YES, WE CAN: MOVING EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS FORWARD TO MULTICULTURAL AND MULTIDIMENSIONAL PROGRAMS

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Abstract

Terms like social justice and culturally responsive pedagogy have become commonplace when discussing education, particularly in the K-12 system. A review of the new yearlong residency program at Tarleton State University provided a framework for taking these words from passive nouns to active verbs, from words to actions. We can all agree these things are essential, but how does one actually 'do' these things. Not only that, but how does one teach someone how to 'do' these things? These are the questions plaguing teacher education programs across the nation. This paper addresses a few of the critical components that should be present in every teacher preparation program and how Tarleton can use this new approach to help clinical teachers grow from a passive understanding of these theories and practices to their interactive and innovative application.

Keywords: social justice education, teacher preparation, multicultural education, teacher education, culturally responsive pedagogy

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To meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population, Tarleton State University, a Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) member, has engineered a yearlong residency program to allow for an extended, innovative, and immersive teacher education experience for teacher candidates enrolled in their program. What follows is a brief description of that effort as well as an in-depth discussion of some of the vital components that must be present for the success of this program. The elements discussed below are imperative for any teacher education program, but we will focus on the Yearlong Residency Program at Tarleton State University for the context of this paper.

The 2018-2019 Numbers

According to the Texas Education Agency (TEA)'s report on teacher preparation, there are a total of 76 traditional Education Preparation Programs (EPP) in the state of Texas. Of these, 76, TAMUS lays claim to 10 (13%) of these programs giving TAMUS quite a stake in the future of education. According to TEA data reporting, TAMUS' overall new teacher satisfaction ranges from 2.55 to 2.17, with a minimum of 2 indicating sufficient. Data reported by TEA (accessed March 2021) from the Principal Survey of the Preparation of First-Year Teachers show that 30% of TAMUS' teacher graduates were rated as 'insufficiently' or 'not at all prepared to work with English Language Learners (ELLs). Further, 24% were deemed 'insufficiently' or 'not at all prepared to work with students with disabilities (SWDs). While the overall graduating GPA for TAMUS (3.29) is slightly higher than the national

average (3.25), the data reported by the TEA shows deficiencies in preparation when it comes to working with two of the largest diverse populations in the state of Texas SWDs and ELLs.

Diem and Carpenter's Five Key Issues/Concepts

Social justice has become a blanket term to cover concepts like equality, equity, inclusion, and diversity (Diem & Carpenter, 2012; Furman, 2012). The meaning behind social justice becomes even more convoluted when juxtaposed with terms like leadership preparation, making it nearly impossible for aspiring educational leaders to know what, if anything, they should be able to do once they have graduated from preparation programs boasting a focus on social justice. This lack of clarity inhibits educator preparation programs from fostering and developing the critical thinking and learning that must take place for the concepts of social justice to be synthesized (Brown, 2004).

After in-depth research, Diem and Carpenter (2012) found that the literature and curricula in educational leadership insufficiently addressed research that ties together issues of race with educational leadership and pedagogical strategies intended to address issues surrounding race. The authors suggest five key issues/concepts that educational leadership preparation programs must examine and address are as follows:
1. color-blind ideology,

2. misconceptions of human differences,

3. merit-based achievement,

4. critical self-reflection, and

5. the interrogation of race-related silences in the classroom (p. 98).

Color-Blind Ideology

Colorblindness pretends that racial recognition is the problem, but it does not do away with color. Instead, it "reinforces whiteness as the unmarked norm against which difference is measured" (Lipzitz, 2019, p. 24). Diem and Carpenter (2012) posit that color-blind racism is a pass to allow Whites to look the other way when trying to understand race. The authors further dive into the world of color-blind ideology by addressing the idea by citing

Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich (2011) interpreting racial phenomena through dominant frames that allow them to:
a) appear "reasonable" or "moral" while opposing policies that work to alleviate racial inequality (abstract liberalism);

b) use culturally-based arguments to blame minorities for their place in society (cultural racism);

c) claim that racial phenomena are natural occurrences in society (naturalization); and

d) argue that racism and discrimination are a "thing of the past" and no longer play a contributing role in minorities' life chances (p. 102).

