PROFESSIONAL LEARNING TO STRENGTHEN TEACHER PREPARATION FOR URBAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

by
Valentine Ames Burr

A dissertation submitted to Johns Hopkins University in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

Baltimore, Maryland
June 2021
Abstract

The United States struggles to prepare teachers for urban public schools serving under-resourced communities. A needs assessment revealed that at Oakes College, a graduate school of teacher and leadership education, graduate students in the teacher preparation programs had strong teacher-self efficacy and self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice but expressed low commitment to teach in urban public schools serving under-resourced communities. Faculty expressed mixed perspectives about their role with many reporting they did not see their role as being to influence students’ urban commitment. Based on these findings, the researcher designed and implemented an intervention to engage graduate teacher education faculty in a community of practice (CoP) constructed with appreciative inquiry principles. The CoP focused on strengthening faculty’s orientation towards public schools and their teaching and field practices to support candidate self-efficacy for and commitment to urban public schools. The group was comprised of seven faculty participants and was investigated over a 5-month period. A qualitative dominant mixed methods study assessed the intervention process and outcomes. Findings included that the CoP developed a strong learning community among participants with high levels of collegial engagement. The majority of participants developed practices to better support students in urban public schools. In addition, there was evidence for shifts in orientation about the importance of centering public schools and engaging in wider conversations about the larger mission of the college related to preparing candidates for public schools. Implications for practice and further research are discussed along with study limitations.

Keywords: community of practice, appreciative inquiry, professional learning, teacher preparation, teacher education faculty, urban education, higher education

Dissertation Advisor: Dr. Carey Borkoski
Dedication

Dedicated to my husband, Steve, for supporting me to the moon and back, and to my sons, Silas and Quinn, for keeping my feet on the ground.
Acknowledgments

Early in my doctoral journey my advisor, Dr. Carey Borkoski, shared advice with her students to approach feedback with gratitude. It has been easy to feel grateful every step along the way for Dr. Borkoski’s guidance. Your feedback has enriched me and improved this work. I am thankful for your support, wisdom, and care. I am grateful as well to the rest of my committee, Dr. Beth Kobett and Dr. Eric Rice. Your questions sharpened my thinking and your feedback strengthened my writing. I left each conversation with you confident and energized.

I am grateful as well to my peers, particularly those of you in the 2018 cohort. Your humor, caring, and intellectual depths buoyed and inspired me. Just when one more discussion board was going to be the death of me, someone would write a post that sparked my thinking—or a smile. Comps would not have been possible without my (several) wonderful study groups. I look forward to staying connected and seeing you out in the real world.

This dissertation would not have been possible without the partnership of my colleagues and the Dean. I am lucky to work in a community committed to principles of social justice and among colleagues and friends who care deeply about each other, our students, and our work. Endless gratitude to the members of the community of practice who are at the heart of this project.

Finally, I offer thanks not only to my loves, Steve, Silas, and Quinn, but to my larger family. Thank you to my parents, Barbara and Win, who have supported me always, and to the extended Burrs and Friedmans who provide me and our whole family with so much love.
## Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>IX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>XI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROBLEM OF PRACTICE</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO CHALLENGES IN PREPARING TEACHERS FOR URBAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTEXT</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRENGTHS AND NEEDS AT OAKES COLLEGE</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs Assessment Design</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs Assessment Findings</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRENGTHENING TEACHER PREPARATION FOR URBAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Learning for Faculty</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRENGTHENING TEACHER PREPARATION FOR URBAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS AT OAKES COLLEGE</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Design</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Findings</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROBLEM OF PRACTICE</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trends in Teacher Turnover and Sorting and Their Effects on Achievement</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO CHALLENGES IN PREPARING TEACHERS FOR URBAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sociocultural, Historical, and Political Factors ................................................................. 24
School Characteristic Factors .............................................................................................. 28
Teacher Characteristic Factors ......................................................................................... 33
Teacher Education Factors ............................................................................................... 39
Summary of Factors ........................................................................................................... 41

CHAPTER 2 ......................................................................................................................... 43

CONTEXT ............................................................................................................................. 44
PURPOSE OF THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT ........................................................................ 44
Research Questions ............................................................................................................ 45
METHODS ............................................................................................................................ 45
Population ............................................................................................................................ 46
Recruitment and Participants ............................................................................................ 47
Constructs ............................................................................................................................ 49
Instruments .......................................................................................................................... 52
Data Analysis ...................................................................................................................... 55
RESULTS ............................................................................................................................... 58
Teacher Self-Efficacy and Self-Efficacy for Culturally Responsive Practice ....................... 58
Commitment to Teaching in Urban Public Schools .............................................................. 69
Teacher Preparation Experiences and Urban Commitment .................................................. 75
Faculty Role in Developing Urban Commitment .................................................................. 82
Programmatic Implications ................................................................................................. 89
DISCUSSION .......................................................................................................................... 90

CHAPTER 3 ......................................................................................................................... 95

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .............................................................................................. 96
Constructivist and Transformative Paradigms ...................................................................... 97
Sociocultural Theory and Situated Learning Theory ............................................................. 98
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Learning to Strengthen Teacher Preparation for Public Schools</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Learning for Faculty</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening Teacher Preparation for Urban Public Schools</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention Overview</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 4</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes and Theory of Change</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Study Design</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 5</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Evaluation Findings</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adherence</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes Evaluation Findings</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shifts in Role</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shifts in Knowledge, Practice, and Perspectives</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications for Practice</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications for Research</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

Table 2.1. Operational Definitions of Study Constructs.................................................................50
Table 2.2. Student and Alumni Interview Codes and Themes Related to Self-Efficacy for Culturally Responsive Practice.................................................................56
Table 2.3. Student and Alumnae Interview Codes and Themes Related to Urban Commitment...56
Table 2.4. Faculty Interview Codes and Themes............................................................................57
Table 2.5. Means and Standard Deviations for Items on the TSE for All Respondents..............59
Table 2.6. Means and Standard Deviations for Items on the CRSE for All Respondents............62
Table 2.7. Survey Responses: Intent to Seek a Job in an Under-Resourced Public School by Length of Fieldwork Placement..................................................................................70
Table 2.8. Interviewees’ Intent to Teach in Public Schools..........................................................70
Table 2.9. Means and Standard Deviations for Items Adapted from the UTB...............................73
Table 2.10. Faculty Role in Developing Students’ Commitment to Teaching in Urban Public Schools..........................................................................................................................82
Table 4.1. Operational Definitions of Study Constructs.................................................................151
Table 4.2. Evolution of the Outcomes Questions.........................................................................158
Table 5.1. Definition of Codes and Subcodes for Adherence Analysis.........................................163
Table 5.2. Adherence Matrix......................................................................................................165
Table 5.3. Evolution of Codes and Themes for Analysis of CoP Activities and Interactions.......173
Table 5.4. Evolution of Codes and Themes for Analysis of Faculty Experience..........................184
Table 5.5. Change to Faculty’s Sense of Their Role in Developing Students’ Intent to Teach in Urban Public Schools.................................................................................................194
Table 5.6. Definitions, Codes, and Themes for Knowledge Capital.............................................202
Table 5.7. Definitions, Codes, and Themes for Shifts in Practice................................................207
Table 5.8. Practices Shared During Session 2.................................................................209

Table 5.9. Codes and Themes for Shifts in Perspective.................................................222
List of Figures

Figure 1.1. Ecological Systems Theory Model of Factors Influencing Teacher Preparation and Retention..........................................................22

Figure 2.1. Frequency Across Respondents of the Mean of All Items for the TSE Figure........60
Figure 2.2. Frequency Across Respondents of the Mean of All Items for the CRSE.................64
Figure 2.3. Frequency Across Respondents of the Mean of All Items for the UTB....................74

Figure 3.1. Relationship Between the Theoretical Frameworks and the Intervention Studies Under Review..........................................................97

Figure 3.2. Relationship Between Theoretical Frameworks, Research Literature, and the Intervention........................................................................129

Figure 5.1. Intervention Timeline........................................................................164
Executive Summary

All students deserve to learn in a school with a stable, well-prepared teaching faculty that can honor their strengths and identities. This is a goal the country aspires to and has yet to fully realize. The following study sought to examine the strengths and vulnerabilities of a small urban school of teacher education related to its candidates’ preparation for urban public schools. Findings from a needs assessment and a review of research on professional learning and strong practices in urban teacher preparation informed an intervention study with faculty aimed at strengthening faculty practices and orientations towards urban public school preparation.

Problem of Practice

The U.S. struggles to prepare teachers who will seek out and persist in urban public schools. Currently, 40-50% of teachers leave the profession within their first five years, and this turnover rate disproportionately affects urban public schools (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2018; Ingersoll, Merrill, Stuckey, & Collins, 2018). In addition, public schools in under-resourced communities have difficulty attracting highly qualified teachers (Jacob, 2007). Teacher attrition, in turn, contributes to poor achievement for many students, particularly children of color and children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013). Although Oakes College¹ (herein referred to as Oakes), a college of teacher and leader preparation located in New York City, produces nationally recognized practitioners (Lit & Darling-Hammond, 2015²), fewer than half of the graduates from the teacher preparation programs seek positions in public

1 Oakes is a pseudonym.
2 This reference has been anonymized to protect the identity of the institution.
schools, and many report feeling underprepared to teach in under-resourced communities (Oakes College, 2017a, 2017b).

**Factors Contributing to Challenges in Preparing Teachers for Urban Public Schools**

Teachers’ commitments to urban public schools are shaped by conditions in their Microsystems, such as the characteristics of their teacher education programs, as well as larger social and historical forces. For this reason, ecological systems theory provided a useful framework for analyzing these factors and their intersections (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

Teacher preparation for urban public schools occurs against a backdrop of challenges facing public schooling and the teaching profession. Deficit narratives about urban communities and the racialized achievement gap persist (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Historical effects of racial segregation have contributed to unequal schooling conditions and learning outcomes (Reardon, Kalogrides, & Shores, 2019; Rothstein, 2013). In addition, an accountability-driven approach to K-12 schooling and teacher preparation has contributed to the ongoing de-professionalization of the field (Cohen-Vogel, 2005; Mehta, 2014).

These larger contextual forces contribute to more proximal factors, such as the characteristics of urban schools themselves. Schools with high percentages of children of color and low student achievement have difficulty attracting teachers and have higher rates of teacher turnover (Horng, 2009; Scafidi, Sjoquist, & Stinebrickner, 2007). Schools with low collegiality and poor leadership also have high rates of attrition (Marinell & Coca, 2013; Simon & Johnson, 2015).

Teacher characteristics are another influence on career pathways. White teachers are less likely to persist in urban public schools (Ingersoll, Merrill, Stuckey, & Collins, 2018) yet

---

3 These references have been anonymized to protect the identity of the institution.
represent about 80% of the nation’s teachers (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2020). Teachers with low self-efficacy for working in culturally diverse contexts (Siwatu, 2011a) and low urban commitment (Creasey, Mays, Lee, & D’Santiago, 2016) have high rates of turnover in urban public schools. Urban commitment is also influenced by the K-12 schools teachers attended (Whipp & Geronime, 2017) and characteristics of their preparation programs.

Teacher education programs can influence teachers’ readiness to teach in urban public schools. Teachers who have weaker preparation have higher rates of attrition from the field (DeAngelis, Wall, & Che, 2013). Lack of time spent training in urban public schools (Whipp & Geronime, 2017), as well as a dearth of coursework on developing culturally sustaining practices (Siwatu, 2011a, 2011b), contribute to low commitment to teaching in urban public schools.

**Context**

Oakes is a graduate school of education founded over 100 years ago on principles of progressivism and social justice (Oakes College, n.d.⁴). In the fall of 2018, there were 549 students enrolled at the college and 26 faculty in the teacher preparation programs. The college offers a range of teacher preparation programs, including programs in early childhood and childhood, general and special education, literacy, and bilingual education.

**Strengths and Needs at Oakes College**

To better understand the factors that contribute to Oakes students’ career pathways, I conducted a mixed methods needs assessment. The purpose of the needs assessment was to investigate factors that may influence Oakes students’ decisions to seek out or avoid urban public schools. I also sought to uncover faculty thinking about their role in developing students’ urban commitment. The following research questions (RQ) guided the assessment.

---

⁴ This reference has been anonymized to protect the identity of the institution.
RQ 1: What level of teacher self-efficacy and self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice do recent alumni and current students report?

RQ 2: To what degree do recent alumni and current students report a sense of urban commitment?

RQ 3: How do alumni and current students describe the relationship between their teacher preparation experiences and their urban commitment?

RQ 4: What do faculty think is their role in the development of students’ urban commitment?

**Needs Assessment Design**

The study was a convergent mixed methods design, employing Creswell and Plano Clark’s typology of mixed methods design (2018). I collected quantitative data in the spring of 2019 from students and alumni via a survey comprised of existing validated instruments. The survey was sent to 740 alumni and enrolled students, with 120 completing, and was analyzed using descriptive methods. Qualitative data were gathered concurrently through interviews with students, alumni, and faculty. I interviewed eight current students and alumni, and four faculty. Participants were selected using purposive sampling methods. I used a priori and emergent codes to analyze interview data.

**Needs Assessment Findings**

The needs assessment revealed strengths as well as opportunities for further development related to the preparation of Oakes candidates for urban public schools. Participants reported strong general teacher self-efficacy and self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice. Participants expressed lower self-efficacy for teaching in urban public schools, and the majority expressed low commitment to teaching in urban public schools. Those who expressed a strong commitment came to the college with this orientation. Participants who had fewer experiences in public schools reported lower urban commitment. In addition,
participants felt they did not have enough support translating what they learned at Oakes to public school contexts and described negative rhetoric at the college related to urban public schools. Finally, faculty expressed a range of perspectives about their role. Most faculty, however, did not see their role as cultivating commitment to teaching in urban public schools.

**Strengthening Teacher Preparation for Urban Public Schools**

The findings from the needs assessment revealed opportunities to strengthen urban teacher preparation at Oakes, specifically faculty’s role with students and the practices faculty employ in their teaching and field supervision. Sociocultural and situated learning theory, which hold that learning is a contextual and socially constructed process (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; Cobb & Bowers, 1999; Lave & Wenger, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978), provided a framework for reviewing the literature on professional learning in education as well as practices that support strong preparation for urban public schools. These theoretical orientations also undergirded the intervention design that emerged from the literature.

**Professional Learning for Faculty**

Effective professional learning in education is content-focused, provides opportunities for active construction of learning, is coherent with institutional goals, is sustained over time, and integrates opportunities for collaboration (Desimone & Garet, 2015). Larger change processes in higher education are strengthened when stakeholders have a voice in developing a vision of change (McKinney & Capper, 2010; Klempin & Karp, 2018) and when structures for engagement are clear and collaborative (Dempster, Benfield, & Francis, 2012; McKinney & Capper, 2010). Two effective approaches to structuring faculty development are communities of practice (CoP, Lave & Wenger, 1990) and appreciative inquiry (AI, Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). These models support faculty in strengthening practice, building a learning culture, and engaging in transformative change processes (Golden, 2016; He & Oxendine, 2019).
Strengthening Teacher Preparation for Urban Public Schools

Programs that successfully prepare teachers for urban public schools share some characteristics, and these can inform the content of professional learning for teacher education faculty. Time spent learning in public school classrooms can enhance candidates’ perceptions of urban settings (Bleicher, 2011; Matsko & Hammerness, 2014), strengthen their culturally responsive practices (Bleicher, 2011; Matsko & Hammerness, 2014), and positively affect urban commitment (Bleicher, 2011; Roegman, Pratt, Goodwin, & Akin, 2017; White, 2017). In addition, coursework that grounds candidates in the realities of urban public schools can increase self-efficacy for teaching for those contexts (Fitchett, Starker, & Salyers, 2012; Matsko & Hammerness, 2014; Waddell, 2013), urban commitment (Fitchett et al., 2012; Lee, Eckrich, Lackey, & Showalter, 2010), as well as the development of culturally responsive practices (Matsko & Hammerness, 2014; Waddell, 2013).

Strengthening Teacher Preparation for Urban Public Schools at Oakes College

I used the principles of effective professional learning and research on strong teacher preparation for urban public schools to design a CoP aimed at addressing the findings of the needs assessment, specifically that faculty could do more to strengthen students’ urban commitment and confidence to teach in public schools. The CoP, which was grounded in an AI structure, met monthly for the full 2020-2021 academic year. The intervention study focused on the first five sessions, which occurred from October through February. During these sessions, faculty shared and developed practices for application later in the spring semester. The CoP was comprised of seven teacher education faculty and six non-participant members from other areas of the college. Non-participant members participated fully in the CoP but as they were not faculty in the Teaching and Learning Department, I did not collect or analyze data from these members of the group.
**Study Design**

The intended short-term outcomes of the CoP were for faculty to develop a stronger commitment to cultivating students’ urban intent and to begin to broaden the practices they drew on in course instruction and field supervision. The CoP sought to generate momentum to spark larger institutional change, with a more distal goal of increasing the number of Oakes graduates who teach in urban public schools. To explore both the process of the CoP and short-term outcomes, I framed the study with the following questions:

**Process evaluation questions.**

RQ 1: In what ways did the activities and goals of the CoP adhere to the intended plan?

RQ 2: What activities and interactions did faculty engage in as members of the CoP?

RQ 3: How do faculty describe their experiences in the CoP?

**Outcomes evaluation questions.**

RQ 4: How did faculty conception of their role in developing students’ intent to teach in urban public schools change over the course of the intervention?

RQ 5: In what ways did this intervention develop a CoP in which members generated knowledge, developed practice, and shifted perspectives?

**Methods.** The study employed a convergent parallel mixed methods design with emphasis given to the qualitative methods and data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Quantitative data sources and instruments included attendance data along with a pre- and post-intervention survey. Qualitative data was generated from session agendas, transcripts, and session notes; notes from inter-session meetings with participants; CoP artifacts; and semi-structured post-intervention interviews with each participant. I used a priori and emergent codes in my analysis.
Study Findings

Data analysis yielded findings related to the study’s core constructs: adherence; engagement; experience; shifts in role; and shifts in knowledge, practice, and perspectives.

Adherence. The level of adherence to the intervention design was high with small variations to the original plan. Variations occurred in response to contextual factors and allowed the intervention to be responsive to the needs and interests of the group.

Engagement. Levels of attendance and participation were also high. The core activity participants engaged in was sharing faculty practice. In addition, programmatic and institutional practices were explored. Patterns also emerged about the nature of collegial interactions, the role of reflection in the CoP, as well as the presence of more challenging moments.

Experience. Participants described being part of the CoP, particularly the opportunity to engage deeply with colleagues around problems of practice, as a positive experience. Although the experience was described as positive by all participants, there were also tensions that emerged, as well as recommendations to strengthen the work.

Shifts in Role. The majority of participants articulated having a stronger sense of commitment to preparing students for positions in public schools, with variations across participants. One participant did not show much evidence of shift, and one participant described feeling a greater confusion about her role.

Shifts in Knowledge, Practice, and Perspectives. There was some evidence for the generation of knowledge capital among participants, although less than the evidence for the development of practice. Over the course of the intervention, participants strengthened the ways they centered public school content more explicitly in their teaching. In addition, participants generated ideas for shifts in programmatic and institutional practices. Finally, many participants’ perspectives shifted over the course of the CoP. Several described developing a
more positive orientation towards public schools. A shared desire to examine the larger mission of the graduate school related to teacher preparation for public schools emerged.

**Conclusions.** In sum, this study contributes to research that has found that CoPs can support collegial engagement, be spaces to share and build practice, and provide opportunities to examine larger personal and organizational values. A CoP can provide a space for higher education faculty to share and build practices together aimed at nurturing students’ urban commitment. The study findings also lead to recommendations for more research on faculty learning and change processes in teacher education, and on the role that faculty and program mission can have on teacher preparation for urban public schools serving under-resourced communities.
Chapter 1

Schools in the United States (U.S.) struggle to provide high-quality, equitable education for all children (McFarland et al., 2018). According to a U.S. Department of Education report, only 37% of the country’s 12th graders scored at or above proficient in reading, and a mere 25% scored at or above proficient in math (McFarland et al., 2018). One dimension of this problem is that public schools serving under-resourced communities have difficulty attracting and retaining skilled teachers (Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2018) whose practices support student achievement (Hanushek, Rivkin, & Schiman, 2016; Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013; Sass, Hannaway, Xu, Figlio, & Feng, 2012) and affirm the cultural (Siwatu, 2011a, 2011b) and linguistic (López, 2016; Sharif & López, 2019) assets of their students.

High teacher turnover and challenges with teacher recruitment contribute to school instability and poor student learning outcomes. Nationally (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2018; Ingersoll, Merrill, Stuckey, & Collins, 2018) and locally in New York City (NYC, Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2009; Marinell & Coca, 2013), teacher turnover rates are high, and this has negative consequences, particularly for the learning outcomes of students of color and students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Hanushek et al., 2016; Ronfeldt, Loeb, et al., 2013; Sass et al., 2012). Public schools serving under-resourced communities have difficulty filling open positions (Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2018), and high teacher turnover disrupts school stability (Hanushek et al., 2016; Sass et al., 2012).

Contributing factors to the problem of teacher commitment to and retention in urban public schools range from macro-level historical and political forces (Cohen-Vogel, 2005; Reardon, Kalogrides, & Shores, 2019; Rothstein, 2013), to more immediate factors including teacher characteristics (Aaronson, Barrow, & Sander, 2007; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rockoff, Jacob, Kane, & Staiger, 2011; Sass et al., 2012; Siwatu, 2011a,

The context for this study is a teacher education program, Oakes College5 (herein referred to as Oakes). A graduate school of teacher and leader education located in NYC, Oakes is over 100 years old and was founded on principles of progressivism and social justice (Oakes College, n.d.). Since its inception, Oakes has worked closely with NYC public schools. Over the years, the college has expanded its reach to partner with public schools and districts around the country (Oakes College, n.d.). Despite Oakes’s long history with public schools, current students and recent alumni are more likely to seek teaching positions in independent schools than they are to seek positions in public schools, exacerbating the larger issue of the inequitable distribution of a stable, high-quality teaching force. The issues facing Oakes parallel issues in the field, and the literature review that follows explores a range of factors that contribute to the problem of teacher preparation for urban public schools serving under-resourced communities.

Throughout the literature on inequity in education and teacher preparation, researchers use a wide range of terms, often interchangeably, to describe underserved children, schools, and communities. Some of this language, particularly terms that describe or allude to the racial and socioeconomic make-up of schools and communities, is problematic (Rodriguez, 1998; Spencer, 2008). Urban, for example, is frequently used as shorthand to describe public, high-

5 Oakes is a pseudonym.
6 This reference has been anonymized to protect the identity of the institution.
poverty, city schools with high percentages of students of color and/or emergent multilingual students (Chou & Tozer, 2008; Matsko & Hammerness, 2014), although of course not all urban schools fit this profile.

Given its prevalence in the literature, however, urban is a difficult term to avoid. Schools with high percentages of students of color and students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are also variously described as high-minority (Ingersoll, May, & Collins, 2017), low performing (Marinell & Coca, 2013), underperforming (Carey, 2014; Marinell & Coca, 2013), low achieving (Lankford et al., 2002), high poverty (Ingersoll et al., 2017), and low income (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Lankford et al., 2002). To avoid deficit language that locates systemic failures within individuals (Spencer, 2008) and avoid euphemisms, I use the phrase, public schools serving under-resourced communities, to describe schools serving large populations of historically marginalized youth, many of whom are students of color living close to or below the poverty line (Carey, 2014; Spencer, 2008). When I describe specific research studies, I will use the language of the authors. In some cases, I will use constructs, such as urban commitment and urban intent, that are defined in the literature. Finally, I will also use the word urban as a qualifier to describe schools serving under-resourced communities that are located in cities.

In addition, I refer throughout to public and independent schools. In NYC, most private schools refer to themselves as independent and the terms independent and private are used interchangeably. For the purposes of this study, I include public charter schools in the category of public, although in some research and with some participants public charter and traditional public schools are treated as separate categories.

