reports: "students get caught up with the wrong crowd; drugs are readily available; their parents either don't care, can't care, or are in jail."

In another set of data based on a focus group study with the COEHS interns (2018), teacher candidates give different answers to the following question: What do you believe best explains the underperformance of students in high-need urban schools? Their answers included the following:

“lack of representation of teachers of color,”

“overly scripted curriculum- need a more engaging curriculum,”

“lack of resources,” and

“not enough assistance in classrooms.”

However, some of the candidates’ answers can be seen as examples of cultural deficit thinking:

“*partially genetics*,”

“*scared of students in urban school attitudes*,” and

“wasn’t a lot of strategies taught towards African American students.”

As explained in previous sections, teacher candidates’ identities shape their teaching practices and their interaction with their students. Teacher candidates who lack of multicultural understanding struggle in teaching in diverse urban schools, and they fail their students of color. Therefore, it is extremely important to build relationships with students during internships instead of focusing on technical aspects of teaching such as preparing lesson plans and using technology. In fact, participants October and Sam reported that teachers’ dispositions and values and the positive relationship between teachers and students are the key to culturally responsive teaching. Sam reports:

Number one issue in teaching profession is 80% of teachers are White, middle-class women. Ethnicity and race are important in teaching. Diversity should be the framework. [...] Traditional classes with power points do not work. It is about dispositions of the teacher. Check their dispositions about cultural competency. Some people are just vague [they are intentionally silent about diversity issues.]

Sam also noted that there should be multiple classes in the teacher education curriculum focused on diverse populations, such as refugees, gender, and religious diversity. Faculty members should be trained about cultural competence as well. Discussions on diversity and cultural competence should take place across the college. Similarly, October argues:

You should show yourself to your students. Show yourself as a person. Show some interests in them. Some teacher candidates just sit there [in the corner of the classroom] and the students sit in the center and they never get organic, open communication with the students. [...] We sell dreams. Teaching in urban schools is not for everyone.

October’s report indicates that teacher candidates should know about themselves, as well as the contextual, historical, and social realities of the US. She felt teacher candidates should do research on poverty, racism, and inequalities in the neighborhoods. They should understand that poverty is not a choice. Participant Nancy echoed the others on the effect of structural racism in Jacksonville, argues:

As a result of historical segregation and institutional racism, Jacksonville is very segregated, which is reflected in the housing market. I-95 is built on black neighborhoods to separate communities from each other. Most teacher candidates have never been exposed to these experiences and thoughts. Teachers need to understand the context, all social problems, racism, and marginalization. [...] Parents do care about their children. They want to get involved in their children’s education, they just don’t know how.

According to the participants, culturally competent pedagogy can be learned by helping the teacher candidates to better know themselves through self-reflection and auto-biographical work, as well as to better know others by getting to know the students, their lifestyles, their neighborhoods, their family and community. Becoming a culturally responsive teacher entails going off campus, meeting community members, and becoming aware of structural inequalities in society.

#### 4. Conclusion

Teaching in a multicultural society is a complex issue. Teachers’ success is affected by numerous factors such as interpersonal skills and relevant teaching practices. There are also social (poverty, racism) and ontological (teachers’ and

students' dispositions) issues that influence teachers' and students' experiences in classrooms. How teacher candidates perceive educational disparities, racism, and equity traps and respond to them affect the teacher/student relationships and underprivileged students' educational attainment.

Blaming the students of color for their educational problems while ignoring the role of race, racism, and systemic and structural problems in society reproduces inequalities and educational disparities. Similarly, being unaware of cultural deficit thinking (e.g., being afraid of students of color, and color-blindness) widens the gap between teacher candidates and their students of color.

Teacher education programs need teacher candidates who are knowledgeable about historical and cultural forms of oppression and their effect on students' educational attainment. Discussing the achievement gap without analyzing its reasons from critical lenses only increases this gap and makes students of color internalize this deficit thinking. Teacher candidates who do not respect their students' ideas and their home culture cannot help students reach their potential. Teacher candidates need to recognize individual differences of their students. The curriculum should take into account different varieties of cultures and implement them in lesson plans and inventories. Offering a course on diversity is not sufficient in this regard. As McKenzie and Phillips (2016, p. 37) argue, "It will take a rigorous program designed to disrupt the mental models and behaviors that entangle us, taught by instructors that understand these traps and have the pedagogical skills."

In addition, consistent and collaborative work on cultural competence throughout teacher education programs is necessary. This inquiry needs an ongoing critical dialogue among the members of the college: faculty members, pre-service and in-service teachers, and their students. We need to be clear about the rationale of these dialogues. We need to do service-related work. We need to go out and get involved with the community. Local knowledge/s, including indigenous, culturally-based knowledge, are valuable educational resource for the university community, including teacher candidates (Dei, 2003).

Finally, it is vital to find ways to attract teacher candidates from underrepresented groups such as the Black, Latinx, and Native American communities, as teachers of color can provide more culturally competent discussions in the classroom. This will greatly help students of color who struggle or drop out of school because they have no role models in schools. Representation of minorities in educational settings has proven positive effects on students of color.

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