In this manner, Whites use this ideology to justify their actions, as well as those of society and the system as a whole. Not addressing this in teacher preparation programs only furthers the acceptance of this idea as valid. We think many Whites who gravitate toward this concept may be ignorant of the fundamental issues of racial injustice and are afraid to address it at all, which gives them the chance to avoid it while claiming not to be part of the problem. "In a society plagued by pervasive racial stratification and subordination, race-bound problems require race-based remedies" (Lipsitz, 2019, p. 23). Multiculturalism has been offered as an alternative to color-blind ideology because it acknowledges and celebrates cultural differences. Perhaps most important to our current climate, multiculturalism does not shy away from acknowledging and learning from how others have suffered as a result of cultural conflict or discriminatory treatment.

So, how do we foster multiculturalism? Lipsitz (2019) states that few problems can be addressed and resolved by pretending that they do not exist. McCabe (2011) suggests that multiculturalism can be addressed by:
1. Recognizing and valuing differences,

2. Teaching and learning about differences, and

3. Fostering personal friendships and organizational alliances.

Misconceptions of Human Differences

Diem and Carpenter (2012) state that human differences, such as race, are not a result of biology but the longstanding, historical, socially constructed lines between those with minor differences. This concept dates back to

the first act of categorizing humans based on appearance and wealth. The long-term acceptance of the link between race, genealogy, and intelligence has only increased these misconceptions by suggesting that this specific difference has an implication that is out of their control and unchangeable (Diem & Carpenter, 2012). These misconceptions can be addressed by challenging those misconceptions of differences (Diem & Carpenter, 2012, p. 103). This shows the interconnectedness between the ignorance, fear, and irresponsibility of the color-blind ideology discussed above with these misconceptions. The lack of questioning has led to an ignorance epidemic. Educational leadership preparation programs lay the foundation of the classroom structure and environment that will be created, and there are many cracks in that foundation.

Merit-Based Achievement

The concept of merit-based achievement is deeply ingrained into our society, so much so that it is our default for measuring success. Our children and students are conditioned to think that if they work harder, they will be successful even though an entire system is designed to keep them from doing so. Diem & Carpenter (2012) echo the above with, "no matter how hard a student works toward achieving his/her goals, the systemic barriers existent within the educational system actually work to perpetuate inequalities within schools" (p. 105). Diem & Carpenter (2012) further posit that merit-based achievement fails to recognize the complexities inhibiting or even preventing student success (p. 105). Hard work is essential. Not all hard work is the same; there is an understanding in the educational community that every student has an equal chance. Once again, we see the interconnectedness between the previously discussed concepts.

Competency-based or progress-based instruction has received a push in recent years by many well-known academic researchers, including Robert Marzano and the Marzano Academies Organization (2021). Competency-Based Education operates within a system of mastery wherein the student must demonstrate mastery of specific concepts and skills before moving on to the advanced levels of learning. After reviewing the current curriculum, Competency-Based Instruction is not built into the curriculum for educator preparation programs. Rather than a competency-based approach, many EPPs employ the drill

and skill until clinical teaching. Once in their clinical teaching stage, students are plunged into a 14 week-long trial by fire to determine if they are able to apply what they have learned in the preceding semesters into a real-world setting. This has shown to be less than adequate, an assertion supported by the poor retention of first-year teachers within the profession (TEA, 2021). In response to this, some EPP's are exploring options, including yearlong teaching residencies. In these innovative efforts, competency-based training must be developed and demonstrated in a hands-on, evidence-based, and real-world experience.

Critical Self-Reflection

We think this is the most challenging of the five concepts because it can be painful to look at ourselves and realize problems with our own actions, values, and ideologies. As part of their required curriculum, students in EPPS must complete "reflection" assignments. To get the most out of these assignments' preparation programs should foster the development of socially just leaders through the facilitation of conversations that encourage critical self-reflection. This is not currently the standard and is starkly missing from the pedagogy of these programs (Diem & Carpenter, 2012, p. 105). This concept poses a challenge to the traditional power roles of the classroom with the teacher as the authority and the student as the subordinate through a "teacher/student with a collaborative model where both students and teachers cooperate in the critical intervention of social injustices" (Diem & Carpenter, 2012, p. 106). This method opens the teacher up to the possibility of learning from the student's ideas, thoughts, and values that only they possess. The art of teaching becomes a reciprocal practice rather than a one-sided practice.

Tatum (2003) considered reflection one of the chief elements all teachers must embrace to appropriately develop learning experiences for a diverse student population. Scholars such as Gooden and Dantley (2012) also suggest that critical reflection is especially important for aspiring leaders "as it can serve as motivation for transformative action in their leadership practice" (p. 14).