**Problem of Practice**

The challenge of preparing teachers who pursue and remain in public schools serving under-resourced communities in the U.S. contributes to persistently poor educational outcomes
for the children who grow up in such communities (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Eckert, 2013; Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2018; Ingersoll, Merrill, Stuckey, & Collins, 2018; Ronfeldt, Kwok, & Reininger, 2016; Ronfeldt, Loeb, et al., 2013; Scafidi et al., 2007). Currently, 40-50% of teachers leave the profession within their first five years, and this turnover rate disproportionately affects schools with high percentages of children of color and children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2018; Ingersoll, Merrill, Stuckey, & Collins, 2018). In addition, public schools in under-resourced communities have difficulty attracting highly qualified teachers, as defined by certification and preparation, as more qualified teachers tend to sort themselves into more well-resourced schools (Jacob, 2007; Lankford et al., 2002). Sorting in this context refers to the variable distribution of teachers with different characteristics across schools (Lankford et al., 2002), and turnover, also referred to as attrition, refers to patterns of teacher movement out of or between schools (Ingersoll, 2001). Teacher sorting and turnover contribute to poor achievement for many students, particularly children of color and children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Ronfeldt, Loeb, et al., 2013).

The challenge of preparing teachers with strong urban commitment is one with which Oakes grapples. Although Oakes produces nationally recognized practitioners whose retention rates in the field exceed national averages (Lit & Darling-Hammond, 2015⁷), the college faces challenges in preparing candidates who choose to pursue teaching positions in public schools. According to the Director of Career Services at Oakes, fewer than half of the graduates from the teacher preparation programs seek positions in public schools (M. Harris⁸, personal

---

⁷ This reference has been anonymized to protect the identity of the institution.
⁸ M. Harris is a pseudonym.
In addition, findings from exit and alumni survey data (Oakes College, 2017a, 2017b) suggest that many Oakes graduates feel underprepared to teach in under-resourced communities. These patterns at Oakes mirror larger challenges the field faces in preparing teachers who can support positive learning outcomes for historically marginalized youth.

**Trends in Teacher Turnover and Sorting and Their Effects on Achievement**

To more deeply understand the factors that contribute to the U.S.’s challenge in preparing teachers for public schools serving under-resourced communities, it is important to examine national and local trends in teacher sorting and turnover. The Nation as a whole, as well as New York State (NYS) and NYC, have had consistently high rates of teacher attrition. Teacher sorting and attrition patterns have a direct bearing on student learning outcomes (Hanushek et al., 2004; Lankford et al., 2002; Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2018; Ronfeldt, Loeb, et al., 2013).

**National trends.** Teacher turnover is a persistent and serious problem in K-12 schooling across the U.S. (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2018; Ingersoll, Merrill, Stuckey, & Collins, 2018). Concerns about teacher turnover and related fears of teacher shortages came to national attention in the 1980s, though initial attempts to understand this problem failed to fully account for the causes (Darling-Hammond, 1984; Ingersoll, 2001; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). The prevailing belief among researchers at the time was that teacher shortages were largely a function of retirement and student enrollment increases (Grissmer & Kirby, 1997; Ingersoll, 2001; Murnane, 1987). Ingersoll (2001) disrupted this narrative in a widely cited study of national teacher turnover patterns that examined data from 6,700 teachers using

---

9 These references have been anonymized to protect the identity of the institution.
the 1990-1992 U.S. Department of Education's Schools and Staffing Surveys and Teacher Follow-Up Surveys. Ingersoll found the teacher turnover rate to be 13.2%, a rate that was high in comparison to similar professions such as nursing. Retirements represented only 12% of teacher attrition in Ingersoll’s study, with the majority of teachers reporting job dissatisfaction as their primary reason for leaving the profession. Ingersoll also looked at the relationship between school characteristics and turnover, finding that high-poverty schools had higher rates of turnover than affluent schools.

Twenty years later, teacher turnover patterns in the U.S. have worsened (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2018; Ingersoll, Merrill, Stuckey, & Collins, 2018; Simon & Johnson, 2015). Ingersoll and colleagues (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2018; Ingersoll, Merrill, Stuckey, & Collins, 2018) returned to the U.S. Department of Education’s Schools and Staffing Surveys and Teacher Follow-Up Surveys from 2012-2013 and found that rates of teacher turnover had increased 27% since the 1990s. Rates of teacher turnover were 11 percentage points higher than rates for nurses, and 16 percentage points higher than rates for engineers (Ingersoll, Merrill, Stuckey, & Collins, 2018). New teachers are particularly vulnerable to attrition, with half of new teachers leaving the profession altogether within their first five years (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2018; Ingersoll, Merrill, Stuckey, & Collins, 2018). Public schools serving under-resourced communities continue to have disproportionately higher rates of teacher turnover as compared to suburban, whiter, and wealthier schools (Hanushek et al., 2004; Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2018; Ingersoll, Merrill, Stuckey, & Collins, 2018; Scafidi et al., 2007). Approximately 45% of all teacher turnover takes place in one-fourth of public schools, and these are most likely to be schools serving under-resourced communities (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2018). Nearly half of schools with higher than average turnover reported difficulty filling open positions (Ingersoll, 2001).
Turnover patterns are nuanced, and variations in turnover are important for understanding the scope of teacher movement and the effect of this movement on student learning. Teachers may leave the field altogether, leave teaching but remain in education, drift between urban and suburban regions, drift between different types of schools within a region, or shift between similar schools (Freedman & Appleman, 2009; Olsen & Anderson, 2007). Leavers, shifters, and drifters disrupt schools through destabilizing a teaching staff (Freedman & Appleman, 2009; Hanushek et al., 2016; Olsen & Anderson, 2007; Ronfeldt, Loeb, et al., 2013; Sass et al., 2012). This disruption has negative implications for student learning outcomes, particularly in public schools serving under-resourced communities where high teacher turnover is related to lower student achievement (Hanushek et al., 2016; Ronfeldt, Loeb, et al., 2013; Sass et al., 2012). Teachers who leave their schools but stay in the profession are more likely to be drifters, moving from under-resourced to more stable, well-resourced settings (Hanushek et al., 2004; Horng, 2009; Ingersoll, Merrill, Stuckey, & Collins, 2018; Lankford et al., 2002). A smaller percentage of movers are shifters, teachers who maintain a strong commitment to public schools serving under-resourced communities, but who seek out new settings that are perhaps a better philosophical or cultural fit (Freedman & Appleman, 2009). What motivates public school teachers to leave, shift, drift, or stay varies (Freedman & Appleman, 2009; Hanushek et al., 2004; Horng, 2009; Olsen & Anderson, 2007; Whipp & Geronime, 2017), and more research is needed to better understand what these patterns might suggest for interventions aimed at increasing school staffing stability in public schools serving under-resourced communities.

**New York State and City trends.** Teacher turnover and sorting trends in NYS and NYC mirror national patterns and are cause for concern when considering disparate learning outcomes for children across the city and state (Ronfeldt, Loeb, et al., 2013). In their study of all NYS teachers from 1984-2000, Lankford and colleagues (2002) analyzed district personnel data
and found significant teacher sorting throughout the state. The authors found that students of color, students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and students living in urban areas were more like to have less qualified teachers, as measured by teachers’ levels of education and certification appropriate to their teaching assignment. The authors concluded that in NYC, “Dramatically less qualified teachers teach students in low-performing urban schools” (Lankford et al., 2002, p. 48). The authors do not speculate on the reasons for this sorting but note that policies aimed at improving student achievement outcomes must consider ways to prepare and attract strong teachers to schools serving under-resourced communities.

In addition to sorting, there are high rates of new teacher turnover in NYC elementary and middle schools (Boyd et al., 2009; Marinell & Coca, 2013). In their study of 4,000 NYC middle school teachers, Marinell and Coca (2013) found over half left their schools within their first three years of teaching, and over half of these movers left the field altogether. Similar to the national data, turnover rates were higher in schools with a “high concentration of underperforming students” (Marinell & Coca, 2013, p. vii). Boyd and colleagues (2009) found 28% of elementary and middle school teachers left the NYC public school system altogether within their first three years of teaching. Although the authors note that not all turnover is harmful, as some ineffective teachers choose to leave the profession, the effects of turnover disproportionately and adversely hit public schools serving under-resourced communities (Boyd et al., 2009). The authors write, “the net effect [of turnover patterns] is that traditionally low-performing students are further disadvantaged and often left with the most inexperienced teachers” (Boyd et al., 2009, p. 21). Important to understanding these findings is the fact that new teachers are less effective at raising student achievement, and public schools serving under-resourced communities tend to have higher percentages of students who perform poorly on standardized tests (Boyd et al., 2009). The evidence suggests that public schools in NYC
serving under-resourced communities have higher rates of teacher turnover (Boyd et al., 2009; Marinell & Coca, 2013) and are staffed by less experienced, less well-qualified teachers than more well-resourced schools (Lankford et al., 2002).

**The effect of turnover and sorting on student learning.** High turnover on balance hurts schools and student learning, particularly in urban public schools serving under-resourced communities (Hanushek et al., 2016; Ronfeldt, Loeb, et al., 2013; Sass et al., 2012). In a study of over 6,000 fourth- through eighth-grade math teachers in a large urban district in Texas, Hanushek and colleagues (2016) found high rates of teacher turnover had a negative effect on student math achievement in low-achieving schools. In these schools, disruption due to turnover offset any potential positive benefits of less effective teachers leaving (Hanushek et al., 2016). In contrast, teacher turnover did not have a negative effect on student learning outcomes in high-achieving schools (Hanushek et al., 2016). In a similar study, Sass et al. (2012) analyzed public school and teacher data from Florida and North Carolina from 2000-2005 for 17,000 teachers in the third through fifth grades. Teacher turnover was significantly higher in high-poverty schools than in low-poverty schools in both states, and high-poverty schools in both states had lower levels of student achievement (Sass et al., 2012). Schools with less turnover had greater success raising student achievement (Sass et al., 2012). In Florida, teachers who moved to lower-poverty schools were more successful in raising student achievement than they had been in high-poverty schools (Sass et al., 2012). The authors hypothesized that this may be due to school-level conditions that supported more effective teaching practices, though more research is needed to establish this relationship empirically (Sass et al., 2012).

Similarly, across NYC, teacher turnover has a negative effect on student learning outcomes, and more so for students of color (Ronfeldt, Loeb, et al., 2013). Findings from Ronfeldt, Loeb, and colleagues’ (2013) study of eight years of data for over 850,000 fourth- and
fifth-grade NYC students from 2001-2002 and 2005-2010 indicate that children of color’s test scores on math and English language arts assessments were 12.8% and 8.0% of a standard deviation lower, respectively, in grades with high teacher turnover than in grades with low or no turnover. In comparison, in schools with lower percentages of children of color, high turnover was correlated with only 5.9% of a standard deviation lower test scores in math and 1.8% lower in English language arts (Ronfeldt, Loeb, et al., 2013). In schools with high turnover, learning outcomes of students whose teachers stayed were also negatively affected, leading the authors to suggest that turnover had a disruptive effect on the larger teaching community (Ronfeldt, Loeb, et al., 2013). As is clear from these studies, teacher sorting and turnover in public schools serving under-resourced communities is cause for concern (Hanushek et al., 2016; Ronfeldt, Loeb, et al., 2013; Sass et al., 2012). The factors that contribute to this problem are complex and operate at both the systemic level as well as the local and personal.

Theoretical Framework

Ecological systems theory (EST, Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1994) is a valuable organizing framework for understanding the multiple and intersecting factors that contribute to the problem of preparing teachers for public schools serving under-resourced communities. In EST, individuals are understood through their interactions within nested systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Interactions between individuals and their proximal environments are affected by more distal environmental systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Bronfenbrenner developed EST in reaction to the methods of developmental psychologists of the 1970s who were studying children in laboratory spaces outside of their natural environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). As he wrote, “much of contemporary developmental psychology is the science of the strange behavior of children in strange situations with strange adults for the briefest possible periods of time” (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 513). Bronfenbrenner saw in EST the opportunity for people to
better their condition through the theory’s capacity to reveal humankind’s interdependencies as experienced in the world (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

The EST framework provides a lens to examine how the interactions between individuals and their proximal environments are affected by more distal systems. A person’s immediate environments, for example, family, school, and community, are the microsystems that most directly influence patterns of development and growth. Microsystems often interact, and Bronfenbrenner (1994) labeled these microsystem interactions the mesosystem. Family and school mesosystemic interactions can affect both home and classroom environments and, by extension, an individual’s development. For teachers, these mesosystemic interactions might influence their future decision-making as they consider the type of school or community they envision working in (Whipp & Geronime, 2017). Micro- and mesosystems are nested within larger exosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1977), which include, for example, the forces that shape the larger context of a teacher education program, school district policies and conditions, and the distribution of education resources within a region. Finally, these layered systems are continually influenced by the larger macrosystem, which includes social, cultural, and political forces that shape a particular society and the interactions of its members (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

Ecological systems theory evolved over Bronfenbrenner’s (1977, 1994) lifespan and beyond, and more recent iterations by Neal and Neal (2013) and Spencer (2008) are useful for exploring the relationship between factors related to teacher preparation and retention. Neal and Neal (2013) proposed a networked model of EST, reconceiving the environment as constellations of social interactions as opposed to concentric settings. Systems, in Neal and Neal’s (2013) model, are defined as “patterns of interaction” (p. 22). Rather than conceptualized as nested, in this orientation systems are networked, meaning interactions between individuals
are influenced by ever-expanding networks of interactions (Neal & Neal, 2013). Seen through this lens, for example, a teacher’s interactions with students can be understood as being influenced by that teacher’s interactions with peers and faculty within their teacher education program; in turn, the program itself is influenced by the interactions its members have with the larger field.

A development of Bronfenbrenner’s (1977, 1994) EST is Spencer’s (2008) phenomenological variant of ecological systems theory. Through the phenomenological variant of ecological systems theory, Spencer extends EST to more critically examine both oppressive and protective structural forces that contribute to individuals’ developmental trajectories. Integrating elements of critical race theory, Spencer challenges scholars to examine oppressive power structures that are embedded in contexts and interactions, as well as to see and acknowledge human resiliencies. Privilege itself can be a form of vulnerability in the degree to which it has the potential to cloister an individual from developing certain competencies and resiliencies (Spencer, 2008). For example, a White teacher’s under-developed cultural competency, meaning their ability to work in affirmative ways with youth whose race, language, and/or culture might differ from their own (Paris, 2012; Siwatu, 2011a), may contribute to feelings of fear or inadequacy when working in cross-cultural contexts, and thereby exacerbate “oppressive conditions for young people” (Spencer, 2008, p. 711). Nearly 80% of teachers in the U.S. are White (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2020), and Spencer (2008) calls attention to the possibility that teachers’ struggles to connect with children whose racial and socio-economic backgrounds may differ from their own may contribute to lower teacher self-efficacy in such settings. This orientation complicates pervasive narratives that attribute teacher turnover to problems located within children and communities, and challenges scholars to
consider the effects of oppressive interpersonal interactions and structural systems (Spencer, 2008).

Factors Contributing to Challenges in Preparing Teachers for Urban Public Schools

Ecological systems theory as an organizing framework can help illuminate the intersections between various factors that contribute to inequitable schooling outcomes in the U.S., and the related challenge of attracting and retaining teachers for public schools serving under-resourced communities. Teachers make choices about which schools to seek out for employment and where and how long to stay in the field (Cochran-Smith et al., 2012; DeAngelis et al., 2013; Lankford et al., 2002). These choices are influenced by factors ranging from a teacher’s own characteristics to larger social, cultural, and political forces. See Figure 1.1 for an ecological systems theory model of factors that influence teacher preparation for and retention in urban public schools serving under-resourced communities.

Figure 1.1

Ecological Systems Theory Model of Factors Influencing Teacher Preparation and Retention
At the microsystem level, factors that influence the preparation of teachers and their retention in public schools serving under-resourced communities include the characteristics of K-12 public schools as well as teachers’ own experiences and characteristics. School characteristic factors include school-level demographics and student achievement patterns (Hanushek et al., 2004; Lankford et al., 2002; Scafidi et al., 2007). In addition, school culture, teacher collegiality, and school leadership are all factors that contribute to teacher turnover patterns in public schools serving under-resourced communities (Ingersoll, 2001; Marinell & Coca, 2013; Simon & Johnson, 2015). Teacher-related factors include teachers’ levels of education (Aaronson et al., 2007), preparation experiences (Aaronson et al., 2007; Ronfeldt et al., 2016), years of teaching experience (Aaronson et al., 2007), and race (Aaronson et al., 2007; Hanushek et al., 2004; Ronfeldt et al., 2016; Scafidi et al., 2007). Teacher efficacy (Creasey et al., 2016; Eckert, 2013; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Knoblauch & Woolfolk Hoy, 2008), efficacy for culturally responsive pedagogy (Chu & Garcia, 2014; Fitchett, Starker, & Salyers, 2012; Siwatu, 2011a, 2011b; Siwatu, Putman, Starker-Glass, & Lewis, 2017), and urban commitment (Aragon, Culpepper, McKee, & Perkins, 2014; Frankenberg, Taylor, & Merseth, 2010; Tamir, 2013; Whipp & Geronime, 2017) are additional characteristics that have been found to affect teacher sorting and retention. Mesosystemic interactions between these characteristics include, for example, that teachers of color are more likely to seek out and persist in schools with more students of color than are White teachers (Aaronson et al., 2007; Freedman & Appleman, 2008; Horng, 2009; Ingersoll, Merrill, Stuckey, & Collins, 2018; Ronfeldt et al., 2016; Scafidi et al., 2007).

Teacher career pathways are also influenced by teacher education program factors (Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, & Heilig, 2005; DeAngelis et al., 2013; Freedman, & Appleman, 2009). Teacher education programs affect teacher commitment to and retention in public schools serving under-resourced communities (DeAngelis et al., 2013; Redding & Smith,
2016; Whipp, 2013) and play a role in the development of teachers’ self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice (Siwatu, 2011a, 2011b). Finally, pre-service teachers’ career choices are influenced by mesosytemic interactions between their teacher education programs and the demographics of schools where they have field experiences (Ronfeldt, Reiner, et al., 2013).

Teacher, school, and teacher education characteristics are in turn shaped by larger exo-and macrosystems, including education policy (Boyd et al., 2008; Cohen-Vogel, 2005), geographic segregation (Reardon et al., 2019; Rothstein, 2013), as well as the declining status of teaching (The 50th annual PDK poll, 2018). As one example, teachers who grew up in racially homogeneous schools and neighborhoods and who had fewer cross-racial experiences prior to teacher preparation are less likely to seek out teaching positions in racially and culturally diverse public schools (Whipp & Geronime, 2017). It is essential to consider these larger macrosystem factors to more deeply understand the complexities of teacher preparation for public schools serving under-resourced communities.

Sociocultural, Historical, and Political Factors

The challenges of recruiting and retaining teachers for public schools serving under-resourced communities, and of realizing strong learning outcomes for all students, exist within a larger historical, political, and socio-cultural context. In the five decades since the Coleman report (1966)—the first study to survey the state of educational opportunity and equity across the Nation—was published, questions about the causes and correlates of disparate learning outcomes for historically marginalized youth have been studied and debated. In the early 1980s, the publication of A Nation at Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), a report on the Nation’s schools commissioned by President Reagan, raised alarms and contributed to the country’s sense that its schools were failing (Mehta, 2013). A Nation at Risk proved to be a catalyst for an approach to “fixing” K-12 education grounded in greater
standardization and accountability, the legacy of which endures today (Mehta, 2013, 2014). The dominant discourse in K-12 schooling continues to advance neoliberal policies including high stakes testing, teacher and school accountability in the form of school grading, and value-added measures of teacher quality, standardization, and privatization as tools to narrow the achievement gap (Mehta, 2013, 2014; Spencer, 2008; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). The achievement gap is often defined as disparate achievement outcomes for students from different racial groups, with patterns of White students consistently outperforming most other racial groups (Bohrnstedt, Kitmitto, Ogut, Sherman, & Chan, 2015; McFarland et al., 2018). Some scholars, using sociocultural and critical race theory, have reframed the narrative as being about a resource gap, caused by inequitable access to employment, healthcare, and housing, that negatively affect historically marginalized communities (Carey, 2014; Spencer, 2008), as well as an opportunity gap caused by inequitable and oppressive power structures, such as teachers and schools that do not affirm the identities of children of color and therefore fail to provide students equitable opportunities to learn (Carey, 2014; Gee, 2008; Rodriguez, 1998; Spencer, 2008). Spencer (2008) argues that the current focus on narrow measures of student achievement exacerbates deficit narratives about youth of color and ignores youth resiliencies and their role in learning and development. Paradigms that focus on narrow measures of learning and market-based solutions to public education may fail to acknowledge larger oppressive systems that contribute to low academic achievement (Spencer, 2008), narrow approaches pedagogy in K-12 schools (Tyack & Cuban, 1995), and contribute to the de-professionalization of teaching (Mehta, 2013, 2014).

Inequitable educational opportunities for children of color and children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and the challenges their schools and teachers face, are intertwined with access to other resources such as housing (Reardon et al., 2019). In their study of over 200
million students from 2009-2013, Reardon and colleagues (2019) found regional racialized housing segregation, paired with intergenerational poverty, to be predictive of poor schooling outcomes. The authors noted, “it is perhaps more appropriate to think of an observed achievement gap as a proxy measure of local racial inequalities in educational opportunity” (Reardon et al., 2019, p. 1166). Residential segregation itself is a byproduct of decades of federal, state, and local discriminatory housing laws and policies, and the legacies of government-sanctioned racist policies reverberate today (Rothstein, 2013, 2018, 2019).

Although teachers are a significant factor in student learning (Aaronson et al., 2007; Rivkin et al., 2005; Sass et al., 2012), these larger macrosystem forces point to the imperative of understanding the larger context within which teachers are being prepared and the need to work on multiple fronts to effect meaningful change for children and communities.

In addition to historical and political factors affecting children and families, and by extension their schools and teachers, there are larger trends and systems in the U.S. that have influenced the institutions that prepare teachers (Cohen-Vogel, 2005; Schneider, 2018; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). At the country’s inception, schooling, that is education occurring outside of the home or vocational context, was for the few not for the many (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Schooling in its early days was also local and idiosyncratic, with few and inconsistent criteria for teacher hiring and credentialing (Schneider, 2018). Towns and communities were responsible for providing education to their youth, and it was largely at the discretion of the local community to administer all aspects of schooling. As schooling spread, the demand for teachers rose, causing teaching to become a “mass occupation” (Ingersoll, Merrill, Stuckey, & Collins, 2018, p. 22) increasingly supported through public funds. The public began to demand more from its teachers (Schneider, 2018). State systems for credentialing began to emerge in the 1860s, and
by the 1940s colleges and universities were largely responsible for teacher preparation (Schneider, 2018).

Over time, the federal government has come to play an increasingly powerful role in education (Cohen-Vogel, 2005). Federal legislative acts have shifted from policies in the 1950s that focused on filling teacher shortages to more recent policies that are geared towards aligning teacher preparation to K-12 policy trends (Cohen-Vogel, 2005). These trends include less direct funding for teacher preparation, a greater focus on accountability for teachers, specifically in terms of their ability to raise student test scores, as well as a push towards alternative teacher certification that parallels and complements the push towards privatization in K-12 public schooling (Cohen-Vogel, 2005; Mehta, 2014). Alternative certification programs were intended to bring innovation to the field (Boyd et al., 2008). Boyd and colleagues’ (2008) study of 26 teacher education programs from 16 institutions across NYC in 2004, found, however, that policy constraints, regulation, and the field’s tendency towards homogeneity, have suppressed innovation, with the majority of programs looking more similar than different. Regulatory pressures and decreased federal support, along with competition from alternative certification pathways, have all posed challenges to traditional university-based teacher education programs such as the one that is the context for this study (Cohen-Vogel, 2005; Schneider, 2018).