Interrogation of Race-Related Silences in the Classroom

It is commonly suggested that silence speaks louder than words. This concept addresses that idea as it relates to those race-related silences. It is tempting to assume that silence is compliance or omission, but Diem & Carpenter (2012) argue that race-related silences in the classroom are much more than that. Schultz (2009) employed sociocultural theory while working with elementary students to understand and work with student silence. Results of this study affirmed that teachers, including preservice teachers, should use careful observation and immersion to learn about the meanings behind their students' (Shultz, 2009). These silences are present in both the teachers and students, sometimes resulting from ingrained oppression, fear, ignorance, and flat-out resistance. Castagno (2008) posits that whiteness is legitimized by teacher silence around issues of race and other diverse and potentially uncomfortable ideas. This silence, according to Castagno (2008), "sends the message that race, and racism are either nonexistent—figments, perhaps, of students' imaginations—or unnecessary topics of thought and conversation—something students use to try to divert attention or stir up controversy" (p. 324). Educational researchers should examine the meanings behind the silences and demand the incorporation of "pedagogical strategies that surface issues of race and racism, while at the same time carefully exploring the existence of the silences that often occur" (Diem & Carpenter, 2012, p. 106).

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Culturally Diverse Instruction is the new "it" in education and is driven by multiculturalism. Culture is embedded into every concept and aspect of education, lesson plans, language, demeanor, dress, classroom expectations, and routines. Culture is central to learning. Culture holds a vital role in learning through the influence on communication, receiving information, and the overall thinking processes of the individuals in the classroom as well as the class as a whole (Diem & Carpenter, 2012). Ladson-Billings (2009) posits that pedagogical practices offer equitable access to education for a culturally diverse student body when they acknowledge, respond to, and celebrate fundamental cultures. Culturally Responsive Teaching is a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of

learning. While this is the new practice in her writings, Hooks (1994) suggests that many teachers avoid curriculum and practices that include race, class, and gender out of the fear of overwhelming emotions resulting in a classroom environment unconducive to learning and potentially dangerous. "The unwillingness to approach teaching from a standpoint that includes awareness of race, sex, and class is often rooted in the fear that classrooms will be uncontrollable, that emotions and passions will not be contained" (Hooks, 1994, p. 39). Furthermore, Hooks (1994) suggests that this avoidance may cause students of color to shut down as a result of discomfort, isolation, and lack of safety. It is the absence of belonging, safety, and inclusion that serves only to prolong the silence and lack of student engagement (Hooks, 1994).

The Curriculum

Diem & Carpenter (2012) assert that leaders in education must be provided with a rigorous curriculum that offers "multiple opportunities to participate in the reflective examination of the ideologies/concepts that often limit and/or block discussions focused on race from occurring" (p. 97). Osterman and Hafner (2009) posit that there was a lack of curriculum cohesiveness in preparation programs. A growing body of evidence that cohesiveness matters in exemplary preparation programs. For example, Darling-Hammond et al. (2010) found that in addition to research-based content, "curricular coherence linking goals, learning activities, and assessments around a set of shared values, beliefs, and knowledge" (p. 42).

Davis et al. (2013) recommended preparation programs built on adult learning theories advanced by Knowles et al. (2005) and Mezirow (1997), in which programs are contextually driven; include problem-based and on-the-job learning activities; supply candidates with coaching, mentoring, and peer networking opportunities; gradually release candidates to more practice-based responsibilities and to rely more on their own inquiry and problem-solving abilities. Arguably, these principles form the rationale for program features found throughout this review but may not always be explicitly articulated in the original publications.

A growing body of literature has examined how equity, diversity, and social justice are taught. For example, multiple authors have identified critical skills necessary for building social justice knowledge and skills, including

experience in self-reflection and critical consciousness (Christman, 2010; Diem & Carpenter, 2012), connecting theory with actions (Dentith & Peterlin, 2011), integrating social justice throughout the program rather than isolating it to one course (Diem & Carpenter, 2013), creating cognitive dissonance and concern (Guerra et al., 2012), assistance in identifying appropriate entry points for making change (Guerra et al., 2013), international practicum experiences (Richardson et al., 2013), and deliberative dialogue (Mutchler, 2011). Several scholars have critiqued this area of the curriculum. Among the concerns raised is the lack of research connecting issues of diversity and race with leadership preparation curriculum (Boske, 2012; Diem & Carpenter, 2012, 2013; Hernandez & McKenzie, 2010) and the lack of research on what an entire program oriented toward social justice would look like (Hernandez & McKenzie, 2010).

Harry Wong's Views Positive and Negative

For Wong, everything is about classroom management and giving teachers strategies and training that will help them become more "effective." It could be said that Wong only views curriculum as a procedure to help reach the objectives that were lined out in the lesson plan. How those objectives are achieved is not as important as if they were achieved at all. Null suggests that Wong "wants enough system so that his methods appeal to busy teachers but not so much that his solutions shackle teachers to the point of neglecting unique classroom circumstances" (2017, p. 127). So, he wants to write a prescription but not tell the patient exactly how to use it. While in medication, this is not a good thing, in classroom management, it gives the teacher more freedom to use his suggestions because the prescription is not written completely. We just take it as needed. "Part of Wong's success rests in the fact that teachers can use his techniques to achieve whatever ends they have in mind" (Null, 2017, p. 129).

Wong's notable successes have not been in the art of curriculum development but rather in training teachers on things like classroom management. However, Wong seems to be "more interested in identifying phrases, statements, and 'tricks of the trade' that will have wide appeal than he is with offering a long-term vision for curriculum and teaching" (Null, 2017, p. 128). It would seem that Wong is dismissive of the importance of curriculum and chooses

instead to focus on flashy sales tactics. Nevertheless, Wong has a prominent place in the world of teacher preparation. This is a required text in many educational preparation classes, and the lesson plans, objectives, and goals were considered the key to effective teaching. As suggested by Wong, classroom management is vital because a teacher cannot hope to be successful if there is no management; Wong places this over everything else. He is essentially saying that how you teach is more important than what or why you teach. This is a take on the negative aspects of Wong's position, but it also highlights the positives. Understanding the importance of classroom management to the effectiveness of teaching can be easy to overlook, but it is vital for an effective classroom. Wong does a great job of offering strategies that could be applied in many different ways, which allow the teacher to adapt them to the uniqueness of the classroom and a particular situation. Null describes this by stating that,

> Wong's language allows him to concentrate on "training" teachers to be "effective" without requiring them to agree with him or with each other about the purpose of schooling. Part of Wong's success rests in the fact that teachers can use his techniques to achieve whatever ends they have in mind…. This is classic pragmatic curricular philosophy, which, ironically enough, has the effect of avoiding curriculum almost entirely (p. 129).

This universality has dramatically enhanced the popularity of Wong's writing. Conversely, the lack of value placed on what and why of it all casts a negative light on his position and presents it as incomplete. He suggests that if a classroom has effective management, all of the other pieces will fall in line, but we are not sure that is all a teacher needs to know to be "effective." Ironically even Harry Wong is color-blind, but because he is touted at university's education preparation programs, he is allowed to continue the one size fits all approach to classroom management with limited resources focusing on diversity and how that affects behavior, attitudes, and responses. Until universities seek multicultural approaches and choose to incorporate the approaches into the mainstream, we will remain stagnant.

Tarleton's Year-Long Residency Teacher Program (YLR)

Higher education is both a challenge to and collector of culture, and any change must be approached with the utmost thoughtfulness. Kezar (2018) offers five guidelines to help navigate change (p. 123); they include:

1. Develop systematic, systemic institutional, and environmental assessments.

2. Work with individuals, be inclusive, and realize this is a human process.

3. Be aware of the distinctive characteristics of higher education.

4. Realize the need to develop your context-based model of change.

5. Balance

John Tarleton Agricultural College at Stephenville joined an earlier form of the TAMUS in 1917, and after joining, the name was changed to Tarleton State University. A teacher himself, the founder of Tarleton State University founder understood firsthand the importance of education to the success of every citizen. Founder John Tarleton hoped to establish a space where students could receive the kind of quality, affordable education that would ultimately contribute to their future success and, thus, the success of the nation.

Taking the lead from our benefactor, Tarleton has embarked on creating a year-long teacher preparation residency. When re-imaging any program of study, the importance of deep exploration into the relevant scholarship and literature cannot be understated. Understanding where the gaps are at the local, state, national, and international levels will help to ensure that this new path is forged by those most well-informed, educated, and qualified to do so. Tarleton is one of the first members of TAMUS to employ this new approach to teacher preparation. We are coming to the close of the pilot year. What follows is how we hope to help forge that new direction to produce highly qualified, culturally responsive, and socially just educators in the nation!