Finally, the challenge of preparing teachers for urban public schools serving under-resourced communities also intersects with challenges faced by the profession overall. Teaching has, from its beginning, been a low status, low pay, dominantly female occupation in the U.S. (Schneider, 2018). Ingersoll and colleagues found that the teaching force has become increasingly female in recent decades (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2018; Ingersoll, Merrill, Stuckey, & Collins, 2018). That the authors (Ingersoll, Merrill, Stuckey, & Collins, 2018) express
concern over this trend demonstrates the persistence of attitudes that equate dominantly female professions with low status. In addition, although the public supports teachers, their support of the profession is waning (The 50th Annual PDK Poll, 2018). Only 46% of parents report that they would want their child to become a public school teacher, down from 70% in 2009, and down further from 1969, when 75% of parents reported they would be happy if their child chose this career (The 50th Annual PDK Poll, 2018). The K-12 policy climate, the legacy of racism in housing and schooling, and increasing challenges to the status of the profession are exo- and macrosystem forces that have bearing on problems with teacher sorting and turnover in urban public schools serving under-resourced communities. In addition to the effects of larger macro- and exosystems, more local microsystems, including school-level characteristics, may affect teachers’ career decision-making (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Hanushek et al., 2004; Horng, 2009; Ingersoll, 2001; Lankford et al., 2002; Scafidi et al., 2007).

School Characteristic Factors

School-level characteristics, including school demographics (Hanushek et al., 2004; Lankford et al., 2002; Scafidi et al., 2007) and climate (Marinell & Coca, 2013; Simon & Johnson, 2015), are factors that affect teacher turnover and career patterns. The school itself is a microsystem that influences teachers’ choices about where to work and how long to stay (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Hanushek et al., 2004; Horng, 2009; Ingersoll, 2001; Lankford et al., 2002; Scafidi et al., 2007). One body of research has focused on the effects of student race, levels of poverty, and achievement on patterns of teacher movement (Hanushek et al., 2004; Ingersoll, 2001; Lankford et al., 2002; Scafidi et al., 2007). Another body of research has argued that characteristics such as school culture, teacher collegiality, and school leadership are more salient factors in teacher career patterns (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Horng, 2009; Simon & Johnson, 2015). These research strands represent different ontological and epistemological
orientations, one more positivist in orientation that views the problem through the lens of student adversities (Hanushek et al., 2004; Lankford et al., 2002; Scafidi et al., 2007), and the other more critical and constructivist that approaches the problem through the lens of systemic failures and shortcomings (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Horng, 2009; Simon & Johnson, 2015).

Race, poverty, and student achievement. There may be a relationship between student demographics—including race, socioeconomic background, and achievement—and teacher turnover patterns (Hanushek et al., 2004; Lankford et al., 2002; Scafidi et al., 2007). A common finding across several studies is that teachers are more likely to leave schools with higher percentages of students of color, low-performing students, and low-income students than they are to leave Whiter, higher-performing, and wealthier schools (Hanushek et al., 2004; Ingersoll, 2001; Lankford et al., 2002; Scafidi et al., 2007). In a descriptive study of teacher turnover patterns across all Georgia public elementary teachers and schools from 1994-2001, Scafidi and colleagues (2007) examined the relationship between teacher turnover and school demographics. Teachers with larger percentages of Black students in their schools had higher turnover rates than teachers with larger percentages of White students in their schools (Scafidi et al., 2007). Race had more of an effect than poverty or student test scores on teacher turnover, and wages were not found to have a significant effect on teacher turnover (Scafidi et al., 2007). In a similar study of nearly 380,000 elementary school teachers across Texas using state education data from 1993-1996, Hanushek and colleagues (2004) explored which school characteristics were predictive of teachers' decisions to leave urban public schools or to move from one school to another. New teachers in urban settings with less than three years of experience were 10% more likely to leave Texas public schools altogether than new teachers in rural and suburban settings (Hanushek et al., 2004). Teachers who stayed in teaching but moved to new schools were more likely to move to schools with fewer students of color, fewer
students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and fewer low-performing students (Hanushek et al., 2004). Schools with higher percentages of low-achieving students had higher teacher turnover than schools with more high-achieving students (Hanushek et al., 2004). Finally, teacher movement was unrelated to class size and only weakly related to salary (Hanushek et al., 2004).

Local patterns of teacher turnover from public schools serving under-resourced communities NYS may similarly indicate some connection between teacher movement patterns and student and school demographics (Lankford et al., 2002). In their descriptive study of all public school teachers, Lankford et al. (2002) found only 38% of teachers remained in the same urban school after five years as compared to 46% who remained in suburban schools (Lankford et al., 2002). When teachers transferred to new public schools in NYS, their receiving schools had approximately four percentage points fewer students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and two percentage points fewer students of color (Lankford et al., 2002). The authors concluded, “Transfer and quit behavior of teachers is consistent with the hypothesis that more qualified teachers seize opportunities to leave difficult working conditions and move to more appealing environments,” which the authors defined as wealthier, Whiter, and more suburban (Lankford et al., 2002, p. 55).

Culture, collegiality, and leadership. The lens of organizational culture provides an alternate framework for interpreting similar data (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Horng, 2009; Ingersoll, 2001; Simon & Johnson, 2015). In contrast to student-focused research on teacher turnover factors, findings from a growing number of studies suggest that “when teachers leave schools serving low-income, minority students, they are not fleeing their students...When these teachers leave, it is frequently because the working conditions in their schools impede their chance to teach” (Simon & Johnson, 2015, p. 3). DeAngelis and Presley (2011) examined how
turnover rates of over 160,000 first-year teachers in Illinois related to school and teacher characteristics. The authors tracked turnover patterns of cohorts of new teachers in Illinois through their first five years from 1971-2006 (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011). Variations in rates of turnover were greater within school type than across school types, and the measured characteristics of teachers accounted for only 16% of the turnover variation within schools (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011). Individual school-level conditions had a larger effect on teacher turnover than school geographic location, student characteristics, or teacher characteristics (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011). The specific school conditions that have been found to affect teacher retention and student learning include school culture (Ingersoll, 2001; Marinell & Coca, 2013; Simon & Johnson, 2015), teacher collegiality (Marinell & Coca, 2013; Simon & Johnson, 2015), and school leadership (Boyd et al., 2011; Horng, 2009; Ingersoll, 2001; Marinell & Coca, 2013; Simon & Johnson, 2015).

Not surprisingly, teachers have higher rates of turnover from schools where the climate is disorderly and trust and collegiality among teachers are low (Marinell & Coca, 2013; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Kraft, Marinell, & Yee, 2016; Simon & Johnson, 2015). In their study of teacher turnover from middle schools in NYC, Marinell and Coca (2013) found rates of turnover to be five percentage points higher in schools that teachers described as lacking collegiality, as compared to schools with high levels of collegiality. In a similar study of 278 NYC middle schools from 2007-2012, Kraft and colleagues (2016) found the strength of teachers’ relationships with colleagues and their level of collaboration to be related to teacher turnover. In Johnson and Birkeland’s (2003) qualitative study of 50 new public school teachers, leavers frequently described lack of support from and collaboration with other teachers as major factors in their decision-making. Importantly, teachers most often attributed disorderly school cultures not to
the students themselves, but to disorganized school-level conditions (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003).

School leadership is a particularly important factor in school culture and teacher turnover patterns in public schools (Boyd et al., 2011; Horng, 2009; Ingersoll, 2001; Marinell & Coca, 2013; Simon & Johnson, 2015). Horng (2009), in a study of 531 elementary teachers in southern California from 2003-2004, asked teachers to rate the importance of various school characteristics and compared teachers’ ratings to their movement patterns. Administrative support was rated a more important driver of teacher movement patterns than student racial demographics (Horng, 2009). Similarly, Boyd and colleagues’ (2011) study of over 4,000 first-year teachers in NYC found over 40% of teachers who left teaching cited unhappiness with the school administration as their primary reason for leaving as compared to only 15% who cited student behavior.

The research on both student demographics as well as school-level conditions can provide important insights into the problem of teacher preparation for urban public schools serving under-resourced communities. The vast majority of teachers, and by extension teacher candidates, are White (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2020). Rather than locate the issue of turnover in the race of students, it may be more instructive to consider how bias concerning children of color may contribute to patterns in teachers’ career decision-making and may drive White teachers, in particular, to be more likely to leave schools serving large numbers of students of color. Schools of education would therefore be wise to recruit a more racially diverse teaching force—discussed further in the next section—and to engage all candidates in developing culturally affirming practices, both of which may contribute to creating a teaching force with greater self-efficacy for working in racially diverse contexts (Chu & Garcia, 2014; Fitchett et al., 2012; Siwatu, 2011a, 2011b; Siwatu et al., 2017). In addition, better preparing
teachers to navigate complex administrative relationships and constructively advocate for their needs may be important to increasing teacher retention in public schools serving under-resourced communities. To support teacher development, it is also critical to understand the role of teacher characteristics in teacher career patterns.

**Teacher Characteristic Factors**

Teachers are the single most important school-level resource (Aaronson et al., 2007; Rivkin et al., 2005; Sass et al., 2012). Understanding which characteristics may encourage or inhibit teachers’ commitment to urban public schools and their retention in such settings is critical to improving preparation for these contexts. Teacher race, general self-efficacy (Creasey et al., 2016; Eckert, 2013; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Knoblauch & Woolfolk Hoy, 2008; Rockoff et al., 2011), efficacy for culturally responsive practice (López, 2016; Sharif & López, 2019; Siwatu, 2011a, 2011b; Siwatu et al., 2017), and urban commitment (Aragon et al., 2014; Frankenberg et al., 2010; Tamir, 2013; Whipp & Geronime, 2017) have all been found to contribute to teachers’ decisions to pursue and remain in positions in urban public schools serving under-resourced communities.

**Race.** Race is a teacher characteristic that appears to affect teacher turnover and commitment in public schools (Freedman & Appleman, 2008; Hanushek et al., 2004; Horng, 2009; Ingersoll, Merrill, Stuckey, & Collins, 2018; Ronfeldt et al., 2016; Scafidi et al., 2007), and this, in turn, has implications for student learning. Teachers who move to new schools tend to move to schools with fewer students of color, fewer students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and fewer low-performing students (Hanushek et al., 2004). This is particularly true for White teachers who move at higher rates from schools with high enrollment of students of color than their colleagues of color (Hanushek et al., 2004). In at least one study, Black teachers, by contrast, tended to move to schools with higher enrollment of Black students.
(Hanushek et al., 2004). Teachers of color have a stronger preference for settings with a higher proportion of students of color and leave such settings at lower rates than their White colleagues (Aaronson et al., 2007; Freedman & Appleman, 2008; Horng, 2009; Ingersoll, Merrill, Stuckey, & Collins, 2018; Ronfeldt et al., 2016; Scafidi et al., 2007).

In addition to having a stronger commitment to public schools serving under-resourced communities, teachers of color may have a small but meaningfully stronger effect on learning outcomes for students of color as compared to their White colleagues (Aaronson et. al., 2007; Dee, 2005; Egalite, Kisida, & Winters, 2015; Sun, 2018; Yarnell & Bohnstedt, 2018). Aaronson and colleagues (2007) found ninth-grade African American math teachers in the Chicago public schools were able to raise the math test score of African American boys and girls .07 and .04 grade equivalents more than White teachers. In a study of over 2.9 million third- through tenth-grade students in Florida from 2001-2009, Egalite and colleagues (2015) found students whose teachers were of a similar racial background made greater achievement gains than students whose teachers were of a different racial background. These gains were particularly significant for lower-performing students (Egalite et al., 2015). Egalite and colleagues (2015) hypothesized that one factor may be the reduced stereotype threat students of color experience with teachers of color (Steele, 1997). Steele (1997) defines stereotype threat as the pressure individuals experience, consciously or unconsciously, that they will live up to a negative stereotype about their perceived group identity. Although empirical research has yet to demonstrate a clear link between stereotype threat and academic achievement (Whaley, 2018), the racial climate of schools and cultural competence of teachers are important factors in creating learning environments that support all learners (López, 2016; Sharif & López, 2019; Siwatu, 2011a, 2011b).
It is particularly troubling, then, that Black teachers are both under-represented in the teaching force and leave the field at higher rates than their White colleagues (Ingersoll et al., 2017; Putman, Hansen, Walsh, & Quintero, 2016; Ronfeldt, Loeb et al., 2013; Villegas, Strom, & Lucas, 2012) given the positive effect they have on learning for students of color (Egalite et al., 2015). Although Ingersoll, Merrill, and Stuckey (2018) found a 162% increase in the number of teachers of color entering the profession between 1987 and 2016, rates of turnover for teachers of color remain higher than their White colleagues (Ingersoll et al., 2017; Putman et al., 2016). In a recent study of public school elementary and middle school teachers across North Carolina from 2004-2015, Sun (2018) found Black teachers’ retention rate across the state to be about 4 percentage points lower than their White colleagues. This finding is mirrored in national trends, which also show that the rate of retention for teachers of color from public schools has fallen over the last 20 years (Ingersoll et al., 2017). In addition, although increasing numbers of teachers of color are entering the field (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2018), their proportion relative to students of color is falling due to a diversifying student population (Putman et al., 2016; Villegas et al., 2012).

**Efficacy.** Efficacy is another important teacher characteristic that has bearing on retention in public schools serving under-resourced communities (Eckert, 2013; Rockoff et al., 2011). Teacher self-efficacy is a teacher’s belief in their capacity to respond to or act in a context in a manner that will achieve a desired learning outcome (Gibson & Dembo, 1984, Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). General teacher efficacy is the belief that teachers have the ability to support children’s learning, no matter the context (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Findings from extensive empirical research indicate that teacher self-efficacy and general teacher efficacy have a positive relationship to teacher development (Creasey et al., 2016; Eckert, 2013; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Knoblauch & Woolfolk Hoy, 2008; Rockoff et al., 2011; Siwatu, 2011a, 2011b).
Teacher self-efficacy and general teacher efficacy are positively related to teacher retention in urban schools (Eckert, 2013; Rockoff et al., 2011). Rockoff and colleagues’ (2011) study of fourth through eighth grade NYC public school math teachers found self-efficacy beliefs had a small but significant effect on teachers’ intentions to stay in NYC public schools. Eckert’s (2013) mixed methods study of 25 new teachers working in low-income urban schools with high percentages of students of color found teachers’ general efficacy was correlated with retention in urban schools. Eckert wrote, “Teachers...need to feel that they can make a difference to their students to keep trying and to remain in teaching” (Eckert, 2013, p. 86).

**Self-efficacy and culturally sustaining pedagogy.** More recently, a body of research has emerged that looks at the importance of culturally responsive practice in supporting self-efficacy for teaching in public schools serving under-resourced communities (Chu & Garcia, 2014; Fitchett et al., 2012; Siwatu, 2011a, 2011b; Siwatu et al., 2017). This research has particular relevance for preparing new teachers, the majority of whom are White (Snyder, 2018), for culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse urban schools. Gay (2002) defines culturally responsive practice as, “using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively” (p. 106). More recently, scholars such as Paris (2012) have extended this orientation, calling for culturally sustaining practices that actively disrupt hegemonic schooling cultures and create spaces that sustain students’ racial, linguistic, and cultural identities. Self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice is a teacher’s belief that they have the capacity to enact culturally responsive practices (Siwatu, 2011b).

Many teachers, however, report low general and teacher self-efficacy for working in culturally diverse urban contexts (Creasey et al., 2016; Siwatu, 2011a, 2011b). In their study of nearly 400 preservice teachers in the suburbs of Chicago, Creasey and colleagues (2016) found
pre-service teachers' perceptions of school safety as well as their beliefs about their ability to work successfully with students in urban public schools negatively affected their intent to seek positions in these schools. Teachers who expressed concerns over their safety in urban public schools and who reported low cultural competency were less likely to express intent to seek out teaching positions in Chicago public schools. Similarly, in his study of 34 preservice teachers in the southwest, Siwatu (2011b) found preservice teachers reported feeling significantly less prepared to teach in urban than suburban schools. In addition, preservice teachers reported significantly lower self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching when considering teaching in culturally diverse urban schools as compared to more homogenous suburban schools. In another study of nearly 200 preservice teachers in the Midwest, Siwatu (2011a) found preservice teachers expressed greater self-efficacy for general teaching practices, such as building trust, and lower self-efficacy on measures related to culturally responsive teaching such as being able to bridge home and school cultures. Support for English language learners and their families was another area where preservice teachers expressed consistently low self-efficacy (Siwatu, 2011a).

**Urban commitment.** Finally, *urban commitment* is another factor that contributes to teachers’ intentions to look for positions in urban public schools and to stay in those positions (Aragon et al., 2014; Frankenberg et al., 2010; Tamir, 2013; Whipp & Geronime, 2017).

Commitment refers to teachers’ values and intentions regarding their workplace settings (Firestone & Pennell, 1993; Park, 2005). Firestone and Pennell (1993) identified three dimensions of teacher commitment: commitment to a school, to the profession, and to students. More recently, scholars have extended this concept to a teachers’ commitment to teaching in urban public schools serving under-resourced communities (Aragon et al., 2014; Creasey et al., 2016; Taylor & Frankenberg, 2009; Watson, 2011; Whipp & Geronime, 2017).
Several studies use the terms *urban commitment* and *urban intent* interchangeably, and the definitions provided in the research are similar (Creasey et al., 2016; Whipp & Geronime, 2017). Creasey and colleagues (2016) operationalize urban intent as being likely to “pursue [a] career in an urban setting” (p.754). Whipp and Geronime (2017) define urban commitment in similar terms as the “pursuit of a teaching position in schools which are located in large cities with high numbers of low-income students” (p. 804). I use both terms in my discussion of factors and in the upcoming needs assessment.

Many teacher preparation candidates seem to express low commitment to teaching in urban public schools, and teachers with low commitment who do end up in urban public schools have higher rates of attrition from those settings. Whipp and Geronime (2017) conducted a longitudinal study of 72 teacher candidates enrolled in an urban Midwestern university. The study followed participants from just before their graduation through three years in the field (Whipp & Geronime, 2017). Fewer than half of the participants indicated an intent to teach in urban public schools prior to graduation. Candidates who themselves had attended urban high-poverty schools as children were 13 times more likely to express a commitment to teaching in such settings and preservice teachers who expressed strong urban commitment were 18 times more likely to remain in these settings after three years in the field than those who had not expressed such a commitment (Whipp & Geronime, 2017). Similarly, in a study of nearly 400 teacher candidates from a suburban Midwestern university, Creasey and colleagues (2016) found that very few preservice teachers expressed a strong commitment to work in urban public schools. Concerns over safety and lack of cultural competence were the major reasons candidates cited for lack of intent (Creasey et al., 2016). Conversely, Frankenberg and colleagues’ (2010) study of approximately 120 graduates of a teacher education program with an explicit focus on preparation for urban settings found high urban commitment among
participants. Those who entered the program with the highest levels of urban commitment were more likely to remain in such settings after three years of teaching (Frankenberg et al., 2010).

Teachers’ characteristics can influence the type of schools they seek out as well their longevity in urban public school settings. Some characteristics, such as race, are fixed and could be leveraged through diversifying teacher candidate recruitment efforts. Other characteristics, such as efficacy (Creasey et al., 2016), culturally responsive practice (Siwatu, 2011a, 2011b), and urban commitment (Whipp & Geronime, 2017), have the potential to be cultivated in the context of teacher development experiences. Teacher education is another critical factor in the preparation of educators for urban public schools.

**Teacher Education Factors**

Teacher education programs (TEPs) have been found to affect teachers’ commitment to (Ronfeldt, Reininger et al., 2013; Whipp, & Geronime, 2017), and retention in (DeAngelis et al., 2013; Redding & Smith, 2016), urban public schools. In particular, TEPs can influence the development of teacher self-efficacy for urban public schools (Creasey et al., 2016; Eckert, 2013) and self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice (Siwatu, 2011a, 2011b).

**Retention in and commitment to urban contexts.** Many teacher education programs struggle to adequately prepare teachers for the general demands of the classroom as well as for the specific complexities of urban public schools (Cochran-Smith et al., 2012; Redding & Smith, 2016). Teachers who self-report they were less satisfied with or less well prepared by their TEPs are more likely to leave the classroom within their first two to three years in the field than teachers who report more satisfaction (DeAngelis et al., 2013). In a national study of over 18,000 teachers that analyzed U.S. Department of Education Schools and Staffing and Teacher Follow-Up Survey data from 1999-2012, Redding and Smith (2016) found alternatively certified
teachers reported feeling less well prepared than traditionally certified teachers. Relatedly, turnover rates of alternatively certified teachers have been rising, and by 2011-2012 these rates were 10 percentage points higher than turnover rates for traditionally certified teachers (Redding & Smith, 2016). In addition to influencing turnover patterns, TEPs can affect the development of teachers’ urban commitment (Whipp & Geronime, 2017). Preservice teachers who do not spend time student-teaching in urban public schools (Whipp & Geronime, 2017) or in classrooms with large percentages of students learning English during their program of study (Ronfeldt, Reininger et al., 2013) express less commitment to teaching in those contexts.

New teachers face significant challenges in navigating the complex context demands of urban public schools serving under-resourced communities (Cochran-Smith et al., 2012; Freedman & Appleman, 2009; Olsen & Anderson, 2007). Many new teachers articulate the need for more student-teaching experiences in their TEPs that prepare them to navigate the school culture and complicated micropolitics of many public schools (Freedman & Appleman, 2009; Hammerness & Craig, 2016; Olsen & Anderson, 2007; Schultz, Jones-Walker, & Chikkatur, 2008; Whipp, 2013). Grissom, Kalogrides, and Loeb (2015) define micropolitics as intra-school power dynamics and school-level politics and policies. In Whipp’s (2013) qualitative study of 12 first-year teachers, all graduates of the same TEP working in urban public schools, one teacher reflected on how valuable it was to have mentor teachers who taught him how to navigate school bureaucracy, something teachers across the study felt was rarely addressed directly in their teacher education classes. Participants in Freedman and Appleman’s (2009) study of novice teachers working in urban, high-poverty schools cited their struggles with navigating school cultures and micropolitics as a significant reason for their decision to leave teaching.

**Self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice.** Teacher education programs are also a factor in the development of teachers who have self-efficacy for teaching in public schools
serving under-resourced communities (Creasey et al., 2016) and for culturally responsive practice (Siwatu, 2011a, 2011b). In Siwatu’s studies (2011a, 2011b), preservice teachers reported feeling less well prepared by their TEPs to teach in urban schools as compared to suburban schools. The majority of participants in one of Siwatu’s (2011a) studies indicated that only a small number of their courses directly addressed culturally responsive teaching, and these tended not to be methods classes. Similarly, Creasey and colleagues (2016) found preservice teachers’ reports of low self-efficacy to teach in urban settings correlated with their reports of inadequate preparation in their TEPs for these settings. Teachers whose TEPs did not articulate a clear philosophy of urban education expressed less general efficacy for teaching in high poverty urban public schools (Eckert, 2013). Finally, in her qualitative study of 12 new teachers, Whipp (2013) found teachers who enacted fewer socially just teaching practices, which she defined as “teach[ing] in culturally responsive ways” (p. 454), did not cite cross-cultural experiences or a social justice orientation when reflecting on their teacher education programs. Given that urban public schools are more likely to have higher percentages of students of color, students who are learning English as a new language, and students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds than suburban schools (Billingham, 2019; Logan & Burdick-Will, 2017), teachers’ cultural competency is of significant importance to the problem of teacher preparation for and retention in urban public schools.

Summary of Factors

Achieving equity in education means addressing the “education debt” owed to persistently marginalized communities (Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 3) and investing in strong schools and teachers for all children. To sustain strong schools and teachers, the U.S. needs an ecosystem within which K-12 education and teacher preparation can flourish. This means everything from enacting policies that support creating healthier communities through
increased access to equitable housing and job opportunities (Carey, 2014; Reardon et al., 2019; Spencer, 2008), to creating education policies that encourage meaningful approaches to teaching and learning in higher education as well as in K-12 schools (Cohen-Vogel, 2005; Mehta, 2013; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Teaching itself needs to be professionalized (Mehta, 2014), and the voice and agency of teachers need to be elevated to combat waning public esteem for the profession itself (*The 50th Annual PDK Poll, 2018*). Finally, strong efforts need to be made to desegregate the profession and to encourage individuals of color to pursue careers in teaching (Ingersoll et al., 2017; Putman et al., 2016; Ronfeldt, Loeb et al., 2013; Villegas et al., 2012). The problem of teacher preparation for public schools serving under-resourced communities is large and multifaceted. The context for this study is a teacher education program, specifically the students and faculty of the Teaching and Learning Department at Oakes College. To better understand how the problem of teacher preparation for public schools serving under-resourced communities manifests at Oakes, the needs assessment study that follows focused on factors related to the intersection of teacher and teacher education program characteristics. The needs assessment examined Oakes graduate students’ and alumni’s sense of urban commitment (Taylor & Frankenberg, 2009; Whipp & Geronime, 2017), teacher self-efficacy (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Knoblauch & Woolfolk Hoy, 2008), and self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice (Siwatu, 2011a, 2011b), and explored how students and alumni described their preparation experiences for urban public schools serving under-resourced communities. In addition, the study examined faculty perspectives on their role in developing students’ urban commitment.
Chapter 2

As the literature has demonstrated, the challenge of preparing teachers who will seek out and persist in urban public schools serving under-resourced communities is complex and has many dimensions. For example, proximal microsystem factors such as teacher self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice (Chu & Garcia, 2014; Fitchett et al., 2012; Siwatu, 2011a, 2011b; Siwatu et al., 2017) and urban commitment (Creasey et al., 2016; Whipp & Geronime, 2017) are affected by more distal macrosystems, including the characteristics of teacher preparation programs (Creasey et al., 2016; Eckert, 2013; Siwatu, 2011a, 2011b) and teachers’ own K-12 schooling contexts (Whipp & Geronime, 2017).