Texas is home to an extensively diverse student population which only reinforces the need for culturally diverse teaching styles, methods, and strategies. With the support of their cooperating teacher, students will have the opportunity to apply their knowledge gained throughout their program to make them successful in the classroom. The YLR program seeks to heed the call for teachers who are able to meet the students where they are in the classroom. The YLR program recognizes that teacher candidates must not only possess a great deal of subject matter knowledge they must also be well versed in pedagogical practices to be able to communicate that knowledge. Tarleton will partner with rural and urban districts to immerse education majors in the experience that cannot be found in a textbook for two full semesters. According to a 2016 Harvard study, there have been innumerable discussions around inequity due to educational access because of economic mobility and privilege. In fact, the conversation is and has been that the ZIP code in which you are raised is often an indicator of how much access you will have to services, education, and ultimately income in the long term. Katz (as cited by Pazzanese, 2016) describes this dilemma when he states,

> But what we have been seeing is rising inequality with stagnant mobility, which means that the consequences of where you start, whether it's in a poor neighborhood, whether it's from a single-parent household, are more consequential today than in the past. Your ZIP code and the exact characteristics of your parents seem to matter more.

Findlay (1992) suggests that the current methods by which teachers obtain professional competencies may not be the most appropriate for preparing them for real-world application. By reducing the theory aspect of teacher education to only what is needed to perfect the practice, the prospective teacher will be trained to cope with various situations that may be encountered in the real-world classroom. Christina Bain alleges that effective teachers not only have a certification proving content knowledge, but they also possess something more intangible, such as understanding of the cultural climate and their students (2004). While university teacher education programs provide theoretical knowledge such as the developmental stages, theory does not guarantee that clinical teachers understand how to apply this knowledge in the actual classroom (Bain, 2004). Bain also asserts her doubts that a single test can predict the future of teaching success.

Transcendent Educational Leadership

Transcendent leadership involves accepting another's differences (values, culture, etc.), respecting another, being present when discussing with another, having the courage to self-reflect, appreciating and showing compassion towards another, and equity for the benefit of another (Stabens, 2017). Using these characteristics, we perceive educational leadership to include culturally relevant teaching in their school; showing respect to all students and staff; being present in the moment--actively listening--when speaking with students and staff; self-reflecting regularly to ensure growth for self, students, and staff; showing compassion to students and staff--trauma-informed care; and finally, possibly revising traditionally held beliefs in education that are not as beneficial as was once thought.

In their foundational text on leadership, Bensimon and Neumann write, "Team-oriented leadership assumes that differences exist among people -- searching actively and affirmatively for them and seeking to bring them to light -- rather than insisting on talking only about the views that people share in common" (1994, p. 30). Being a leader who can be proactive and highlight other innovative leaders within teacher education programs has multiple benefits. First, it can allow for a democratic process to take place. This means that decisions made to adapt to changing circumstances have buy-in and vetting from the people who are likely on the decision's frontlines.

Second, this type of leadership fosters a sense of the need to continue learning. By challenging the idea that a leader is the person with all the knowledge, a leader who pools from the collective wisdom demonstrates vulnerability and trust. As Bensimon and Neumann go on to say, "It fosters the continued development of people's intrinsic differences, rather than covering them up" (1994, p. 32). When we think of leaders as singular individuals, we can inadvertently homogenize the people they represent and support. This can lead to a deeply divided communication climate. Whereas, if a leader works with and reflects the group, it can be easier to navigate massive change. The leader, in this case, is the teacher preparation educator and the graduated teacher in the classroom.

Conclusion and Discussion

At the time of publication, Tarleton has completed the year-long residency pilot. The pilot started with approximately 24 undergraduate EC-6 students in their final year before graduation. Tarleton partnered with 2 Texas school districts to accomplish this pilot. We are pleased to report that all the approximately 24 students have completed the pilot and are in the process of completing their certification exams to enter the workforce. Moving forward, Tarleton students must take and pass their teacher certification exams before completing the year-long residency. After the success of this pilot, five additional Texas school districts have agreed to participate in Tarleton's year-long residency program.

Additionally, Tarleton has announced that the year-long residency is available to all EC-6 preservice teachers and will soon replace the traditional method of educator preparation at Tarleton. The vision for this program is to transform teacher preparation at Tarleton for all levels and eventually Texas and beyond. Tarleton is eager to see the results of this innovative approach to teacher education.