Although Oakes is known as a premier teacher preparation program (Lit & Darling-Hammond, 2015), the institution recognizes the need to strengthen the preparation of its candidates for public schools serving under-resourced communities. To better understand the factors that contribute to Oakes students’ intentions to seek or not to seek positions in public schools serving under-resourced communities, I conducted a mixed methods needs assessment focused on learning more about graduate students’ and alumni’s commitment to teaching in urban public schools serving under-resourced communities (Taylor & Frankenberg, 2009; Whipp & Geronime, 2017), their teacher self-efficacy (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Knoblauch & Woolfolk Hoy, 2008), and their self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice (Siwatu, 2011a, 2011b). In addition, I examined how Oakes faculty conceptualized their role in the development of candidates’ commitment to teaching in public schools serving under-resourced communities. I collected quantitative and qualitative data concurrently via a survey and semi-structured interviews and analyzed the data using descriptive quantitative analysis and a priori and emergent coding methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).
Empirical research has demonstrated that teacher self-efficacy (Creasey et al., 2016; Eckert, 2013; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Knoblauch & Woolfolk Hoy, 2008), self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice (Chu & Garcia, 2014; Fitchett et al., 2012; Siwatu, 2011a, 2011b; Siwatu et al., 2017), and urban commitment (Aragon et al., 2014; Frankenberg et al., 2010; Tamir, 2013; Whipp & Geronime, 2017) affect teacher turnover and retention. Teacher education programs can influence teacher career pathways through nurturing a commitment to urban schools (DeAngelis et al., 2013; Redding & Smith, 2016; Whipp, 2013) and through developing teachers’ self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice (Siwatu, 2011a, 2011b). Better understanding these factors at Oakes has the potential to illuminate opportunities to strengthen the way the college prepares its candidates for urban public schools serving under-resourced communities.

Context

As described in Chapter 1, Oakes College is a graduate school of teacher and leader education located in NYC with 549 students enrolled in the 2018-2019 academic year. The college faces challenges in preparing teachers for public schools. According to the Director of Career Services, fewer than half of the graduates from the teacher preparation programs seek positions in public schools (M. Harris, personal communication, October 10, 2018). Moreover, many graduates report feeling underprepared to teach in schools serving under-resourced communities (Oakes College, 2017a).

Purpose of the Needs Assessment

The purpose of this needs assessment was to better understand some of the underlying factors that may influence Oakes students’ decisions to look for positions in, or avoid, public schools serving under-resourced communities. I also sought to uncover faculty thinking about their role in developing students’ urban commitment, given the relationship between urban
commitment and intent and students’ career pathways (Aragon et al., 2014; Frankenberg et al., 2010; Tamir, 2013; Whipp & Geronime, 2017). Teacher education faculty’s role in developing urban commitment in students is under-researched and may be an important consideration in strengthening teacher preparation for urban public schools serving under-resourced communities.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions (RQ) guided the needs assessment.

RQ 1: What level of teacher self-efficacy and self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice do recent alumni and current students report?

RQ 2: To what degree do recent alumni and current students report a sense of urban commitment?

RQ 3: How do alumni and current students describe the relationship between their teacher preparation experiences and their urban commitment?

RQ 4: What do faculty think is their role in the development of students’ urban commitment?

**Methods**

This study employed a convergent mixed methods design. I drew on Creswell and Plano Clark’s (2018) definition and typology of mixed method research. Creswell and Plano Clark define mixed methods as a research approach that integrates and synthesizes qualitative and quantitative data within a clearly articulated research design. A convergent mixed methods approach allows the researcher to collect and analyze multiple sources and types of data concurrently, to analyze qualitative and quantitative data independently, and to integrate the results, allowing for elaboration and triangulation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The rationale for this design is its affordances as an efficient approach that allows for comparison of more open-ended participant responses with more closed-ended quantitative responses to the same
constructs. For this needs assessment, I collected quantitative data from students and alumni via a survey. Qualitative data were gathered concurrently from students, alumni, and faculty and served to triangulate and complement findings that emerged out of the quantitative data (Hanson, Creswell, Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006).

**Population**

I collected data in the spring of 2019 from three populations: recent alumni, current students nearing graduation, and faculty. Alumni represented those individuals who graduated from teacher certification programs between 2014-2018. Current students included those enrolled in teacher certification programs with projected May or August 2019 graduation dates. The alumni and students came from a range of degree programs including infancy, early childhood, and childhood programs, and from a range of specialization areas including general, special, bilingual, literacy, and museum education. The survey was sent to 740 individuals, 103 of whom were current students. Eighteen surveys sent to alumni bounced back due to invalid email addresses. Although I do not have demographic data for the survey sample, in the fall of 2018, 90% of Oakes’s 549 enrolled students were female and 33% were students of color (Oakes College, 201810). These demographics have been fairly stable in recent years. Finally, in the 2018-2019 academic year the Teaching and Learning Department had 29 full and part-time faculty, 26 of whom taught and advised in the teacher preparation programs. Oakes does not use a faculty ranking system. Of the faculty in the department in spring 2019, 38% were faculty of color and 90% were women.

---

10 This reference has been anonymized to protect the identity of the institution.
Recruitment and Participants

I recruited three groups for participation in this study: student and alumni survey participants, student and alumni interviewees, and faculty interviewees. In the sections that follow, I describe my processes for recruitment and the demographics of the participants across all three groups.

Survey participants. The survey was distributed to all 740 alumni and current students in the identified population. Participants received the survey online through Qualtrics. Participants were assured their information would be kept confidential, that no identifying information would be stored or shared, and that they were welcome to decline participation at any time. I did not teach or supervise any students to whom the survey was distributed, minimizing the risk of coercion.

The survey was open for 13 days. A reminder was sent to participants after three days and then once again seven days after the survey opened. Of the 722 survey recipients with active email addresses, 201 started the survey and 120 completed it, leading to a completion rate of approximately 17%. Of the survey completers, 98 were alumni and 22 were current students. A slightly higher percentage of current students completed the survey (18%) than was sent the survey (14%). The gender and racial demographics of survey respondents were similar to the general student population. Approximately 92% of the respondents were female and 30% were students of color. See Appendix A for additional characteristics of the survey respondents.

Interview recruitment and participants. For the interviews, current students, alumni, and faculty were selected using first convenience and then purposive sampling methods. For the student and alumni interviews, I initially used convenience sampling as a time-efficient way to reach a diverse range of potential participants. I contacted a few faculty members from a range of programs and asked them for names of current students and recent alumni who might be
interested in being interviewed. Faculty referred me to 12 current students and nine recent graduates. I reached out to three additional alumni who expressed interest via email after learning more about the project from the survey. Of this initial sample of 24, all but one were women. I do not have racial demographic data for the sample.

Of the total group of students and alumni referred by faculty or self-referred through the survey, I reached out to eight current students and eight alumni using purposive sampling methods. I used purposive sampling methods as this approach allowed me to select students and alumni so as to maximize “information rich” cases (Patton, 1990, p. 169) with intentional variation. Specifically, my goal was to speak with students and alumni who were considering seeking employment or already working in a range of school types, including public schools serving under-resourced communities, public schools serving well-resourced communities, and independent schools. Sampling methods that use intentional variation with a small number of cases have the potential to highlight programmatic variation as well as to illuminate patterns, although due to the small sample findings from interviews are limited in their generalizability (Patton, 1990). Seven of the eight students indicated an interest in being interviewed and three of the eight alumnae expressed interest. I was able to schedule and complete interviews with six students and two alumnae. Of the eight interviewees, all were women and two were women of color.

For the faculty interviews, I emailed 23 of the 26 faculty in the Teaching and Learning Department inviting their participation. The three faculty I did not contact were individuals whose works loads at the time were not allocated primarily to teaching and advising students but to work on grant-funded and other special projects at the institution. Of the group of 23 faculty I contacted, 35% were faculty of color and 91% were female. I serve in a supervisory capacity with faculty and as such needed to minimize any coercion faculty might feel to
participate. Extending an open invitation and following up only with faculty who expressed interest was one strategy I used. I was also careful that my interview question would not prompt answers that would have any implications for performance review.

Eight of the 23 faculty contacted expressed interest in participating and I reached out to five to set up interviews. As with selecting the student interviewees, I used a purposive sampling approach to maximize the potential to engage with a range of perspectives within a small participant group (Patton, 1990; Pettus-Davis, Grady, Cuddeback, & Scheyett, 2011). I selected faculty from a range of programs, with varying lengths of employment at the institution, and with a range of racial and ethnic backgrounds. I scheduled and completed four interviews. All four of the interviewees were women, and two of the four were women of color. They ranged in length of employment at the college from under three years to over 25. Three of the four had significant experiences working in public schools and/or publicly funded programs before teaching at Oakes. The participants had a primary affiliation with three different programs at the college.

In my initial email and in subsequent conversations, I explained to all student, alumnae, and faculty interview participants the purpose of the study, processes for data collection, as well as their right to decline participation or withdraw at any time. I obtained verbal consent from all interview participants and written consent from all survey and interview participants. I recorded all interviews over Zoom or using the transcription application, Otter. After downloading and reviewing transcripts, I deleted the audio and video files. Transcripts and transcript file names were coded to remove all identifying information.

**Constructs**

To answer the research questions, I collected data on teacher self-efficacy, self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice, and urban commitment using an online survey and three
interview protocols. Empirical evidence links teacher self-efficacy (Eckert, 2013; Rockoff et al., 2011), self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice (Siwatu, 2011a, 2011b), and urban commitment (Aragon et al., 2014; Frankenberg et al., 2010; Tamir, 2013; Whipp & Geronime, 2017) to retention in public schools serving under-resourced communities. See Table 2.1 for an operationalized definition of each of these constructs. These definitions informed both the quantitative instruments employed as well as the coding of qualitative data.

Table 2.1

*Operational Definitions of Study Constructs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Operational Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher self-efficacy</td>
<td>Teacher self-efficacy is a teacher’s belief that they have the capacity to respond to or act in a manner that will achieve desired learning outcomes for students (Gibson &amp; Dembo, 1984; Tschannen-Moran &amp; Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice</td>
<td>Culturally responsive practice is, “using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively” (Gay, 2002, p. 106). Self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice is teachers’ belief that they have the capacity to enact culturally responsive practices (Siwatu, 2011a, 2011b).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban commitment</td>
<td>Urban: Schools with over 50% students receiving free or reduced lunch, over 50% students of color, and located in a city (Eckert, 2013). Commitment: Commitment is having a sense of the value and importance of one’s work (Firestone &amp; Pennell, 1993). Urban commitment is the intent to teach in an urban school (Taylor &amp; Frankenberg, 2009; Whipp &amp; Geronime, 2017). It is also referred to in the literature as urban intent (Creasey et al., 2016; Whipp &amp; Geronime, 2017).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Teacher self-efficacy.* Teacher self-efficacy is a teacher’s belief that they have the capacity to respond to or act in a manner that will achieve desired learning outcomes for students (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). As described in
Chapter 1, teacher self-efficacy is positively related to teacher retention in urban public schools (Eckert, 2013; Rockoff et al., 2011) and some studies have found that course and fieldwork experiences in teacher preparation programs can positively affect teachers’ self-efficacy (Eckert, 2013; Knoblauch & Woolfolk Hoy, 2008; Ronfeldt et al., 2016). I was interested to learn in this study how Oakes students and alumni perceived their efficacy as new teachers entering the field.

**Self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice.** Culturally responsive practice is, “using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively” (Gay, 2002, p. 106). Self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice is teachers’ belief that they have the capacity to enact culturally responsive practices (Siwatu, 2011a, 2011b). Self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice can have a positive effect on preparing teachers for racially and culturally diverse public schools (Siwatu, 2011a, 2011b). It also represents a characteristic that teacher preparation programs can help to cultivate (Creasey et al., 2016). Exploring Oakes students’ self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice could be informative in understanding why fewer than half of Oakes’ teacher education graduates seek out positions in public schools and whether opportunities exist in the graduate school to shift those patterns.

**Urban commitment.** Finally, urban commitment is defined as teachers’ intentions to work in urban public schools (Taylor & Frankenberg, 2009; Whipp & Geronime, 2017) and, as explored in Chapter 1, is interchangeable with the concept of urban intent (Creasey et al., 2016; Whipp & Geronime, 2017). Recognizing the limitations of the word urban, previously described, I used the construct urban commitment as it is a construct defined in the literature. The construct label stands for the larger concept of teachers’ commitment, or intent, to teach in urban public schools serving under-resourced communities. Urban commitment has a positive
relationship to teachers seeking out and persisting in urban public schools serving under-resourced communities (Aragon et al., 2014; Frankenberg et al., 2010; Tamir, 2013; Whipp & Geronime, 2017). The study sought to build on anecdotal evidence about Oakes students’ urban commitment through the collection of empirical data. In addition, I wanted to explore faculty’s sense of their role related to developing students’ urban commitment as faculty perspectives on the issue of preparation for urban public schools has gone relatively unexplored at the college.

**Instruments**

To measure students’ and alumni’s teacher self-efficacy, self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice, and urban commitment, I administered a survey comprised of three scales. Interviews with students and alumni served to triangulate and complement the survey findings related to the three constructs (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Finally, faculty interviews probed faculty’s sense of their role in developing students’ urban commitment.

The student and alumni survey was a composite of three existing scales. See Appendix B for all survey items. The first scale I included was the *Teacher Self Efficacy Beliefs Scale-Short Form* (TSE; Tschanne-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). This is a 12-item scale intended to measure teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs regarding their ability to have a positive effect on student behavior and learning in the classroom (Tschanne-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). The scale is divided into three subscales: a) Efficacy in Student Engagement, b) Efficacy in Instructional Strategies, and c) Efficacy in Classroom Management (Tschanne-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Respondents use a nine-point scale from “none at all” to “a great deal” to respond to prompts including, “How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?” and “How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?” (Tschanne-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). This is a widely used scale in the field and has a reliability rating of .90 (Tschanne-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).
The second scale I included in the instrument was the *Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale* (CRSE; Siwatu, 2011b). The CRSE was developed to “elicit information from preservice teachers regarding their self-efficacy to execute specific teaching practices and tasks that are associated with teachers who have adopted a culturally responsive pedagogy” (Siwatu, 2011b, p. 361). The scale has 31 items and asks respondents to rate their degree of confidence for each item along a 100-point scale from “no confidence at all” to “completely confident” (Siwatu, 2011b). Items include, “I am able to identify ways that the school culture (e.g., values, norms, and practices) is different from my students’ home culture” and “I am able to critically examine the curriculum to determine whether it reinforces negative cultural stereotypes” (Siwatu, 2011b, p. 362) (see Appendix B for all scale items). The scale is not widely employed in the field, although a small number of empirical studies have made use of it (Fitchett et al., 2012; Frye, Button, Kelly, & Button, 2010; Thomas-Alexander & Harper, 2017). Siwatu (2011b) reported an internal reliability of the 31 items of .94 and .96 across two administrations.

Finally, I included items from the *Urban Teaching Barriers Survey* (UTB; Creasey et al., 2016). The UTB is a 70-item scale developed by the authors to measure barriers prospective teachers identify for entry into the Chicago public schools (Creasey et al., 2016). The scale has six subscales to capture prospective teachers’ concerns about: a) school resources, b) teacher training, c) safety, d) support, e) cultural competence, and f) personal concerns (Creasey et al., 2016, p. 478). Response options range along a 5-point scale from “not a barrier” to “a barrier large enough to prevent me from teaching in the urban schools” (Creasey et al., 2016, p. 763). Creasey and colleagues developed this scale to better understand factors that contribute to preservice teachers’ intent, or lack of intent, to teach in urban public schools (Creasey et al., 2016).

For my survey, I used nine items from across two UTB subscales (*teacher training* and *cultural competence*) to look more closely at how participants perceived their teacher
preparation experiences and their cultural competency as barriers or not to their intent to seek out teaching positions in urban public schools. Language in the survey was specific to Chicago, so I made adaptations to reflect the NYC context. Items on the scale include, “There was a lack of coursework in my program that involved preparation for under-resourced public schools” and “My teacher preparation lacked clinical experiences in under-resourced public schools” (Creasey et al., 2016, p. 755). See Appendix B for all adapted items included in the survey. The scale domains were found by the authors to have good internal consistency, but more research is needed to test reliability and validity (Creasey et al., 2016). As far as I am aware, other researchers have not yet used this scale, perhaps in part because of its location-specific nature.

All survey data were collected through Qualtrics and then uploaded to and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. To further explore students, alumni, and faculty perspectives, the needs assessment also employed qualitative data collection using semi-structured interviews (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017).

Interview protocols varied for each category of participant. See Appendix C for the complete interview protocols. For faculty, I asked the question, “What is your sense of what your role is (or isn’t) in the development of graduate students’ sense of commitment to teaching in under-resourced public schools?” Faculty interviews lasted approximately 20-25 minutes and included open-ended prompts to support elaboration or clarification.

The interview protocols for recent alumni and soon-to-be graduates were adapted from a protocol developed by Whipp and Geronime (2017) in their mixed methods study of urban commitment in graduates of an urban teacher preparation program. Whipp and Geronime explored the relationship between graduates’ cross-cultural experiences throughout and prior to their teacher preparation programs, and their decision to enter into and persist in urban public schools. In addition to surveys, the authors developed a semi-structured interview
protocol for use with participants just after their supervised fieldwork and then again one year after graduation (Whipp & Geronime, 2017). These protocols were adapted for use in this needs assessment. Questions I asked participants included, “Where do you intend to teach? Why are you choosing to teach in ___ school? What experiences during your teacher preparation have prepared you to work with children of various racial and socioeconomic backgrounds?” (Whipp & Geronime, 2017, p. 820).

Data Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed concurrently, with each data set serving to reveal patterns for further exploration in the other. The survey data were analyzed using descriptive methods to find frequencies and means through Statistical Package for Social Sciences software. I examined the whole sample, and sub-samples by different key variables such as length of fieldwork placement in public schools serving an under-resourced community. To test for statistical differences among segments of the survey respondents, I ran independent-samples T-test analysis to compare means of the self-efficacy, self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice, and urban commitment measures using key demographic data including years of teaching experience, race, and current teaching position.

Interviews were coded in Excel using a priori and emergent codes (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). I began by reading each interview transcript looking for emergent codes and themes. I documented these and then returned to the same transcripts and re-coded them using the constructs from the literature including self-efficacy, self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice, and urban commitment. I also used a priori codes drawn from the items on the survey, for example, identifying bias in curriculum and learning about children’s cultural backgrounds (Siwatu, 2011b). In the last stage of analysis, I analyzed and re-coded the interviews in relation to each of the research questions using a combination of a priori and
emergent codes and themes drawn from the interviews, literature, and surveys. See Tables 2.2 and 2.3 for the final themes and codes in the student/alumni interviews and Table 2.4 for the final themes and codes in the faculty interviews.

Table 2.2

Student and Alumni Interview Codes and Themes Related to Self-Efficacy for Culturally Responsive Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finding/creating resources that reflect student identities</td>
<td>Examining the curriculum for evidence of bias and stereotyping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examining resources for bias</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examining methods of instruction for bias</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocating for less biased resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocating for less biased instructional approaches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking children questions</td>
<td>Learning about children’s cultural backgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inviting children’s stories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inviting families’ stories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing and acknowledging difference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affirming children’s cultural and racial identities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introducing topics around race</td>
<td>Engaging colleagues in conversations about race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not being a bystander to micro-aggressions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying one’s White privilege</td>
<td>Taking a critical stance on one’s own racial identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examining one’s biases</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grappling with Whiteness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.3

Student and Alumnae Interview Codes and Themes Related to Urban Commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student teaching experience</td>
<td>The role of field experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Progressive approaches
Traditional approaches
Teaching style
Freedom of curricular decision-making

The tension between Oakes’ progressive philosophy and the traditional approach of some public schools

Peer experience
Peer attitude
Faculty role
Coursework

Influence of peers and faculty

Table 2.4

*Faculty Interview Codes and Themes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No role</td>
<td>Role in developing students’ urban commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support students with the commitments they bring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicted/questioning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expose students to information about progressive public schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expose students to ways of teaching they can bring to public schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence students through exposure to strong models of teaching in urban public schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence students to consider teaching in such settings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief in/commitment to public urban education</td>
<td>Personal commitment and beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief that the public school system is problematic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief that students should teach where they experience philosophical “fit”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief that there are few strong models in urban public schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief that there are strong models of urban public schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to social justice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief that that independent schools can be problematic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships with strong, progressive urban schools</td>
<td>Programmatic implications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for students to spend time in public schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Models of practice for urban public schools integrated into coursework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results

The data analysis process was concurrent and iterative (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). I collected qualitative and quantitative data for RQs 1, 2, and 3 from both surveys and interviews. There was one outlier who reported significantly lower than average scores for the Teacher Self-Efficacy Beliefs Scale and the Culturally Responsive Self-Efficacy Scale and higher than average scores for the Urban Teaching Barriers Survey. Although it is possible this data point reflects human error or intentional misreporting, it is also possible it reflects a participant whose experiences differ from the majority of respondents because of this possibility and the importance of considering outlier perspectives (Osborne & Overbay, 2004), I decided to retain this data. I analyzed data concurrently and synthesized quantitative and qualitative findings in my analysis. Often the qualitative data corroborated findings from the survey and at times extended them. Interviews also surfaced new themes that were not captured by the survey. Research question 4 was examined using qualitative faculty interview data only.

Teacher Self-Efficacy and Self-Efficacy for Culturally Responsive Practice

The first research question examined the level of teacher self-efficacy and self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice reported by recent alumni and current students. Across both the survey and interviews, participants reported strong teacher self-efficacy and strong self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice. Participants expressed somewhat lower teacher self-efficacy for teaching in urban public schools and somewhat lower self-efficacy for working with families for whom English is not the dominant language and for reducing the effects of home/school cultural mismatch.

Teacher self-efficacy. Across the survey and interviews, alumni and current students reported strong teacher self-efficacy given their status as novice educators. The Teacher Self-Efficacy Beliefs Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) uses a nine-point scale from 1)
“None at all” to 9) “A great deal” (see Appendix B) to assess teacher self-efficacy beliefs. On individual items, the mean self-efficacy ratings across all respondents ranged from a high of 7.61 for, “To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?” to a low of 6.71 for, “How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?” (see Table 2.5). Other relative strengths were crafting good questions (M=7.53), helping students value learning (M=7.48), and helping students believe in their abilities (M=7.40). Relatively weaker self-efficacy was reported for more behavioral items including controlling disruptive behavior (M=6.96), calming disruptive students (M=6.84), and motivating students (M=6.76).