Diem & Carpenter (2012) conclude by calling for preparation programs to include "a purposeful focus on building the critical dialogical skills necessary to facilitate antiracist conversations" (p. 97). This will require an in-depth look at the five issues/concepts discussed above. It is not the idea that we cannot change the current educational leaders' frame of mind that this article was written. Instead sheds light on the root of some of the issues we are facing. The preparation programs are the sun, water, and soil that allow educational leaders to grow. Preservice leaders are most impressionable in those programs because they may not know any different. They are looking to their professors as the subject matter experts because that is what they have been led to believe. Many of the current programs segregate issues of diversity and race into a single course allowing some professors to avoid the topic altogether in other courses. This is to the detriment of not only the student but the professor as well. These issues should be incorporated into every course because future leaders will encounter these topics at every step of their professional journey. We regret that disability was not addressed more directly as part of diversity in this discussion. Still, we also understand that this is a big topic to tackle and thus should be afforded much more time.

The notion of equity as sameness only makes sense when all students are exactly the same. All children have different needs and addressing those needs directly is the best way to address them equitably. A one size fits all approach is a one size fits none problem. The same is true in the classroom. When teachers pretend not to see the racial and ethnic differences of their students, they are not able to see the students at all, which limits their ability to meet their educational needs (Ladson-Billings,1994). (Diem & Carpenter, 2012). In other words, we cannot treat all students (or staff members) the same. We have to take into consideration differences and how best to address those differences to produce equity. We must assist staff, teachers, and students in thinking about their intersectionality and making connections between their various identities. We must help students (and staff sometimes) consider the knowledge they already possess inside themselves instead of waiting for someone to "dispense" knowledge. We must build genuine rapport with stakeholders (students, staff, parents, community members). We must allow teachers to work collaboratively instead of traditional teaching in isolation. As educational leaders, we have to ensure all involved in our schools ensure equity in classrooms and any interaction with students. This equity includes culturally relevant practices.

We have also found, like many other 'uncomfortable' topics, there is no real effort to start a conversation about a particular event and its implications. It would be difficult, no doubt, to start, maintain, and keep civil any potentially controversial conversation. To be fair, many faculty are also being pushed to their limits just to keep up with the departmentally established requirements and curriculum, but this needs to come from the top down. We have to be willing to take ownership of our history, ideologies, and impact on others rather than rely on 'I am just going to be a good person if we hope to address these issues.

Discussion of controversial issues can deepen understanding, promote political interest, and help students develop skills needed to discuss and critically analyze controversial issues to aid in their efforts to understand their own beliefs and thoughts (Hess & McAvoy, 2014). Most students get their information from social media, which just regurgitates the popular conservative/liberal themes. When taken at the surface level, a proper understanding cannot be achieved. Having access to the information is not the problem it is understanding,

assessing, and evaluating the information we lack. We need to teach students how to recognize things like false ideologies and efforts that further social injustice. Further, Hess and McAvoy (2014)

> do not believe that merely teaching young people to deliberate will transform society. … Nevertheless, [deliberative values] can promote more productive classrooms, friendships, families, workplaces, and community organizations and can also shape how young people evaluate what is appropriate behavior in the public sphere (p. 9)

As we look at an ever-changing world, keeping in mind that leaders must be contextual and systematic is a different quality of a leader. Recognizing the need for culturally responsive, highly trained, and capable (not just educated) educators TAMUS is leading the way in creating a yearlong residency with these specific needs in mind. As we move forward into the new world of educator preparation services, we hope that the concepts outlined in this paper find a place in Tarleton's YLR program. Through this initiative, Tarleton hopes to help lead the TAMUS into a new world of teacher education that will meet our state's growing, diverse needs. We hope this work will aid other universities seeking to develop a more socially just and culturally responsive educator preparation program.

Culturally responsive teaching isn't a set of engagement strategies you use on students. Instead, think of it as a mindset, a way of looking at the world. Too often, we focus on only doing something to culturally and linguistically diverse students without changing ourselves, especially when our students are dependent learners who are not able to access their full academic potential on their own.

Zaretta Hammond
"Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain"
(2015, p.52)

Pitts (2016) poignantly states that teachers "may be uncomfortable talking about race, but we can no longer afford to be silent. We have chosen a profession, which— like parenting—requires that our comforts come second to those of children."

At the time of this writing, school boards, superintendents, principals, and teachers across the nation

are facing questions about critical race theory curriculum and its place in our schools. This debate will have a considerable bearing on the future of all EPP programs and pedagogical practices as we know them. This current research does not allow for the time nor the space to unpack this extensive, intricate, and controversial dilemma. It would be beneficial and insightful for future research to explore the specific impact of CRT on EPPs.

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