Table 2.5

*Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) for Items on the TSE for All Respondents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?</td>
<td>7.61</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?</td>
<td>7.53</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much can you do to help your students value learning?</td>
<td>7.48</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in schoolwork?</td>
<td>7.40</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?</td>
<td>7.14</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How well can you implement alternative teaching strategies in your classroom?</td>
<td>7.09</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent can you use a variety of assessment strategies?</td>
<td>7.07</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?</td>
<td>6.98</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?</td>
<td>6.96</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?</td>
<td>6.84</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in schoolwork?</td>
<td>6.76</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?</td>
<td>6.71</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean of all items</td>
<td>7.13</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* TSE=Teacher Self-Efficacy Beliefs Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). The TSE uses a nine-point scale. N=120.
The mean rating across all items for all respondents was 7.13 (see Table 2.5 and Figure 2.1). This mean score is comparable to findings from studies that have used the same scale, for example, Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy’s (2007) study of novice (M=6.87) and experienced teachers (M=7.29), Clark and Newberry’s (2019) study of preservice teachers (M=7.78), and Knoblauch and Woolfolk Hoy’s (2008) study of students post student teaching (M=7.35). Independent-samples T-test analysis revealed no significant differences in self-efficacy belief across a range of participant characteristics including years of teaching experience, race, length of time student teaching in a public school serving an under-resourced community, and current teaching position.

Figure 2.1

Frequency Across Respondents of the Mean of All Items for the TSE

Note. TSE=Teacher Self-Efficacy Beliefs Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). The TSE uses a nine-point scale. N=120.
Student and alumnae interviewees corroborated high levels of teacher self-efficacy. Four of the eight interviewees—three students and one alumna—spoke of their sense of efficacy as new teachers in the field. Several participants cited confidence in their work with children, “[Oakes] has really prepared me to work with kids,” and, “I really feel we made a difference in the kids, of who they are...My kids loved school this year.” The theme of self-reflection and goal setting also emerged, “[my experience] has really prepared me to be reflective on what I could do better” and, “I am happy in the place I am in because that was a goal I set for myself. I have so many more goals.” Finally, one student commented on the breadth of her preparation, “I feel very prepared to work in a wide range of settings.” These findings are important, as teacher self-efficacy has been found to have a positive effect on retention in urban public schools (Eckert, 2013; Rockoff et al., 2011).

Although the survey and interview data provided evidence of strong teacher self-efficacy, there were a few places where participants expressed doubt about their capacity. In the interviews, two participants reflected on a lack of self-efficacy when thinking about teaching in public schools serving under-resourced communities. One stated, “To then be in a complicated system, especially an under-resourced school, just sounded like something that I wasn’t quite ready for.” Another participant—reflecting on a public school she worked in for a short period before attending Oakes—said, “Maybe if I felt I’m strong enough as a teacher to sort of do it on my own...I could go back.” The findings reflect several participants felt low efficacy for teaching in public schools serving under-resourced communities, which is important as teachers with low self-efficacy are less likely to persist in teaching (Eckert, 2013; Rockoff et al., 2011). It may also be that teachers self-select settings where they believe they will experience higher degrees of self-efficacy.
**Culturally responsive self-efficacy.** The data on culturally responsive self-efficacy was more variable, although students and alumni generally reported high self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice. Survey respondents completed the *Culturally Responsive Self-Efficacy Scale* (Siwatu, 2011b) (see Appendix B). The CRSE uses a 100-point scale. Respondents slide an indicator from 0, “no confidence at all” to 100, “completely confident,” to mark their response to each of 31 items. The mean rating across all items for all respondents was 76.85 (see Table 2.6 and Figure 2.2). This mean score is comparable to Siwatu’s (2011b) findings using the same scale in his study of the culturally responsive self-efficacy beliefs of preservice teachers contemplating teaching in urban public school settings (M=76.55). Though not directly comparable, two other studies that used an expanded 40-item version of this scale found means of 83.69 (Siwatu, 2011a) and 89.79 (Chu & Garcia, 2014). As with the teacher self-efficacy measure, independent-samples T-test analysis revealed no significant differences in culturally responsive self-efficacy belief across a range of participant characteristics including years of teaching experience, race, length of time student teaching in a public school serving an under-resourced community, and current teaching position.

Table 2.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop a personal relationship with my students</td>
<td>92.52</td>
<td>11.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help students feel like important members of the classroom</td>
<td>90.25</td>
<td>12.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build a sense of trust in my students</td>
<td>88.98</td>
<td>14.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the interests of my students to make learning meaningful for them</td>
<td>86.79</td>
<td>15.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtain information regarding my students’ academic interests</td>
<td>85.75</td>
<td>15.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate with parents regarding their child’s educational progress</td>
<td>84.49</td>
<td>17.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain new concepts using examples that are taken from my students’ everyday lives</td>
<td>84.32</td>
<td>15.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help students to develop positive relationships with their classmates</td>
<td>83.78</td>
<td>14.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Critically examine the curriculum to determine whether it reinforces negative cultural stereotypes. 
Use my students’ prior knowledge to help them make sense of new information
Use a variety of teaching methods
Establish positive home-school relations
Adapt instruction to meet the needs of my students
Obtain information about my students’ cultural background
Develop a community of learners when my class consists of students from diverse backgrounds
Assess student learning using various types of assessments
Obtain information about my students’ home life
Identify ways how students communicate at home may differ from the school norms
Use my students’ cultural background to help make learning meaningful
Revise instructional material to include a better representation of cultural groups
Identify ways that the school culture (e.g., values, norms, and practices) is different from my students’ home culture
Use examples that are familiar to students from diverse cultural backgrounds
Model classroom tasks to enhance English Language Learners’ understanding
Design a classroom environment using displays that reflects a variety of cultures
Teach students about their cultures’ contributions to society
Communicate with the parents of English Language Learner’s regarding their child’s achievement
Implement strategies to minimize the effects of the mismatch between my students’ home culture and the school culture
Greet English Language Learners with a phrase in their native language
Design a lesson that shows how other cultural groups have made use of mathematics
Praise English Language Learners for their accomplishments using a phrase in their native language
Teach students about their cultures’ contributions to science

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critically examine the curriculum to determine whether it reinforces negative cultural stereotypes.</td>
<td>83.47</td>
<td>17.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use my students’ prior knowledge to help them make sense of new information</td>
<td>82.99</td>
<td>15.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a variety of teaching methods</td>
<td>82.83</td>
<td>14.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish positive home-school relations</td>
<td>82.33</td>
<td>16.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapt instruction to meet the needs of my students</td>
<td>80.75</td>
<td>14.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtain information about my students’ cultural background</td>
<td>80.07</td>
<td>16.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a community of learners when my class consists of students from diverse backgrounds</td>
<td>79.41</td>
<td>18.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess student learning using various types of assessments</td>
<td>78.39</td>
<td>17.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtain information about my students’ home life</td>
<td>77.93</td>
<td>16.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify ways how students communicate at home may differ from the school norms</td>
<td>76.22</td>
<td>17.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use my students’ cultural background to help make learning meaningful</td>
<td>76.18</td>
<td>19.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revise instructional material to include a better representation of cultural groups</td>
<td>75.48</td>
<td>21.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify ways that the school culture (e.g., values, norms, and practices) is different from my students’ home culture</td>
<td>75.10</td>
<td>17.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use examples that are familiar to students from diverse cultural backgrounds</td>
<td>75.08</td>
<td>20.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model classroom tasks to enhance English Language Learners’ understanding</td>
<td>74.05</td>
<td>23.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design a classroom environment using displays that reflects a variety of cultures</td>
<td>69.86</td>
<td>23.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach students about their cultures’ contributions to society</td>
<td>68.64</td>
<td>26.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate with the parents of English Language Learner’s regarding their child’s achievement</td>
<td>67.31</td>
<td>26.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement strategies to minimize the effects of the mismatch between my students’ home culture and the school culture</td>
<td>65.67</td>
<td>20.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greet English Language Learners with a phrase in their native language</td>
<td>64.15</td>
<td>28.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design a lesson that shows how other cultural groups have made use of mathematics</td>
<td>58.83</td>
<td>26.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praise English Language Learners for their accomplishments using a phrase in their native language</td>
<td>56.68</td>
<td>32.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach students about their cultures’ contributions to science</td>
<td>54.33</td>
<td>27.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean of all items</td>
<td>76.85</td>
<td>12.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. CRSE=The Culturally Responsive Self-Efficacy Scale (Siwatu, 2011b). The CRSE uses a 100-point scale from “no confidence at all” to “completely confident.” N=120.*
Respondents’ degree of confidence was higher for items that did not reference culture or language in the prompt. For example, none of the top eight items, which range from M=92.52 to M=83.78, refer explicitly to domains of culturally responsive practice. Respondents were confident in their ability to build relationships, make learning meaningful, and build trust. This mirrors the findings across a range of studies that have used this scale or its variant (Siwatu et al., 2017; Siwatu, 2011a; Siwatu, 2011b; Chu & Garcia, 2014).

Respondents expressed lower self-efficacy for items that assessed some dimension of cultural competency. For example, although respondents reported high self-efficacy for communicating with parents in general (M=84.49), they expressed considerably lower self-efficacy for communicating with parents of English language learners (M=64.15). Using a phrase
to greet a student in their home language (M=64.15), minimizing mismatches between home and school culture (M=65.67), and designing classroom environments that reflect a range of cultures (M=69.86), were also among the domains where respondents reported the lowest self-efficacy. Again, this is congruent with findings from similar studies of preservice teachers (Siwatu et al., 2017; Siwatu, 2011a; Siwatu, 2011b; Chu & Garcia, 2014).

Data from the student and alumnae interviews corroborated some findings from the survey and surfaced additional themes. Four themes emerged from the coding of the student and alumnae interview data (see Table 2.2): a) Examining the curriculum for evidence of bias and stereotyping; b) Learning about children’s cultural backgrounds; c) Engaging colleagues in conversations about race; d) Taking a critical stance to one’s own racial identity. The first two of the four themes correspond to items in *The Culturally Responsive Self-Efficacy Scale* (Siwatu, 2011b). Notably, these two items name culture explicitly and are items where survey respondents reported high levels of self-efficacy as compared to their self-efficacy for other culture-related items. The mean response for examining the curriculum critically for evidence of stereotyping was 83.47 (SD 17.28) and the mean for learning about children’s cultural backgrounds was 80.07 (SD 16.58). Six of the eight interviewees shared stories that reflected strong self-efficacy in these two areas. The last two themes did not correspond with any survey item and emerged from the content of the interviews themselves. Survey items with lower self-efficacy scores, for example, *communicating with English language learners and their families*, and *reducing the effects of home/school cultural mismatch*, did not emerge as themes in the interviews.

Interviewees shared several stories that indicated the ways they critically examine curriculum materials and methods through the lens of culture. One participant reported:
We did a unit on Harriet Tubman and I felt very uncomfortable about the book we read and the way it was being taught. So, myself and another team member brought this to our grade team leader and the administration and they actually changed the curriculum—so fantastic. And [Oakes] helped me see that the way you teach history and the way you use literacy is really powerful...I was able to ask myself, “Am I being culturally sensitive?”

Another student reflected,

Within my first year at [Oakes] I started to look through the curriculum and looked at the texts and did appreciate that there was quite a variety of texts—Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry; Esperanza Rising—and these were texts that gave children opportunities to see themselves. It was a lot of what I learned at [Oakes] to kind of look for that in the material that I was teaching.

These findings, along with the survey results, indicate that Oakes students may have slightly higher levels of self-efficacy for critically examining curriculum than is reported for pre- and in-service teachers in other studies. Siwatu (2011b) found a mean of 73.38 for this item and Chu and Garcia (2014) 3.65 for the same item using a 5-point scale, which is similar to Siwatu’s (2011b) finding. These scores compare to a mean of 83.47 for Oakes’ students and alumni. It is important to note, however, that conclusions cannot be drawn about the significance of these differences.

Interviewees spoke of their confidence in learning about children’s cultural backgrounds. One alumna reflected,

I had students who are Muslim, and I didn’t know that much about that culture, or that religion. And so, I took time to ask them about it. And I think they thought, “Oh, my teacher wants to know about this.”... I made an effort to remove that barrier by finding out more about my students. And that came from [Oakes]...[Oakes] helped show me
that if you show interest in others’ cultures and their lives...you could actually break
down a barrier between you and another person.

In reflecting on how her perspectives have changed, another student said,

I think I would have gone in and thought, race doesn’t matter, wealth doesn’t matter,
we’re all the same. And that’s just blind. Really getting to know each kid and their family
and their backgrounds. [Oakes] definitely prepared me [for that].

Other studies similarly report moderately high levels of self-efficacy for learning about
children’s cultural backgrounds (Siwatu et al., 2017; Siwatu, 2011b; Chu & Garcia,
2014).

Finally, the two themes related to culturally responsive self-efficacy that were
not captured by the survey were engaging colleagues in conversations about race and
taking a critical stance about one’s own racial identity. Two participants spoke about
feeling confident in navigating issues related to race with colleagues. One spoke about
how she brought a college conversation about racial identity to her workplace.

The next day at work...I brought up the topic. And we really talked about how, like we
see [race] playing out in schools as a whole, like who's taking care in daycares? You
know, it’s mostly minority women who are taking care of the kids. And this is not a
conversation that you just like, you have naturally, something...prompts you to have it.

Another student, in reflecting on what she learned from peers of color, said,

To hear how [the teachers of color] are treated by administration, and then also their
colleagues has been very eye-opening to me. I would think that in education, especially
progressive education, we’re all on the same page, and don't treat people differently.
But that's not reality. Having that close group of friends now, knowing their experiences,
I'm going to be so much more aware of my colleagues and ask [about] their
experiences...And if I see something wrong, or people talking over each other, or what have you, I can pull the person aside and just be like, I noticed that and it was messed up, and I'm going to talk to them about it.

Related to their own identities, five of the eight interviewees were explicit about the ways their experiences at Oakes had pushed them to consider bias, privilege, and identity in their work. White students in particular spoke of grappling with their racial identities. One student, in describing an activity in which graduate students looked at dialect and code-switching said,

That gave me a way to talk about my own background, and how I can code-switch. I didn't know that I could code-switch until that moment. It's tricky being a White person who comes from a diverse background because I think you have to be very careful with your biases. I assume I know a lot but I still have privilege.

Another student noted,

My [thesis] is on racial literacy, so I've really been grappling with my whiteness, and how do I teach kids that look like me, and don't look like me...how to talk about race, when to talk about uncomfortable things, and when to step back.

A student of color reflected on her growing understanding of the importance of her identity as a teacher of color,

[Understanding how important] it is for children of having the representation of a teacher who, not, is not White was a really big turning point for me—reading about the impact of that [in classes]. Seeing yourself in the person that's teaching is so valuable.

Participants expressed high levels of self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice across the survey and interviews. Patterns emerged showing levels of efficacy varied according to the type of cultural engagement participants were responding to.
Commitment to Teaching in Urban Public Schools

The second research question examined the degree to which recent alumni and current students reported a commitment to teaching in urban public schools serving under-resourced communities. Students and alumni expressed low levels of commitment to working in public schools. Those who expressed a strong commitment shared that they came to the college with this orientation as opposed to the orientation being nurtured during their time at the college. Participants also reported and described several barriers to urban commitment including a belief that public schools would provide less mentorship and less administrative support than independent schools.

As mirrored by anecdotal reports, fewer than half of the student and alumni participants reported working in public schools, and only half reported an intent to teach in public schools. Of the survey respondents, only 37.5% were teaching in a public school at the time of response (see Appendix A) and only 28% of all respondents reported an intention to teach in a public school serving an under-resourced community in the 2019-2020 academic year (see Table 2.7). Nearly 50% indicated that it was not their intent to teach in a public school serving an under-resourced community and 23% were unsure of their intentions. Of the eight interviewees, 50% described a strong commitment to work in public schools (see Table 2.8), which was a higher level of public school commitment than seen in survey respondents. Only 25% of the interviewees, however, were committed to working in a public school serving under-resourced communities, which mirrors the survey findings. This data reflects findings from several studies that have found new and preservice teachers express low levels of commitment to teaching in urban public schools (Aragon et al., 2014; Creasey et al., 2016; Lee, Eckrich, Lackey, & Showalter, 2010) and underserved schools (Ronfeldt et al., 2016).
Table 2.7

Survey Responses: Intent to Seek a Job in an Under-Resourced Public School (URPS) by Length of Fieldwork Placement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Intentions</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondents who spent 0-5 weeks in URPS field placements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I plan to seek a position in a URPS</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>57.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not plan to seek a position in a URPS</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents who spent one or more semesters in URPS field placements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I plan to seek a position in a URPS</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>39.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not plan to seek a position in a URPS</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total across all respondents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I plan to seek a position in a URPS</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not plan to seek a position in a URPS</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>49.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: N=120.

Table 2.8

Interviewees’ Intent to Teach in Public Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of intent</th>
<th>Change in intent</th>
<th>Fieldwork position</th>
<th>Work setting</th>
<th>Description of changes to intent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>Working teacher, independent</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicted/low</td>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>Student teacher public and independent</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicted/middle</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>Working teacher, independent</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicted/ Middle</td>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>Working Teacher, Independent</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Came with intent to teach in public schools. Faculty and peer interactions shifted perspective towards independent. Has conflicted feelings about independent schools and would like to teach in a public school someday.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High</th>
<th>Stable</th>
<th>Working Teacher, Public Charter</th>
<th>Public Charter</th>
<th>Public Charter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Came in with strong intent to teach in public charter schools. Perspective did not change. Felt many peers at the college did not share this intent.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High</th>
<th>Stable</th>
<th>Student Teacher, Public</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Public</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Came in with strong intent to teach in public schools. Perspective did not change. Felt isolated in this orientation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High</th>
<th>Stable</th>
<th>Working Teacher, Independent</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Public</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Came in with strong intent to teach in public schools. Perspective did not change. Felt isolated in this orientation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*aFor the purposes of this analysis, public school includes both traditional public and public charter schools. Public schools where respondents worked were a mix of schools serving under-resourced and more well-resourced communities. bRepresents degree of intent at the time of the interview. cRepresents self-reported change in intent from time of matriculation to time of interview. dAll participants experienced a year of supervised fieldwork. Working teachers are supervised in the context of their jobs and student teachers are supervised in 3-day a week unpaid student teaching placements.*
Interviewees who did articulate a strong intent to teach in public school all spoke about the fact that they came to Oakes with this commitment. One alumna shared,

I came [to Oakes] with a commitment to public schools...And I think that the vast majority of students in my classes, were not necessarily thinking about working in a public school...They didn't come with that kind of commitment that I already had in mind.

Another alumna similarly said, “I went into [Oakes] planning to be a public school teacher.”

Participants who spoke of a strong commitment to public schools often connected this commitment to their own schooling experiences, as this student did,

I always wanted to become a public school teacher. I’m a product of public school. And I think we’re at the point in education right now, where it’s really important to have good public school teachers, and people who advocate for public schools, because our public school system is, it can't, it can't fail, you know.

Teachers who do express commitment to urban public schools are more likely to seek out and persist in such settings and childhood experience in public schools can contribute to this commitment (Frankenberg et al., 2010; Whipp & Geronime, 2017).

Survey respondents and interviewees also reported on and described the specific barriers that contributed to their low intent to teach in public schools serving under-resourced communities. Survey participants completed an adapted version of the Urban Teaching Barriers Survey (Creasey et al., 2016) (see Appendix B). The survey uses a 5-point scale where 0 is the absence of a barrier and 4 is a barrier large enough to prevent a respondent from teaching in an under-resourced public school. The mean rating across all items was 1.93, indicating, on balance, that respondents experienced some hesitation about teaching in NYC public schools, though on balance not enough to prevent them from seeking positions (see Table 2.9 and Figure
Respondents’ perceived limitations of public schools, including a lack of mentorship (M=2.33) and professional development (M=2.04) and challenging classroom management (M=2.22), were larger barriers to urban school entry than a lack of course preparation in their degree program (M=1.85). Given the findings from other data sources, I expected these numbers to be higher. Although it may be that participants do not feel strongly that there are barriers to entering NYC public schools, the findings call into question the usefulness of the scale itself. The UTB has not been widely used in the field. At the time of writing, there was only one other study that employed the scale (Creasey et al., 2016), and this study did not report on validity or reliability. Great caution must be exercised, therefore, in drawing conclusions from this data.

Table 2.9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I do/did not have enough teaching experience to work in a NYC public school right after I graduate(d).</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not feel prepared to work with parents who do not speak English well.</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a lack of community in under-resourced public schools.</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was a lack of coursework in my program that involved preparation for under-resourced public schools.</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not feel prepared to work with large percentages of students who are learning English as a new language.</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teacher preparation lacked clinical experiences in under-resourced public schools.</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a lack of professional development in under-resourced public schools.</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are difficult classroom management issues to deal with in under-resourced public schools.</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There may be a lack of mentorship in an under-resourced public school.</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean across all items</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>.812</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. UTB=Urban Teaching Barriers Survey (Creasey et al., 2016). The UTB uses a five-point scale from 0) It is not a barrier to 4) It is a barrier large enough to prevent me from teaching in an under-resourced NYC public school. N=120.
Interview data provided deeper insight into some of the barriers Oakes students perceived to working in public schools. All four of the interviewees who expressed low or conflicted intent to teach in public schools described factors that contributed to their lack of intent to seek positions in public schools. Concern about support from the school administration was the most commonly cited factor. One interviewee reflected that in public schools, “I’ve heard people feel like they couldn’t teach the way they wanted to because they didn’t have administrative support.” Similarly, another current student shared,

The fact that teachers don’t generally always get support from administration, or the way that our systems are run, it doesn’t always feel very cohesive. So, I’ve heard a lot about the DOE [Department of Education] in that regard. And, so, I’m not jumping out of my seat to go into the DOE.
A third participant said,

Other teachers that I know who work in public school...they expressed to me that they are not supported by their admin, and that it makes their day-to-day seem really hard.

And I, I think that, you know, scares us off a little.

Research has found that new teachers working in public schools articulate a desire for stronger preparation in navigating complex school culture and leadership (Freedman & Appleman, 2009; Hammerness & Craig, 2016; Olsen & Anderson, 2007; Schultz et al., 2008; Whipp, 2013).

**Teacher Preparation Experiences and Urban Commitment**

The third research question focused on the relationship between participants’ teacher preparation experiences at Oakes and their urban commitment. To explore this question, I analyzed data from the survey and coded student and alumni interviews (see Table 2.3). Survey data indicated that participants who had fewer experiences in public schools while at Oakes reported lower urban commitment. Three themes that emerged from coding the interviews were that field experiences, tensions with Oakes’ philosophy, and the influence of peers and faculty played some role in shaping students’ perceptions of and commitments to urban public schools, often in a negative direction.

**The role of field experiences.** Experiences in supervised fieldwork may have some bearing on Oakes students’ intent to seek positions in public schools although I cannot make a causal link given the limitations of the data collected. Survey respondents were split by those who had five or fewer weeks of fieldwork in a public school serving an under-resourced community and those who had one semester or more (see Table 2.7). Of respondents with one semester of fieldwork or more in a public school serving an under-resourced community, 39% reported an intention to teach in a public school serving an under-resourced community. Only 17% of respondents with five or fewer weeks of fieldwork in a public school serving an under-
resourced community reported an intention to teach in such settings. Similarly, on the UTB survey (see Table 2.9), a lack of clinical experience in under-resourced public schools was noted as a moderate barrier to entry (M=1.99).

Finally, three of the eight interviewees who intend to work in public school had one semester or more in public schools during their fieldwork year and all four of the interviewees intending to work in independent schools had one semester or more in an independent school during their year of supervised fieldwork. One participant who works in a public charter school reflected on the power of placements,

I think people come in with what they know. Yeah, they stick to what they know. It makes sense. And, so…if that's the case, what, how can we be more diverse in terms of our placements and where we're placing the graduate students to get more of that experience? I have never been placed in the DOE. I can't speak on what it's like to be in a DOE school. Yes, I but I've heard, and based on what I've heard, I'm not really looking to go to the DOE.

This student, whom I categorized as working in a public school given she was in a public charter, cannot conceptualize moving from a public charter to a public DOE school given her lack of experience in the DOE. Similarly, another participant, who taught in an independent school shared,

And the two schools that I did my student teaching placement, even though one was special [education]…felt very familiar. Yeah. And I think there's comfort in that. But I would, I would be interested in seeing just how an [Oakes] grad…has made a successful classroom, in an…under-resourced [school]…like [having] just a very vastly different environment… I think could have just made me more aware.
This participant expressed a feeling that she was not ready to teach in a public school serving an under-resourced community wondered if she might have felt more prepared had she spent time as a student teacher in that type of context. Evidence from some studies indicates that time in urban public school classrooms may change candidates’ perceptions and may positively affect their commitment to teaching in such settings (Bleicher, 2011; Gomez, Strage, Knutson-Miller, & Garcia-Nevarez, 2009; White, 2017). One dimension of what participants with low urban commitment struggled with was whether they would be able to enact the kinds of practices they had learned at Oakes in public school contexts.

**Tension with the Oakes philosophy.** The majority of student and alumni interviewees reflected on the Oakes’ progressive philosophy of teaching and learning and the relationship between this philosophy and their teaching careers. All four of the interviewees who expressed low or conflicted commitment to teaching in public schools spoke about a perceived sense that they would not be able to enact progressive practices in public school settings. One student wondered,

If I go [to a public school], will my teaching style be honored? Will I be allowed to be creative in the same way?...My idea of what it is to work in a public school is that you don't have that freedom. And those ideas are not supported. And you don't get to speak up about the curricula that, that you are teaching.

Another asked rhetorically, “If you can’t, you know, take your kids outside to go to a park, how do you have inquiry-based learning? I don’t know if [progressive teaching in public schools] even exists out there.” A third participant shared,

[Oakes] preaches progressive, play-based [learning]...Everyone comes to [Oakes] knows that because I think even the professors model that, right?...I think having that in the back of my mind, doesn't make me reach out to public schools in my job searches.
Embedded in these comments is a sense that public schools would be restrictive and would not allow these participants to teach in a manner they envisioned for themselves. When new teachers do not learn how to translate progressive practices to more traditional or restrictive settings—which can be both public and independent—they can struggle to maintain these practices (Schultz et al., 2008). New teachers are also more likely to leave settings that do not feel like a good philosophical fit (Freedman & Appleman, 2008; Schultz et al., 2008; Whipp, 2013).

In contrast to the participants working in independent schools, the participants working in public schools tended to acknowledge some limitations of enacting progressive practice in public schools, but instead of describing these as barriers, focused on the possibilities. In reflecting on her first-year teaching in a somewhat restrictive charter school, one interviewee said, “I thought to myself, ‘Okay, progressive education isn’t all or nothing.’ Like there are certain things I can take, like, I can plant a little flag here.” Another said, “I felt very hopeful and optimistic about what can happen if public schools are invested in and if strong teachers go to public schools…under the right conditions, really wonderful things can happen.” Others spoke about strong progressive models they had seen in public schools. For example, in describing a student teaching experience in a progressive public school serving an under-resourced community a student reflected,

That was transformative. [I got to see] things that I had read about but never seen. And seeing the teachers work together and the dynamic they had between them gave me so much insight...[It was] very frank and open, a super flexible curriculum...There can be more public schools like that.
Finally, an alumna working in an urban public school conveyed her understanding that a range of public schools exist and that she could choose to work in a school where she would experience a good fit,

You initially want to teach in a place that feels like you can keep growing and keep becoming the teacher that you want to be rather than having to be in a situation where you’re the lone teacher who believes what you believe.

These perspectives align with research that has found that teachers who have positive associations with urban public schools are more likely to seek out positions in those contexts (Aragon et al., 2014; Frankenberg et al., 2010).

**The influence of peers and faculty.** Students with low and high commitment to teaching in urban public schools also reflected on explicit and implicit messaging around public schools they encountered while at Oakes. For participants with low commitment, this messaging sometimes contributed to their negative perceptions of teaching in public schools while participants with a strong commitment often described feeling discouraged or isolated. Two students found their levels of intent to teach in a public school decreased over time (see Table 2.8) and both of these students attributed some of this change to rhetoric at the college around public schools. As one participant reflected,

When I came in, I was picturing myself like, totally working in a public school...I found that after the first year, that...a majority of students intended to work in private schools, and I had never worked in private school before...And there was a lot of professors that had a certain attitude about the restrictions they felt were present in public schools, and how that was kind of at odds with, I guess, what one would call the [Oakes] way of doing things...private school seemed to be this place where you can do a lot more things than you can in a public school...A friend was saying all these wonderful things about the
private school she was in and how they were hiring...And so I thought, “Oh, maybe I should try out private school.”

Another participant shared,

I came to [Oakes] kind of with this altruistic vision of...really thinking that I wanted to go into the public school system. And as I heard people's experiences and kind of learned more about the NYC public school system, it just seemed more and more daunting.

Taking that on... just sounded like something that I wasn't quite ready for.

For both of these students, public school became less appealing, and each reflected on how hearing about other experiences influenced their perspectives. In addition to negative messages about public schools, participants noted that independent schools were often held up as exemplars. As one participant said,

I think that the overall cumulative experience of being at [Oakes] very effectively communicated how wonderful it might be to teach at [a progressive private school]. And all of the thought, and all of the care behind the pedagogical decisions in that school. I think that most graduate students come away feeling like they could teach [there] and would very much enjoy doing that. And, so, I think, if [Oakes] is able to communicate that, then it wouldn't be possible also, to influence students’ visions of themselves in other contexts?

Teacher preparation programs with an explicit focus on preparation for urban public school contexts have high levels of urban commitment among their student population (Eckert, 2013; Frankenberg et al., 2010). Further research would be useful to determine what characteristics of these programs specifically help to nurture this commitment.

Finally, three of the four interviewees who came in with a strong intent to teach in public schools spoke about how challenging it was to manage negative perceptions of public
schools while at Oakes. Many cited feeling isolated, “I was the only person who was in a public school” and, “The majority of the students in my classes were not necessarily thinking about working in a public school.” They also confronted negative stereotypes about public schools. One alumna said,

I do feel like people very often were like, “Oh public school, that's a shame.” Like, it did sort of feel like that was the prevailing sort of narrative. And even when I started applying to public schools, people were like, “Oh, good luck, it's rough out there.” And just this feeling that it was like a subpar sort of option.

Another teacher, reflecting on how different her public school felt from the places where her peers were working said, “sometimes I felt really uncomfortable sharing things.” Although four of the interviewees stayed committed to working in public schools, there was a sense that the cumulative effect of exposure to these attitudes was draining. As one participant reflected,

It becomes easy to dismiss practices that look very different, sound very different [from progressive practice]. And it has been somewhat of a challenge to incorporate very different teaching wisdom into my own perspective and my own bank of teacher wisdom that I draw from, for my own practice.

The experiences of these students at Oakes raise questions about faculty’s relationship to developing students’ urban commitment. Participants across interviews reflected positively about faculty, naming specific classes and individuals that had been important to their growth and development. At the same time, there was a sense, across both participants who sought out public schools as well as some who did not, that there were missed opportunities for more exposure to public school models and a desire among some for a more affirmative vision of working in public schools.
Faculty Role in Developing Urban Commitment

The last needs assessment question investigated faculty’s sense of their role in the development of students’ urban commitment. Three themes emerged in the analysis of the four faculty interviews: a) faculty’s sense of their role in developing students’ urban commitment; b) faculty’s own commitment to and beliefs about urban, public schools; c) and programmatic implications for deepening urban commitment. Refer to Table 2.4 for the final codes and themes used for the analysis of faculty interview transcripts. Role in developing students’ urban commitment is defined as the degree to which faculty believed they should or should not be influencing students’ decisions to seek out teaching positions in public schools serving under-resourced communities. Faculty’s personal commitment and beliefs are the ways in which faculty articulated a commitment to public schooling and their attitudes about public schools serving under-resourced communities. Finally, the theme of programmatic implications was not a focus of the research question, but three of the four faculty reflected on programmatic gaps related to generating urban commitment that were worth consideration.

Across the four interviews, faculty perspective ranged along a continuum from not having a role to having an active role in influencing student thinking and decision-making. Table 2.10 summarizes the major findings concerning faculty’s sense of their role and their personal commitments and beliefs along this continuum.

Table 2.10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Developing students’ urban commitment</th>
<th>Personal commitment and beliefs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leah</td>
<td>No role</td>
<td>Believes in public education but sees the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
developing students’ social justice orientations.
current system as deeply problematic.

Sarah  Conflicted  Questions role; leans towards supporting students with the commitments they bring.
Strong personal commitment to urban public schools. Is aware of few strong models for students to learn from.

Elena  Role is to expose  Students should be aware that there are urban schools aligned with the college’s philosophy and that rigid curriculum can be adapted to be more constructivist.
Committed to having students work in settings where they feel philosophical alignment. Believes this can exist in urban public schools.

Faith  Role is to influence  All students should have experiences with urban public schools and all students should consider teaching in these settings as an option.
Strong personal commitment to urban public schools. Believes there are strong models students can learn from.

No role/conflicted role. Two faculty, Leah and Sarah, wrestled with their role in developing students’ urban commitment. Both faculty members mentioned this was not a question they had considered. Leah said, “Funny, I've never actually thought about this” and Sarah reflected, “I don't know how much time I've spent thinking about what my role is.” They struggled to reconcile their personal commitments to urban public schooling with their roles with students. They each articulated the importance of supporting students’ own goals, noting that for many students this meant supporting their choice to work in independent settings.

Leah, in particular, articulated the importance of new teachers working in settings where they will be supported. She noted, “I understand the reasons why people don't teach in under-resourced public schools...they feel like they need to build more of a skill set.” New teachers are less likely to seek out public schools serving under-resourced communities than they are more well-resourced schools (Hanushek et al., 2004, Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll & May,
2012; Lankford et al., 2002) and many teachers report low self-efficacy for working in culturally diverse urban contexts (Creasey et al., 2016; Siwatu, 2011a, 2011b). Although Leah did not push her students to consider working in public schools, she was intentional about having them grapple with issues of equity and access in school. She shared,

I think I have a role from a social justice standpoint...to explore issues that arise in under-resourced schools and to think about the needs of children, families, in those schools...But I haven't seen my role in having them develop a sense of where they should be working... I can't say that...I am in any way, developing a sense of responsibility in them to, to find positions in public schools...And I want to say sometimes if you're approaching this work from a social justice standpoint, it doesn't need to mean that you're, you're teaching in the public school system.

Leah also wanted to challenge the negative stereotypes students may carry about what teaching in public schools can look like. She shared,

A few of my advisee have sort of just shut down. [They think] what [Oakes] does...just can't exist in the public school system, it just, it just can't happen. So, I do see my role in challenging that thinking as far as in what ways we have seen it exist, even if it's not, you know, this pure model of what we do here.

Research has found that many preserve teachers carry perceptions about urban school safety (Creasey et al., 2016), their ability to teach effectively in diverse urban contexts (Creasey et al., 2016; Siwatu, 2011a, 2011b), as well as deficit-oriented thinking about historically marginalized children and communities (Whipp, 2013). Although Leah may not be steering her students to public settings, she did describe herself as challenging assumptions students may carry about urban public schools serving under-resourced communities.
Sarah saw her role as primarily to support students with the goals they bring with them. She noted, “I’m...valuing and validating everyone in their stance, perspective, and decision making processes.” Like Leah, she had a strong personal commitment to public education. She wrestled, however, with how to expand students’ thinking and wondered if she was equipping her students to consider public settings. In reflecting on a course she teaches, she said,

I’m not focused on things like standards so much as I am, what are you excited to build [in] the curriculum...And so I wonder what message that sends either to folks currently in public settings...but also to those entering into the field...If a school, for example, in an interview said, we don’t have social studies, or we have this one curriculum that you have to, to follow, how they would hold what they learned in that course, to judge that setting.

The tension of preparing teachers using child-centered and constructivist methods while also teaching them to successfully navigate more rigid public school environments has been noted by many researchers studying the preparation of teachers for urban settings (Freedman & Appleman, 2008; Schultz et al., 2008; Whipp, 2013) and corroborates themes that emerged in the student interviews.

Although Leah and Sarah expressed a commitment to public schooling and wanted to disrupt the idea that progressive education is not a successful approach in public schools, they were aware of few strong public school models. Leah reflected, “there’s, unfortunately, not a ton of examples in NYC of the Oakes philosophy really being implemented in the public school system. And that's very problematic.” Similarly, Sarah wondered,

I almost wish we had—and maybe we do, and I just don't know—these other ‘go to’ sites that could show progressive public education. And, you know, I think [C] School is an example of that. And so maybe I'm just underestimating the power of that.
These attitudes may inadvertently contribute to some students’ feelings of isolation in their strong commitment to public schools.

Although there is evidence that even short periods of time in urban public school classrooms can change candidates’ perceptions about such settings and can positively affect their intention to teach in such settings (Bleicher, 2011; Gomez et al., 2009; White, 2017), student teaching placements in urban settings do need to be of high quality, or they can reinforce negative stereotypes about children and communities (Hampton, Peng, & Ann, 2008) and can negatively affect student teachers’ later performance in classrooms (Ronfeldt, 2015).

Leah and Sarah conceptualized their main job as being to support their students’ development as new teachers, and although they expressed strong social justice orientations and personal commitments to public school, they did not see their role as being to influence students’ decision-making.

**Role is to expose or influence.** The two other faculty interviewed, Elena and Faith, described more active roles in developing students’ commitment to work in urban public schools. Elena reflected on the ways she exposed students to information about schools serving under-resourced communities, and Faith saw her role as directly affecting students’ thinking and decision-making.

Although Elena did not initiate conversations with students that steered them to consider teaching in public schools serving under-resourced communities—“Let me think because I don’t think that I’ve addressed [developing a commitment to work in public schools] directly”—she did describe providing advice to students who ask her opinion on where to look for jobs. She shared,

I’ve started telling them of some of the schools that are in the community like PS—, that it’s a public school in a needy area for strong educators, and PS—. These are in
neighborhoods that are really hard, hard to staff...We've heard many of our graduates go there...to be in neighborhoods that are hard to staff, but [the schools] also have some relationship to what they've learned at [Oakes].

Elena expressed a belief that new educators need to be in environments where they can enact some of the practices they have been learning about at Oakes and feels that not all public schools are a good fit. She reflected, “When we know that we have students who are already working in very tough situations, we encourage them to leave the school and look for another school that is more along the lines of an [Oakes] philosophy.” Teachers indeed have higher rates of turnover from schools with a chaotic climate and low trust for school leadership (Marinell & Coca, 2013; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Kraft et al., 2016; Simon & Johnson, 2015).

Both Elena and Faith explicitly addressed how to adapt progressive approaches to more rigid settings. Elena noted,

There are schools that have a set curriculum. But sometimes...curriculum allows for breaks...For example, they’re studying the neighborhood and... they cannot do neighborhood walks. I tell them, “let's adapt, let's do a school walk.” If they...don't have enough trust in the ability of the teacher or the teacher doesn't get enough parents to go out, [they can] do a walk inside the school [to support children in] learning from observation. I call it massaging the curriculum...extending certain parts of what you do and making it more project-based...It would not be fully blown, but there are cracks where they can fit that in.

Similarly, Faith said,

When they are in settings where they have a hard time applying what they are learning at [Oakes], what I tell them is, I want you to think about one thing that you can change in your classroom... I think that once they identify like one or two things that they can
change, as they become more experienced, they realize they actually can change more than they imagined.

Teachers who have not learned explicit strategies for navigating the disconnect they may experience in the practices they learn in their teacher preparation programs and the practices they are asked to enact in the schools where they work are more likely to struggle to hold on to social justice oriented practices (Schultz et al., 2008; Whipp, 2013) and less likely to persist in such settings (Freedman & Appleman, 2008).

In addition to supporting her students in developing a flexible orientation to pedagogy, Faith was the only participant who explicitly described supporting her students to develop a sense of urban commitment. She shared, “I want them to at least consider the option.” Faith found some students carry negative assumptions about public schools,

Some of them are just too afraid of public school. And it’s based on like, nothing. I asked one of my advisees last year, “but have you ever been in a public school classroom?”

And she said, “No.” But she just knew that it was going to be terrible.

She described challenging assumptions students may carry about independent schools, noting sometimes these schools can be more rigid and stressful than public schools. She drew on several strategies to build students’ positive experiences with public schools.

I try really hard to encourage them to take some days off and visit some public school classrooms. I set them up with good teachers and a variety of different kinds of public schools… I make a point… to always bring the conversation back to public schools… I don’t want them to just be focused on independent and private schools, because then I feel like they’re less likely to consider [public school] as an option.
Faith saw exposure to public school models as critical to shifting students’ intent. This perspective is supported by findings in the student and alumni survey and interview data related to Oakes students’ supervised fieldwork experiences.

In their interviews both Elena and Faith shared examples of strong public schools serving under-resourced communities. More than Leah and Sarah, they conveyed their belief in the strength of public school models, while acknowledging there are many tough public school settings. Both women described how they expose students to information about public schools and Faith shared how she actively encourages the development of students’ urban commitment.

**Programmatic Implications**

Across interviews with students, alumnae, and faculty, participants raised questions and ideas that have programmatic implications. Faculty suggested the need to develop more partnerships with strong public schools. One faculty member reflected on her wish that students could spend more time as student teachers in public schools serving under-resourced communities. Three of the four faculty spoke of the important role faculty can play in helping students dismantle assumptions about both public and independent schools. Finally, two faculty spoke about teaching students to translate progressive practices to more traditional or didactic contexts. These perspectives offer an opportunity to capitalize on the tension faculty feel and support some creative thinking that may emerge from further exploring these tensions.

Students and alumnae also shared ideas that have programmatic implications. Students with strong intent to work in public schools expressed a desire for more active and affirmative discussions of public schools in their courses, more recruitment of like-minded peers, and more explicit attention in their courses to how to bring progressive practices to public school settings. One student, who expressed some conflicted feelings about teaching in public school and whose
intent decreased over time, expressed a wish that she had spent time in a public school serving an under-resourced community during her student teaching year. Two others noted how little exposure they had had to public schools during their time as students. There are parallels between these ideas and concerns and the tensions named by faculty. A shared vision of a problem is a fundamental requirement for intervention (Rossi, Lipsey, & Henry, 2019), and finding the convergence between student and faculty voices begins to set a strong foundation for exploring ways forward. These findings also suggest the importance of engaging multiple stakeholders (Merten’s, 2018) as the college works to strengthen the preparation of teachers for urban public schools serving under-resourced communities.

Discussion

Findings from the needs assessment revealed areas of strength as well as opportunities for growth related to the college’s efforts to prepare candidates for public schools serving under-resourced communities. From an ecological systems theory perspective, the needs assessment explored microsystem factors that may have bearing on the larger issue of teacher preparation for urban public schools. These factors were candidates’ characteristics—teacher self-efficacy, self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice, and urban commitment—as well as characteristics of their teacher preparation faculty. Findings from the needs assessment suggested avenues for intervention and opened new questions for exploration.

Oakes students and recent alumni reported strong teacher self-efficacy and self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice. Participants described confidence in their general teaching abilities, being prepared to teach children in a range of contexts, and skills in reflective practice. Participants also reported confidence in their ability to critically examine curricula for bias, to form strong relationships with children and families from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds, and to examine their own racial identities. Although self-efficacy and self-efficacy
for culturally responsive practice were high, several participants expressed a lack of self-efficacy for teaching in public schools serving under-resourced communities and less confidence in connecting to children and families for whom English is a new language. Confidence in their ability to teach and to enact culturally responsive practices does not seem to translate among Oakes students to a commitment to teaching in public schools serving under-resourced communities, however. Further research exploring the relationship between self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice and urban commitment would be valuable.

Overall, participants expressed low commitment to teaching in urban public schools serving under-resourced communities. Participants who had less commitment to public schools spent less time in public schools during their year of supervised fieldwork. Participants who had little intent to seek out public schools also reported on barriers such as a perception that public schools would lack mentorship, opportunities for professional development, and administrative support. In interviews, participants described a sense that public schools serving under-resourced communities would be difficult places to start their careers and that they would experience restrictions that would prevent them from enacting progressive pedagogies. Some students experienced waning intent to work in public schools over the course of their time at the college. These findings connect to research that has found that teacher education students would benefit from stronger preparation in navigating the micropolitics of public schools (Freedman & Appleman, 2009; Hammerness & Craig, 2016; Olsen & Anderson, 2007; Schultz et al., 2008; Whipp, 2013). New teachers also need explicit support with negotiating conflicts they may experience between approaches they have learned in their teacher preparation programs and the demands of the settings they enter (Freedman & Appleman, 2008; Schultz et al., 2008; Whipp, 2013). New teachers are more likely to leave settings where they experience philosophical misalignment (Freedman & Appleman, 2008; Schultz et al., 2008; Whipp, 2013),
which suggests Oakes may be missing an important opportunity to support students in learning how to apply their learning to contexts perceived as being less open to progressive approaches. It may be that anticipating the challenge of this negotiation contributes to a barrier for entry into public schools for some students.

Participants with strong intent to teach in public schools often described coming to the college with this goal in mind and many connected this commitment to their own schooling experiences in public schools. Some described feeling in the minority at Oakes in their commitments to public school and frustrated by negative rhetoric about public schools. These participants also held more affirmative views about what was possible in public schools. One implication of these findings is that teacher education programs seeking to increase the numbers of their graduates who will seek out public schools may want to consider ways to attract more students with strong urban commitment (Frankenberg et al., 2010; Whipp & Geronime, 2017) and prior experiences in K-12 urban public schools (Whipp & Geronime, 2017). It is also worth further investigation into what teacher preparation characteristics might support or inhibit the development of these more expansive or restrictive orientations about public schools.

Finally, faculty participants expressed a range of perspectives about their relationship to developing students’ urban commitment although most did not conceptualize their role as being to influence student commitment to teaching in public schools. Faculty participants did speak of the importance of disrupting negative assumptions students may carry about public schools. As the students and alumnae participants did not reflect on having these kinds of experiences in their classes—and in fact were more likely to report negative rhetoric around public schools at Oakes—this finding raises questions about the connection between faculty intentions and their practices with students. It may be, for example, that faculty’s critiques of systemic issues of
access and equity in public education are unintentionally discouraging to students, although further speculation about this is beyond the scope of this needs assessment.

That some faculty expressed a commitment to social justice and a belief in the importance of public schools but did not see themselves having a role in shaping students’ urban commitment raises a related question about how faculty think about the intersection of social justice and the preparation of teachers for urban public schools serving under-resourced communities. The question of faculty influence on prospective teachers’ urban commitment is under-explored in the literature. As teacher education faculty are central to the curriculum teacher candidates receive, their perspectives and practices may be critical factors in the development of teachers for urban public schools.

There are important limitations to the needs assessment related to the methods, population selection, measures, and researcher bias. As a small mixed methods study using qualitative and descriptive quantitative methods, the findings are not generalizable outside of the immediate context. Any conclusions drawn from the study must also be understood in light of design limitations. I cannot assume that survey respondents or interviewees were fully representative of the larger student and alumni body. For example, although interview participants were assured that they did not need to be working in or intending to work in a public school to participate, given the nature of the study, participants interested in public schools might have been more likely to respond and faculty might have been more likely to refer public school teachers my way for interviews. There is some indication of this in the data. I do not have accurate data on the percentage of students and recent alumni who are working in public schools. Of the survey respondents, 37.5% reported teaching in a public school and 50% of interviewees are teaching in a public school. The small interview sample size also limits the generalizability of conclusions for this context.
In addition to limitations in selection, there are limitations in the instrumentation. The Teacher Self-Efficacy Beliefs Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) is a widely used measure with strong reliability and validity. The Culturally Responsive Self-Efficacy Scale (Siwatu, 2011b) is a less widely used scale, however, with less field-testing for reliability and validity. Finally, the Urban Teaching Barriers Survey (Creasey et al., 2016) has had limited testing as a measure and I adapted the scale, weakening my ability to make any meaningful comparison to Creasey and colleagues’ findings.

A final limitation to consider is researcher bias. I have my own experiences teaching in and commitments to urban public schools serving under-resourced communities. Although I engaged in reflexive practices to attend to and mitigate my biases, my data-gathering and my analyses are certainly informed by the perspectives I bring to this work.

The patterns revealed in the needs assessment data lead to questions about how student commitment to teaching in urban public schools is influenced by their experiences at Oakes, and how students develop robust practices that they feel confident deploying flexibly in a range of settings. There are implications as well for how faculty might play a more explicit role in influencing students’ commitment to teaching in public schools serving under-resourced communities. These questions provide a foundation for the intervention literature review that follows.
Chapter 3

The needs assessment findings provided insight into the challenges Oakes College faces in preparing more candidates who will pursue positions in urban public schools serving under-resourced communities. Analysis of the data illuminated participants’ perceptions of their preparation experiences and their commitments to urban public schools. Although student and alumni participants reported high teacher self-efficacy and self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice, most participants expressed that they were unlikely to seek teaching positions in public schools serving under-resourced communities. Students with a lower commitment to public schools often had fewer field experiences in public schools and several interviewees shared an impression that public school contexts would be difficult places to teach. Participants with a strong commitment to public schools expressed some feelings of isolation and wished that their coursework at Oakes had more directly addressed the realities of teaching in public school contexts. Student experiences were mirrored by the range of perspectives faculty participants shared concerning developing students’ urban commitment. Although one faculty member saw her role clearly as being to encourage students to consider teaching in public schools, others were less certain about their role. This lack of certainty and concerns faculty raised about the kinds of restrictive practices enacted in many public schools may contribute to some Oakes students’ negative perceptions about public schools and the isolation felt by others who are strongly committed to public schools.

Urban public schools are not monolithic (Welsh & Swain, 2020). They range in size, philosophy, and in the student learning outcomes they achieve (Welsh & Swain, 2020). Many urban schools serving under-resourced communities, however, do face challenges in areas such as staffing stability and school culture (Marinell & Coca, 2013, Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Kraft et al., 2016; Simon & Johnson, 2015). As Schultz and colleagues (2008) note, urban teacher
education faculty must negotiate preparing “teachers to face the challenges of what is and also to imagine what might be” (p. 180). Implications from the needs assessment are that Oakes can do more to develop students’ confidence and skills for teaching in urban public schools serving under-resourced communities and for negotiating how to implement progressive practices flexibly in a range of contexts. To do so, faculty would benefit from spaces to grapple with the tension between what is and what might be and learn from and with one another to deepen practices aimed at strengthening candidate preparation for public schools.

In this chapter, I review the literature on professional learning in education as well as practices in teacher preparation that can strengthen candidate development for urban public schools serving under-resourced communities, grounding my review in sociocultural and situated learning theories. Professional learning is a large and multidimensional concept. I draw on Clarke and Hollingsworth’s (2002) definition of professional learning as structured experiences that are aimed at changing practices, beliefs, and outcomes within a professional work context. As there is limited research that looks at professional learning interventions with urban teacher education faculty, I pair the literature on professional learning in education with literature on teacher education practices and program characteristics that are specific to preparation for urban public schools. The analysis of this literature is rooted in theoretical orientations that provide a framework for understanding how learning and development for graduate faculty and graduate students alike are contextual and socially constructed.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical and conceptual frameworks that guided this review of literature emerge from larger epistemological paradigms, which together provided a lens for selecting and analyzing the relevant intervention research and for developing the intervention study. The larger epistemologies I drew from are the constructivist and transformative paradigms (Creswell
& Plano Clark, 2018; Mertens, 2018). Two theoretical frameworks rooted in these paradigms that have particular relevance for research on faculty learning and teacher preparation and are sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) and situated learning theory (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; Cobb & Bowers, 1999). See Figure 3.1 for a graphic illustrating the relationship between these epistemological and theoretical frameworks, and the intervention studies under review.

Figure 3.1

Relationship Between the Theoretical Frameworks and the Intervention Studies Under Review

Constructivist and Transformative Paradigms

The larger epistemologies that inform this literature review are the constructivist and transformative paradigms. The constructivist paradigm holds that truth is not singular or absolutely determinable; rather the construction of an understanding of truth emerges from the consideration of multiple realities and perspectives (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; von
Glasersfeld, 2005). Individuals form knowledge through the reciprocal relationships among experiences, actions, and reflection, which occur within larger social contexts (Dewey, 1938).

The transformative paradigm emerges from the constructivist paradigm and operates from the stance that knowledge formation should be in service of larger social justice and human rights aims (Mertens, 2013, 2018). The transformative paradigm assumes power differentials rooted in historical injustices experienced by marginalized communities influence knowledge formation (Mertens, 2013, 2018). This paradigm places primacy on participant agency and privileges theoretical approaches that attend to the ways in which knowledge is socially constructed and informed by larger cultural, historical, and political forces (Mertens, 2013, 2018).

**Sociocultural Theory and Situated Learning Theory**

Sociocultural theory and situated learning theory are grounded in the constructivist paradigm and scholars of both theories have extended these frameworks to more explicitly address issues of power and equity (Gee, 2008; Lim & Renshaw, 2001; Rodriguez, 1998). Sociocultural theorists view development as a dynamic process that occurs through an individual’s interactions with people, symbols, and tools within particular social and cultural environments (Gee, 2008; Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky (1978) theorized that learning emerges through social interaction, observing how children’s earliest uses of signs and speech develop from and connect them to their social environments. Throughout the lifespan, social interactions—mediated by language and culture—shape perception, attention, and memory, and provide individuals with ever more sophisticated categories and symbolic systems for thought and action (Vygotsky, 1978). This theoretical framework has relevance for both teacher development, which at Oakes is grounded in connecting theory and research to extensive
experiential learning within school environments, as well as for faculty professional learning, which occurs in relationship with colleagues in the larger college context.

As sociocultural theory has evolved, more recent scholars have expanded the theory to explicitly account for the effects of power and hegemony on learning environments and processes (Gee, 2008; Lim & Renshaw, 2001; Rodriguez, 1998). Learning is a culturally bound activity and access to learning is impeded when individuals experience culturally oppressive or unresponsive learning communities (Gee, 2008; Lim & Renshaw, 2001; Rodriguez, 1998). Lim and Renshaw (2001) argue for an application of sociocultural theory that, “supports a pedagogy for valuing difference” (p. 11) and that invites multiple and divergent voices in educational spaces. This framing pushes for models of “cultural reciprocity” (p. 17) in which bidirectional exchange and development occur. These ideas were also taken up by Rodriguez (1998), whose model of sociotransformative constructivism integrates sociocultural, constructivist, and social justice orientations and challenges individuals who construct learning environments to be not merely inclusive, but to actively disrupt cultural patterns that exclude historically marginalized voices. These sociocultural frameworks provide a lens for thinking critically about the types of practices that will support the development of teachers who can enter communities able to reflect deeply on their own identities as they strive to create learning environments that affirm the identities of children. These frameworks also provide a critical lens for considering how to create equitable, non-oppressive learning communities for faculty who may hold divergent views on the preparation of candidates for public schools serving under-resourced communities, and who are grounded in their own perspectives shaped by identity and experience.

A branch of sociocultural theory, situated learning theory, uses the lens of context to understand how learning is socially constructed (Brown et al., 1989; Cobb & Bowers, 1999; Lave & Wenger, 1990). In situated learning theory, knowledge is understood in the ways it is
embodied by individuals and is produced and enacted through interactions within specific social spaces (Brown et al., 1989; Cobb & Bowers, 1999; Lave & Wenger, 1990). Context-specific experiences allow the learner to enter into the culture of a discipline or practice through opportunities for observation, modeling, and coaching (Brown et al., 1989; Cobb & Bowers, 1999). These situated experiences support learners in developing knowledge and skills that are relevant to the demands of a specific setting (Brown et al., 1989; Cobb & Bowers, 1999). Collaborative experiences with peers and colleagues within a setting allow learners to extend, solidify, challenge, and contextualize knowledge (Brown et al., 1989; Cobb & Bowers, 1999).

Although Oakes has strong field preparation and a commitment to the authentic integration of theory, research, and practice (Lit & Darling-Hammond, 2015), the college has not provided its candidates adequate preparation experiences situated in public schools serving under-resourced communities. Situated learning theory is thus a useful frame for engaging faculty in discussions about the kinds of teacher preparation practices that will support candidate success in urban, public school contexts. Furthermore, situated learning theory provides a foundation for thinking about ways to engage faculty in the development of a learning community with one another to study and develop these practices.

Throughout my review of the literature, I used the lens of sociocultural and situated learning theory to examine the literature on professional learning in education. I coupled this with an exploration of specific practices in teacher education that can support the development of teachers for urban public schools and public schools serving under-resourced communities. Sociocultural theory provides a critical perspective in analyzing how teacher preparation faculty might develop their practices in ways that contribute to teachers feeling better prepared for urban public schools.
Professional Learning to Strengthen Teacher Preparation for Public Schools

Addressing a problem as complex as the preparation of teachers for urban public schools serving under-resourced communities requires a multipronged approach. Although, as explored in Chapter 1, teacher preparation programs are far from the only contributing factor in the country’s struggle to provide a stable, high-quality workforce in urban public schools, there is much that can be done in teacher education to better prepare candidates for this work.

Strengthening teacher education faculty practices in this, or any other area, requires a commitment to ongoing, iterative, professional learning (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017; Desimone & Garet, 2015; Jensen, Sonnemann, Roberts-Hull, & Hunter, 2016) as well as in some cases a willingness to consider larger programmatic change (McKinney & Capper, 2010; Klempin & Karp, 2018).

Strong professional learning has the potential to transform practice, culture, and outcomes in educational institutions (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Learning Forward, 2011) and is strengthened when it is content- and context-specific (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone & Garet, 2015; Rohlwing & Spelman, 2014). Although there is a dearth of literature on higher education faculty development focused specifically on urban teacher preparation, there is a significant body of research on effective practices in urban teacher preparation (Anderson & Stillman, 2013; Matsko & Hammerness, 2014; Mentzer, Czerniak, & Duckett, 2019; White, 2017). Scholars have explored approaches that align field preparation (Anderson & Stillman, 2013; Mentzer et al., 2019; White, 2017) and course experiences (Matsko & Hammerness, 2014; Waddell, 2013) to the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for teaching in urban public schools serving under-resourced communities. The review of literature that follows explores interventions aimed at deepening educators’ professional learning. To ground this literature in
the specific content of urban teacher preparation, I also discuss intervention studies aimed at improving teacher development for urban public schools.

**Professional Learning for Faculty**

Professional learning is strengthened when it is grounded in constructivist principles that privilege the co-construction of knowledge and practice (Desimone & Garet, 2015) and in sociocultural orientations that situate developmental processes in social and cultural contexts (Lave & Wenger, 1990). The studies examined here explore successful models of professional learning in education (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone & Garet, 2015; Jensen et al., 2016; Rohlwing & Spelman, 2014), interventions that engage faculty in co-constructing institutional priorities and mission (McKinney & Capper, 2010; Klempin & Karp, 2018), and structures that support higher education faculty participation in change processes (Dempster, Benfield, & Francis, 2012; McKinney & Capper, 2010)

Two approaches to structuring faculty engagement in development and change that I focus on are communities of practice (CoP, Lave & Wenger, 1990) and appreciative inquiry (AI, Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). These models can support higher education faculty in strengthening practice and engaging in transformative change processes (Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Gallagher, Griffin, Ciuffetelli Parker, Kitchen, & Figg, 2011; Golden, 2016; He & Oxendine, 2019). One rational for focusing on these frameworks is that they have resonance with the existing culture of the institution and professional learning is strengthened when its design is responsive to context (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone & Garet, 2015).

**Key features of successful professional learning.** Across the research on professional learning, scholars employ a range of frameworks to analyze principles of strong practice in professional learning design. See, for example, Darling-Hammond and colleagues’ (2017) seven characteristics of professional development; Jensen and colleagues’ (2016) five components of
professional learning; and Desimone and Garet’s (2015) five key features of professional development. There appears, however, to be broad consensus around a set of domains common to strong professional learning activities. For this review, I draw on Desimone and Garet’s (2015) conceptual framework for effective professional development to review the literature on best practices as these domains appear across multiple frameworks (see, for example, Darling-Hammond and colleagues, 2017, and Jensen and colleagues, 2016). Although Desimone and Garet (2015) use the term professional development, I apply their framework to the concept of professional learning, which shifts the focus from discrete development activities to sustained and agentic learning experiences and processes (Calvert, 2016). Finally, although Desimone and Garet (2015) and a range of other scholars explored here (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Jensen et al., 2016; Rohlwing & Spelman, 2014) ground their research in K-12 contexts, the concepts and processes for professional growth described are broad enough to apply to educators at all levels.

Desimone and Garet (2015) identify five key features of successful professional development design. These are that effective professional development: a) is content-focused, b) provides opportunities for active construction of learning, c) is coherent with institutional goals, d) is sustained over time, and e) integrates opportunities for collaboration (Desimone & Garet, 2015). In addition to these features, Desimone and Garet (2015) note the importance of strong leadership and robust assessment processes. The features identified by these authors, including the active construction of knowledge and collaborative learning processes, align closely with sociocultural learning theory (Vygotsky, 1978). The five features of professional development identified by Desimone and Garet (2015) are described here in fuller detail.

Professional learning at its core should be aimed at helping individuals improve in ways that are specific to the nature of their work and their contexts. Desimone and Garet (2015) have
identified the importance of professional learning that is focused on the content that educators and learners are engaged with rather than decontextualized skills or concepts. This means that professional learning should be “job embedded” and “discipline-specific” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017, p. 5). In addition, professional learning is improved when learning is grounded in meaningful dilemmas and problems of practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Rohlwing & Spelman, 2014). Adult learners bring their own knowledge, skills, and experiences to professional learning and are motivated when new learning builds on existing capacity and connects to authentic goals and perceived needs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Rohlwing & Spelman, 2014). Content-focused professional learning allows educators opportunities for application and active meaning-making within their professional context, which aligns with dimensions of sociocultural and situated learning theory (Brown et al., 1989; Cobb & Bowers, 1999).

Strong professional learning designs allow participants to deepen their understandings of and orientations to content specific practice through observation, analysis, experimentation, and application, among other activities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone & Garet, 2015; Raphael, Vasquez, Fortune, Gavelek, & Au, 2014). Guskey (2002) found that changes in beliefs follow changes to practice; in other words that it is the enactment of practice that serves as a primary lever of change in professional learning. Raphael and colleagues (2014) found that new learning becomes convnetualized as individuals have opportunities to appropriate, transform, and make public new practices. During this process, learners benefit from interactive opportunities to apply new learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Firestone & Mangan, 2014; Jensen et al., 2016; Raphael et al., 2014), reflect on their own goals and development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Rohlwing & Spelman, 2014), and engage in dialogic processes with
colleagues (Raphael et al., 2014; Rohlwing & Spelman, 2014). These processes help to build shared understandings across an institution (Avalos, 2011; Firestone & Mangan, 2014).

Personal and collegial learning that is embedded in the context of work is strengthened when continuous learning is integrated into an institution’s culture (Avalos, 2011; Firestone & Mangan, 2014) and professional learning goals and activities align with its priorities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone & Garet, 2015; Firestone & Mangan, 2014). In her review of the research literature on professional development in K-12 education, Avalos (2011) found school cultures that promote inquiry and collaboration foster stronger professional learning. Likewise, Firestone and Mangan (2014) found that leaders who promote a learning culture articulate a vision of collective growth and capacity, engage in distributed leadership practices, and view adults as lifelong learners. Professional learning becomes aligned with an institution’s strategic goals when educators have a voice in setting those goals (Firestone & Mangan, 2014).

Building alignment between personal and institutional development priorities allows for coherence (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017), shared inquiry (Firestone & Mangan, 2014), and efficient allocation of resources (Jensen et al., 2016). Another reason for the importance of a coordinated approach to professional learning is that change is a complex, multidimensional process (Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002) and learning activities, even if thoughtfully constructed, do not always result in lasting effects on practice (Desimone & Garet, 2015).

There is agreement in the literature that duration is one key factor that does increase the likelihood of success for professional learning activities (Avalos, 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone & Garet, 2015; Firestone & Mangan, 2014; Jensen et al., 2016; Raphael et al., 2014). Professional learning activities that occur consistently and over sustained periods have a greater chance of leading to lasting change (Avalos, 2011; Desimone & Garet, 2015; Jensen et al., 2016). Given time is a limited resource, leaders must integrate professional
learning activities into educators’ schedules in ways that honor professional learning as a critical dimension of work and not an add-on (Jensen et al., 2016). Lasting change in practice at an institutional level can take years to achieve (Learning Forward, 2011). An additional reason building time into the existing schedule is important is that it promotes opportunities for sustained collaboration (Jensen et al., 2016).

The last critical feature of successful professional learning identified by Desimone and Garet (2015) is collaboration. When collaboration is woven into the structure of learning activities, adults develop a sense of responsibility for their own learning as well as the learning of their colleagues (Jensen et al., 2016). As Darling-Hammond and colleagues (2017) note, collaboration comes in many forms and can mean everything from one-on-one work with a coach to large teams of educators developing practice together. Across multiple configurations, collaboration has been found to promote more lasting change and improved outcomes (Avalos, 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone & Garet, 2015; Jensen et al., 2016). Dialogic processes allow for the exchange of ideas across multiple perspectives towards the development of a set of shared understandings and practices (Rohlwing & Spelman, 2014). This type of interaction and collaboration is central to the development of learning communities that can contribute to a culture of improvement (Raphael et al., 2014). Change processes become more enduring when they exist not only in an individual’s practice but are shared across a professional community (Raphael et al., 2014).

**Supporting transformative change in higher education.** Transformative change in higher education strengthened when stakeholders have a voice in developing a unifying vision (McKinney & Capper, 2010; Klempin & Karp, 2018) and when structures for faculty engagement are clear and support collaborative growth and learning (Dempster et al., 2012; McKinney & Capper, 2010; Klempin & Karp, 2018). Faculty and other stakeholders who play a participatory
role in the co-construction of a vision or mission are more likely to support and engage in
change processes (McKinney & Capper, 2010; Klempin & Karp, 2018). In their qualitative study
of a counseling psychology program’s deliberate shift to integrate a more explicit social justice
orientation across course and fieldwork, McKinney and Capper (2010) found that department
leadership created explicit opportunities for faculty to co-construct a vision for what
programmatic change for social justice might look like. Faculty had opportunities to negotiate
their varied understandings of social justice (McKinney & Capper, 2010). The study found faculty
perspectives on the meaning of social justice were not universal (McKinney & Capper, 2010).
Divergent thinking was welcomed as generative, however, and the process of engagement
helped to build a shared commitment to the change process (McKinney & Capper, 2010).

Klempin and Karp (2018), in their case study of six community colleges that were all
working to strengthen student advisement processes, found that colleges where “project
leaders shared a clear vision for adaptive change” (p. 96) and where stakeholders at all levels
were engaged in framing the change agenda were able to make more significant improvements
to their advisory structures. These studies draw from constructivist and transformative
paradigms through their focus on participant agency (Mertens, 2018) and suggest the value of
engaging faculty at Oakes in an open discussion of the social justice mission of the college and
data related to students’ perspectives on teaching in public schools. Such discussions could
support the co-construction of a stronger shared vision of the college’s role in preparing
students for urban public schools and lay the foundation for practice and/or programmatic
changes that may need to follow from new priorities.

In addition to the importance of faculty playing a role in co-constructing a collective
vision for transformative change (McKinney & Capper, 2010), faculty are supported in change
processes when structures for participation are clear and explicit (Dempster et al., 2012;
McKinney & Capper, 2010). In their five-year qualitative study of a course design intensive at a university in the United Kingdom, Dempster and colleagues (2012) examined which factors contributed to successful outcomes across a range of design groups. The course design intensive was a structure that brought together faculty from across disciplines in design teams to collaboratively review and iterate curriculum (Dempster et al., 2012). The authors found that individuals were more successful in innovating curriculum when their design teams had strong facilitation, clear deliverables, explicit support for collaboration, and “license to innovate” (Dempster et al., 2012, p. 141). Similarly, McKinney and Capper (2010) found that faculty were more successful in integrating social justice content into the program when clear structures were created for sharing and critiquing syllabi across the program, thus supporting both intellectual collegiality as well as explicit expectations around change outcomes. What follows is an exploration of two approaches to structuring faculty learning and engagement.

Communities of practice and appreciative inquiry. Communities of practice and appreciative inquiry are two, complementary frameworks that have been successfully used in higher education to support the development of professional practices and inquiry-based learning. Communities of practice are intentional communities formed by people with common interests and concerns that foster collaborative processes to improve practice and deepen knowledge through shared inquiry (Gallagher et al., 2011; Golden, 2016; Lave & Wenger, 1990; Wenger, 1998). In higher education, CoPs can support professional growth and development, promote reflective practice, build collaborative communities, and promote the sharing of resources and knowledge (Gallagher et al., 2011; Golden, 2016). Communities of practice can also have a positive effect on supporting changes in practice (Hoyert & O’Dell, 2019; Schenkel & Teigland, 2008). Appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987) is a complementary model that has been applied to faculty learning and that can have a positive effect on supporting
innovative change processes (Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; He & Oxendine, 2019).

Lave and Wenger (1990), building off of sociocultural and situated learning theories, developed the concept of CoP, which they defined as communities made up of members whose knowledge and beliefs are co-constructed and deepened through group participation in shared practices. Although the CoP framework has been critiqued for the ways it has evolved into a set of routines aimed at specific kinds of professional learning (Barton & Tusting, 2005), I explore it here not as a routine or program, but as a conceptual framework that can deepen understandings of how to create transformative learning environments (Lave & Wenger, 1990).

As conceived by Lave and Wenger (1990), CoPs require collaboration and mutual engagement to support reciprocal learning processes between group members. Lave and Wenger conceptualized learning in CoPs developing through legitimate peripheral participation. Peripheral participation is not an activity, but an “analytical viewpoint on learning” (Lave & Wenger, 1990, p. 40). Novices enter communities on the periphery and become more integrated as they acquire “identities of mastery” through increasingly embedded and sophisticated interaction within the learning community (Lave & Wenger, 1990, p. 42). The community supports the development of mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire (Lave & Wenger, 1990).

As with sociocultural theory, later scholars strengthened the CoP framework through a more critical and explicit examination of the effects of power hierarchies on learning communities, noting that CoPs are not by default spaces for social justice or liberatory practices (Barton & Tusting, 2005; Harris & Shelswell, 2005; Lea, 2005). Although CoP as a framework provides a useful lens for thinking about the construction of participatory and transformative learning spaces (Lave & Wenger, 1990) for both faculty as well as for teacher candidates, this
does not absolve participants and facilitators from attending to how knowledge is reified, and how the dynamics of dissonance and exclusion can affect and potentially limit full participation in these spaces (Lea, 2005).

Faculty who participate in CoPs describe these experiences as both generative and transformative (Gallagher et al., 2011; Golden, 2016). In their two-year qualitative self-study of a new faculty CoP at Brock University in Canada, Gallagher and colleagues (2011) found the CoP supported faculty’s professional growth, their sense of “belonging,” and their ability to learn from and with one another (p. 9). Conditions the authors cited as particularly important were that CoP participation was voluntary and that members paid explicit attention to establishing conditions for trust, care, and reciprocity (Gallagher et al., 2011). Participants in CoPs reported that shared experiences with peers promoted reflective practice and empowered the risk-taking needed to enact pedagogical shifts (Golden, 2016). One caution to note in interpreting these findings is that participation is a CoP is typically voluntary (Lave & Wenger, 1990). There may be selection bias at play here (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002), as faculty who choose to engage in a CoP may be more predisposed to identify a sense of belonging with the group as well as to articulate a sense that participating in the group was a positive experience.

Fewer studies have examined the relationship between CoPs and performance or programmatic outcomes, although a small number have found positive effects (Hoyert & O’Dell, 2019; Schenkel & Teigland, 2008). One mixed methods case study of a large, international, multi-firm bridge construction project found participating in cross-firm CoPs improved performance, as measured by reduction in unwanted deviations in production, (Schenkel & Teigland, 2008). Three CoPs in this study with regular structures and processes for communication saw steady reductions in deviations, although a fourth CoP, which had less success sustaining strong communication and collaboration, saw an increase in unwanted
deviation (Schenkel & Teigland, 2008). Successful CoPs in this study, “developed a shared repertoire of both a tacit and explicit means of understanding what defined a deviation as well as the routines for detecting and managing deviations” (Schenkel & Teigland, 2008, p. 110). Although not focused on higher education, Schenkel and Teigland’s (2008) findings concerning the ways effective CoPs can build shared expertise and improve outcomes are instructive for thinking about how faculty could engage in collective processes to strengthen the preparation of their candidates for urban public schools.

In their quantitative study of CoPs in a traditional four-year college, Hoyert and O’Dell (2019) focused on the effect CoPs had on developing faculty’s pedagogical skills. The authors found students who took courses taught by faculty who had engaged in CoPs focused on strengthening pedagogy saw a significant increase (p<.001) in grade point average (GPA) and course retention as compared to students who had participated in the same courses before the intervention (Hoyert & O’Dell, 2019). Students’ GPA rose by nearly 20% and students in the redesigned courses were 10% more likely to return to the college the following year (Hoyert & O’Dell, 2019). Communities of practice can help faculty generate shared goals and practices and support the ongoing acquisition of new knowledge and skills (Gallagher et al., 2011; Golden, 2016; Lave & Wenger, 1990; Wenger, 1998), however, they do not follow a set format. I explore AI as a framework that can provide an explicit structure, grounded in constructivist principles, to a community of practice.

Appreciative inquiry, which emerged from the field of organizational development, provides a framework for thinking about how to engage faculty in learning processes. Like CoP, AI is grounded in constructivist principles and holds that change processes are supported when individuals come together around shared inquiry and goals (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). The five stages of AI, define, discovery, dream, design, and deliver (Priest, Kaufman, Brunton, &
Seibel, 2013), focus on leveraging the strengths of individuals and organizations to shift patterns of thought and action (Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; He & Oxendine, 2019). Groups engaged in AI identify areas for inquiry, define their strengths and opportunities for growth, research innovations and solutions, use this research to inform creative design thinking, and implement changes (Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; He & Oxendine, 2019), as such this is an approach that can be integrated into the structure of a CoP. The AI model has much in common with improvement science, which is also based on a cyclical model of define, implement, study (Bryk et al., 2015). What distinguishes AI is its explicit focus on identifying and naming strengths as the motivating forces for change (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987) as opposed to starting with problems.

Several studies have looked at the effects of AI on programmatic change processes (He & Oxendine, 2019; Priest et al., 2013), adult engagement (Anderson, Thorson, & Kelinsky, 2016; Johnson, 2014), and shifting patterns of thinking (Bushe & Kassam, 2005). In their qualitative study of the use of AI for strategic planning in a Canadian public college, He and Oxendine (2019) found that the AI process created a more generative institutional culture and engaged and empowered faculty while supporting important innovation at the institution. Similarly, Priest and colleagues (2013) found that the use of AI at Virginia Tech allowed faculty to “overcome conventional or habitual ways of thinking” (p. 20) as they engaged in a strategic planning process to reimagine departmental structures and processes and to redesign a leadership course. In a qualitative study of teaching pedagogy at an online university, Johnson (2014) explored the role of AI on the adult learning experience. Johnson found that the integration of AI principles in course design and instruction had a positive effect on student motivation, engagement, and performance. Finally, in a study of program reform at an agricultural teacher education school, Anderson and colleagues (2016) found the AI approach
led to a successful program redesign because of the high level of faculty engagement and buy-in
the process enabled and the structured approach to engaging large groups in a design process.

Finally, AI’s focus on constituent-driven processes supports transformative change (Bushe &
Kassam, 2005). In their meta-analysis of 20 studies that employed AI, the Bushe and Kassam
(2005) found the two qualities of AI that most supported transformational change were AI’s
focus on, “changing how people think instead of what people do” (p. 161) and on AI’s ability to
“nurture a more improvisational approach” (p. 176) as opposed to imposing a prescriptive
change agenda. This latter finding is congruent with principles of the community of practice
framework (Lave & Wenger, 1990).

There are limitations to the research on CoPs and AI that are important to acknowledge,
however. There are some variations in the literature in how both frameworks are defined and
how they are implemented. For example, AI is variously described as having from four (He &
Oxendine, 2019) to five (Priest et al., 2013) stages, and the definition of what constitutes a CoP
varies (Lave & Wenger, 1990; Schenkel & Teigland, 2008). Many of the studies of CoPs and AI
are qualitative studies that measure short-term effects on individuals, such as shifts in attitudes
and perceptions (Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Gallagher et al., 2011; Golden, 2016; He & Oxendine,
2019; Priest et al., 2013). There is a dearth of studies on the longer-term effects of CoPs and AI
on program effectiveness or student learning outcomes in higher education. Finally, as many of
the CoP and AI intervention studies employ qualitative methods, findings are difficult to
generalize.

Despite these limitations, there are rich examples of CoPs and AI processes being used
to engage faculty in innovative processes aimed at developing practice and strengthening
program (Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Gallagher et al., 2011; Golden, 2016; He & Oxendine, 2019;
Priest et al., 2013). These are complementary frameworks with the principles of AI able to
inform the structure of CoPs. Effective professional learning is grounded in content- and context-specific problems of practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Rohlwing & Spelman, 2014). As the needs assessment revealed, a core problem of practice at Oakes is the effective preparation of candidates for positions in urban public schools serving under-resourced communities. In the next section, I discuss intervention studies that explore strong models of urban teacher preparation as these models could inform the structure and content of professional learning experiences for faculty at Oakes.

**Strengthening Teacher Preparation for Urban Public Schools**

Context-specific learning, also referred to as place-conscious learning, is defined as learning that is situated in and attentive to the geographic, demographic, historical, and sociopolitical contexts of specific communities (Gruenewald, 2003; Matsko & Hammerness, 2014). The literature on situated, or context-specific, learning in teacher education focused on preparation for public schools serving under-resourced communities tends to focus on two core dimensions of program: fieldwork placements (Bleicher, 2011; White, 2017) and coursework (Matsko & Hammerness, 2014; Waddell, 2013). Findings from research support the idea that context-specific learning for urban public schools serving under-resourced communities has a positive effect on teacher quality (Goldhaber, Krieg, & Theobald, 2017; Ronfeldt, 2015), teacher candidates’ perceptions about working in urban contexts (Bleicher, 2011), and candidates’ intentions to teach in urban contexts (Bleicher, 2011; White, 2017).

Urban teacher education programs tend to use two types of context-specific field experiences: student teaching placements (Bleicher, 2011; Gomez et al., 2009; White, 2017) and urban teacher residencies (DeMoss, 2016; Guha, Hyler, & Darling-Hammond, 2016; Mentzer et al., 2019). Additionally, there is research on the effects of context-specific coursework in preparing teacher candidates to work effectively in urban public schools (Fitchett et al., 2012;
Context-specific fieldwork and coursework are grounded in the theoretical assumptions of sociocultural theory and situated learning theory, which hold that meaningful learning is contextual (Brown et al., 1989; Cobb & Bowers, 1999; Vygotsky, 1978), is supported by strong modeling and scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978), and occurs when there are opportunities for application and feedback within sites of practice (Brown et al., 1989; Cobb & Bowers, 1999). Student teaching experiences (Bleicher, 2011; White, 2017), urban residencies (DeMoss, 2016; Guha et al., 2016; Mentzer et al., 2019), and context-specific coursework (Fitchett et al., 2012; Matsko & Hammerness, 2014; Waddell, 2013) all show promise in helping to develop teachers for urban public schools serving under-resourced communities, although with all of these interventions there are limitations and challenges.

**Student teaching experiences.** Student teaching placements are designed to prepare teacher candidates for the demands of urban public schools serving under-resourced communities through situated learning experiences within specific communities of practice (Anderson & Stillman, 2013). Although definitions of student teaching vary across programs, these are typically unpaid placements, under the guidance of mentor teachers, that span weeks or months and are embedded as requirements of many teacher preparation programs (Anderson & Stillman, 2013). Student teaching placements can enhance teacher candidates’ perceptions of urban settings (Bleicher, 2011), strengthen their culturally responsive practices (Bleicher, 2011), positively affect candidates’ urban commitment (Bleicher, 2011; Gomez et al., 2009; White, 2017), and contribute to positive learning outcomes for students (Goldhaber et al., 2017; Ronfeldt, 2015), although findings across studies are complex and not unequivocal.

There is evidence that even short periods of time spent as a student teacher in urban public school classrooms can change candidates’ perceptions about such settings and positively affect their skills and dispositions for working in culturally diverse contexts (Bleicher, 2011;
Although the relationship between cultural competency and urban intent is not straightforward. In their study of 335 preservice teachers across three California state university undergraduate education programs, Gomez and colleagues (2009) used pre- and post-field placement surveys with Likert-type and open-ended responses to explore the effect of field experiences on teacher candidates who student taught in Title I versus non-Title I schools. Title I schools serve a high concentration of children living in poverty and children of color that qualify for additional U.S. Department of Education funding (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). Participants—58% of whom described themselves as White—who completed student teaching in Title I schools reported a 46% increase in appreciation for and knowledge about diversity (Gomez et al., 2009). Participants who worked in non-Title I schools reported a 26% increase in appreciation for and knowledge about diversity \((p=.011)\) (Gomez et al., 2009). The authors found that student teaching experiences helped participants develop a “sense of professional competence” through ongoing interactions with children with a range of cultural and racial identities, and through sustained interactions with educators at their field sites (Gomez et al., 2009, p. 135).

In a similar study, Bleicher (2011) found that student teaching in urban schools with high percentages of children of color and children from lower socio-economic backgrounds has the potential to reduce candidates’ racial biases. Bleicher used a mixed methods design to study the effects of a one-week urban placement on 95 suburban and rural teacher candidates. The majority of the study’s participants (99%) described themselves as White (Bleicher, 2011). The urban student teaching placement was part of a larger program of study focused explicitly on helping candidates develop racial and cultural competency (Bleicher, 2011). Before the placement, candidates took substantial coursework focused on supporting learning for children from a range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Bleicher, 2011). Before, during, and after
the placement experience, candidates were prompted to engage in ongoing reflection on their own identities and positionality (Bleicher, 2011). Additionally, candidates took a methods course while they were in their placement and were required to research the school and community context before beginning their field experiences (Bleicher, 2011).

Bleicher (2011) found participants expressed significant trepidation about teaching in an urban context and deficit orientations about youth of color prior to their field experiences but that these attitudes changed over time. After the intervention, participants reported greater confidence in teaching in cross-cultural contexts and significantly more positive orientations towards youth in these contexts although Bleicher acknowledged that a few days of an urban placement was not enough time to completely undo deeply rooted biases. The work of Bleicher (2011) and Gomez and colleagues (2009) points to the promises and limitations of student teaching in diverse urban contexts. Bleicher’s (2011) work in particular highlights the importance of the relationship between field and course experiences, and the value of a programmatic commitment to preparing candidates for racially and linguistically diverse school contexts.

In addition to influencing perception and attitudes, student teaching in urban public schools serving under-resourced communities can positively influence candidates’ intentions to teach in such settings (Bleicher, 2011; White, 2017). White’s (2017) mixed methods study of 150 students before and after their fieldwork experiences in urban public schools found experiences in urban schools positively changed teacher candidates’ opinions about their intent to seek employment in such settings. As one participant said,

I remember on the survey we took before completing our fieldwork, I said I did not have any desire to teach in an urban area...By having the valuable experience of working with the students of [school], that feeling has completely changed. (White, 2017, p. 12)
The program that White studied engaged candidates in reflecting on the ways these urban contexts may differ from the contexts of their own schooling experiences, using the lens of cognitive dissonance to help candidates grapple with and move productively through conflicting beliefs as they developed more affirmative stances about urban schools. Similarly, across each of the five years of her study, Bleicher (2011) found a fairly consistent increase of about 20% in candidates’ intent to teach in urban public schools after their fieldwork experiences. Given high teacher turnover and the struggle urban public schools face in attracting high-quality teachers (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2018), interventions that increase commitment to teaching in such settings are worth further exploration.

Another important factor to consider in student teaching placements is the importance of preparing teacher candidates for the specific demands of the contexts they will later seek employment in (Goldhaber et al., 2017; Ronfeldt, 2015). Teachers are more effective at raising student achievement when the demographics of their student teaching placements mirror the demographics of the schools they eventually teach in (Goldhaber et al., 2017; Ronfeldt, 2015). Ronfeldt (2015) followed 752 teacher candidates in an unnamed district from their student teaching placements into the workforce, measuring their effect on student achievement. Ronfeldt (2015) found that teachers were more effective at raising student achievement when they worked in schools with similar demographics as their sites of student teaching. For example, teachers who learned to teach in placements with higher percentages of Black students were later more effective at raising math achievement in Black students ($p<.001$) than teachers who student taught in less racially diverse contexts (Ronfeldt, 2015). Goldhaber and colleagues (2017), in a similar study of 8,269 student teaching interns in Washington State public schools, also found teachers were more effective in raising student achievement when “student demographics of their school are similar to the student demographics of the school in
which they did their student teaching” (Goldhaber et al., 2017, p. 24). These findings are important, as better preparation for urban public schools serving under-resourced communities is only meaningful if such preparation leads to improved student learning outcomes.

There are limitations to the studies on the effects of student teaching placements in urban contexts, however, and not all studies point to clear benefits (Gomez et al., 2009; McKinney, Haberman, Stafford-Johnson, & Robinson, 2008). Gomez and colleagues (2009) found that although student teaching placements in urban public schools had a positive effect on candidates’ perceptions of students, this did not translate into a greater commitment to teaching. In fact, candidates who completed their fieldwork in Title I schools were more likely to have decreased their intent to seek teaching positions (Gomez et al., 2009). The authors conclude that more needs to be done in teacher preparation programs to couple shifts in attitudes and dispositions with increased knowledge and skills (Gomez et al., 2009). They hypothesize that pairing clinical experiences with coursework that supports the development of “methods, tools, and strategies” for teaching children from a range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds might increase teacher commitment to Title I schools (Gomez et al., 2009, p. 134).

Similarly, McKinney and colleagues (2008) studied 29 student teachers placed in urban high poverty schools across two districts and found that student teaching placements in urban settings did not help teachers develop effective characteristics needed to teach in urban settings. The authors defined these characteristics as including “persistence,” skills in working with “at-risk” students, and seeing the “value of children’s learning” (McKinney et al., 2008, p. 76). Pre- and post-test assessments of participants using the Urban Teacher Selection Interview indicated no significant change in these characteristics after the student teaching experience (McKinney et al., 2008). The authors conclude that an internship alone in an urban public school is not adequate for the development of teachers who will be successful in public urban schools.
Finally, Ronfeldt (2015) found in his study that teachers were most effective in raising student achievement when their student teaching placements were in schools with a positive work climate and a strong culture of teacher collaboration, yet these were not the types of schools teacher candidates were most likely to be placed in. With high rates of teacher and leader turnover, high poverty urban schools often struggle to develop and maintain strong collegial communities that would best support new teacher development (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Simon & Johnson, 2015). Ronfeldt’s study has implications for the selection of field placements that will provide candidates with experiences in schools serving under-resourced communities and where there is also a robust culture of learning and collegial engagement.

Variations in study methods and constructs as well as different models of student teaching that range from one week to several months make it challenging to draw definitive conclusions about the effects of student teaching on urban teacher preparation. There is some indication, however, that student teaching placements in urban public schools that have strong learning cultures (Ronfeldt, 2015), that are embedded in teacher education programs that integrate course and field experiences (Bleicher, 2011), and that provide opportunities for critical self-reflection on race and identity (Bleicher, 2011; White, 2017) have the potential to support teacher development for such settings. One implication of these findings for faculty practice is the role that faculty at Oakes might play in diversifying the range of school partnerships drawn on for field placements and observations. Currently, however, the majority of students at Oakes complete field supervision as working teachers, often as assistant teachers in independent schools, and not as student teachers. One reason for this is student teaching is unpaid, while assistant teaching positions offer a salary that can help defray the cost of graduate school. For this reason, models of paid clinical preparation in public schools provide an alternative preparation pathway with tremendous promise.
**Teacher residency programs.** One of the defining elements of residency programs is that they embed teacher candidates deeply within an urban school community (Guha et al., 2016). Although residency programs require institutional and programmatic commitment and are not simply about shifts in faculty practice, their focus on the importance of situated learning (DeMoss, 2016; Guha et al., 2016) has the potential to be instructive. In addition, to grow such programs at an institution requires faculty interest in developing urban public school partnerships and revising curriculum, and a strong commitment to preparing urban teacher residents (DeMoss, 2016; Guha et al., 2016).

Teacher residency programs have the potential to provide more deeply embedded experiences for teacher candidates in urban public schools serving under-resourced communities than short-term student teaching placements (DeMoss, 2016; Guha et al., 2016). The National Center for Teacher Residencies (NCTR) defines teacher residencies as “district-serving teacher education programs that pair a rigorous full-year classroom apprenticeship with masters-level education content” (NCTR, n.d.). Residents are partnered with an experienced mentor teacher and typically work four to five days per week in a classroom for a full academic year (DeMoss, 2016; Guha et al., 2016). The majority of residency programs occur in partnership with Title I schools (DeMoss, 2016; NCTR, 2017). Teacher residencies are designed using the principles of medical school residencies in which doctors in training are inducted into the profession through rigorous coursework and paid clinical preparation under the guidance of experienced mentors (DeMoss, 2016; Guha et al., 2016; Wasburn-Moses, 2017). One advantage of teacher residencies is that they provide stipends for candidates during their year of fieldwork, making sustained situated teacher training more affordable to a wider range of individuals (DeMoss, 2016; Guha et al., 2016).
Residencies can have a positive effect on teacher self-efficacy, retention, and preparation for culturally diverse contexts (DeMoss, 2016; Guha et al., 2016; Mentzer et al., 2019; NCTR, 2017). In their four-year comparative study, Mentzer and colleagues (2019) looked at the teacher preparation outcomes of a fast track program with a required 120 hour-field experience in an urban school as compared to the outcomes of a program with a one-year full-time residency placement. The authors found that teacher candidates prepared in the residency program had higher teacher self-efficacy and were rated as being better prepared for teaching in urban public schools serving under-resourced communities, as assessed using the Haberman Star Teacher Screener (Mentzer et al., 2019). Williamson, Apedoe, and Thomas’ (2016) qualitative study of the San Francisco Teacher Residency program likewise found that once hired, residents expressed more confidence in their preparation than other new teachers at the same schools who were not prepared by the residency program. As one principal in this study said, “the residents who are now teaching here definitely have a leg up. They understand the students and the wee micro systems we have created...It would be great if all new teachers could come in with that sort of knowledge” (Williamson et al., 2016, p. 1189). Knowledge developed through situated learning in a specific school context has the potential to equip teachers with the skills and dispositions needed to build their confidence for working in urban public schools (Eckert, 2013; Williamson et al., 2016).

Several studies have also found that teachers prepared in urban residency programs have higher rates of retention in urban public schools than teachers prepared through other pathways (Roegman, Pratt, Goodwin, & Akin, 2017; Silva, McKie, & Gleason, 2015). Roegman and colleagues’ (2017) retention study examined the turnover rates of 20 graduates of a NYC urban residency program for five years after graduation. After three years, 95% of the residents remained as NYC public school teachers (Roegman et al., 2017). After five years, 85% of the
Residents remained in public school classrooms, with 70% of these remaining in the same district where they did their residency (Roegman et al., 2017). Although caution must be exercised in drawing conclusions, as this is a small sample size (Roegman et al., 2017), these retention rates exceed national averages (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2018). In a larger study of 377 teachers who graduated from 12 teacher residency programs, researchers found teachers in their third year who were prepared through a residency program were 15 percentage points more likely to remain in the classroom than teachers not prepared through a residency program (Silva et al., 2015). Residency programs are a relatively recent development in teacher preparation, and as such the research on their effects is still nascent (Guha et al., 2016). Studies such as these (Roegman et al., 2017; Silva et al., 2015), however, demonstrate their promise in helping to prepare teachers who will persist in urban public schools serving under-resourced communities.

Finally, residencies also have the potential to help teachers develop “context conscious mindsets” (Williamson et al., 2016, p. 1182) that arm teachers with localized knowledge of communities (Matsko & Hammerness, 2014). In their study of the University of Chicago’s teacher residency program, Matsko and Hammerness (2014) found that the program engaged candidates in studying schools as organizations nested within geographical, socio-cultural, historical, and policy contexts. This content helped disrupt residents’ deficit orientations towards urban schools and communities and supported residents in drawing on students’ funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) in their teaching (Matsko & Hammerness, 2014). Moll and colleagues (1992) define funds of knowledge as the cultural and lived knowledge accumulated by individuals in the context of home and community, knowledge that is often overlooked in schooling contexts. Working closely with youth living in poverty can help teachers develop a stronger asset-based perspective on their students (Garza & Harter, 2016; Kahn, Lindstrom, & Murray, 2014). For example, teachers can come to recognize students’
resiliencies and problem-solving capacities, characteristics that can go unacknowledged by adults who see students primarily through the lens of risk and need (Ellis, Bianchi, Griskevicius, & Frankenhuis, 2017). This type of learning exemplifies the power of the environment itself to shape the development of knowledge, skills, and dispositions (Brown et al., 1989; Cobb & Bowers, 1999).

Despite their promise, there are challenges to residency programs, and more research is needed to demonstrate their effect on student learning. Teacher residencies are expensive and required funding from federal grants and private foundations to pay for resident stipends and tuition reduction (DeMoss, 2016; Gonser, 2016; Guha et al., 2016). Such funding sources are often unstable, and programs risk closure when grants end (DeMoss, 2016; Gonser, 2016; Guha et al., 2016). Residency programs also take time to develop as they require close collaboration between schools, districts, and university partners (Guha et al., 2016; McDonald, Domingo, Jeffery, Pietanza, & Pignatosi, 2013). Finally, there are few studies of the effects of residencies on teachers’ ability to raise student achievement (Guha et al., 2016). On balance, however, the evidence seems to indicate that residencies have some success in preparing teachers for urban public schools serving under-resourced communities (DeMoss, 2016; Guha et al., 2016; Mentzer et al., 2019; Roegman et al., 2017; Silva et al., 2015; Williamson et al., 2016).

One characteristic of residency programs is that they often have a clear mission to prepare candidates for urban, under-served public school settings (DeMoss, 2016; Guha et al., 2016). As the needs assessment data from both students and faculty revealed, Oakes’ current focus on preparing students for a wide range of settings may not be centering clearly enough a specific focus on urban teacher preparation. If the college hopes to strengthen its work in this area, faculty will need to consider the mission of the college and their role in this work. It may be instructive for faculty to explore how the mission of residency programs shapes their
practices as well as student experiences and outcomes. Strong urban teacher preparation programs, in addition to having a clear mission and grounding students in context-specific field experiences, also have coursework that focuses explicitly on the development of candidates’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions for urban public schools (Lee et al., 2010; Matsko & Hammerness, 2014; Waddell, 2013).

**Context-specific coursework.** Coursework that grounds candidates in the context-specific knowledge of public schools serving under-resourced communities can increase candidates’ self-efficacy for teaching in the schools that serve these communities (Fitchett et al., 2012; Matsko & Hammerness, 2014; Waddell, 2013), their intent to teach in such contexts (Fitchett et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2010), as well as their self-efficacy for (Fitchett et al., 2012) and knowledge of (Matsko & Hammerness, 2014; Waddell, 2013) culturally responsive practice. Context-specific learning in teacher preparation invites teacher candidates to learn about schools’ local contexts through an examination of the geographic, historical, and socio-cultural make-up of urban communities (Lee et al., 2010; Matsko & Hammerness, 2014; Waddell, 2013). In addition, many programs integrate the expertise of community members and community organizations into graduate students’ course experiences (Lee et al., 2010; Matsko & Hammerness, 2014; Waddell, 2013; Zeichner, 2010). The theoretical assumptions behind context-specific learning are that situated knowledge supports skilled participation in a particular community and that the environment itself can be instrumental in the learning process (Brown et al., 1989; Cobb & Bowers, 1999).

Coursework that embeds context-specific content has a small but meaningful effect on teacher candidates’ attitudes towards urban schools (Waddell, 2013) and their intent to teach (Fitchett et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2010) in urban schools. Waddell’s (2013) qualitative study of 36 elementary undergraduate teacher candidates who engaged in an eight-week summer course
focused on learning about the local community of a Midwestern city found this community intensive experience strengthened the candidates’ confidence and self-efficacy for teaching in urban schools. Similarly, Lee and colleagues’ (2010) quantitative investigation of the effects of urban-specific coursework on 153 teacher candidates in Chicago found participation in this coursework had a small but significant (p=.003) positive effect on students’ urban teaching intentions. Finally, Fitchett and colleague’s (2012) study of a social studies curriculum course that supported teacher candidates in designing context-specific curriculum with an explicit focus on culturally responsive practice found post-test results indicated participants had greater confidence for teaching in diverse settings (p<.05, η²=.230). Participants also expressed a stronger sense that teaching in urban public schools would be desirable (Fitchett et al., 2012). Given the need to attract well-prepared teachers to urban public schools (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2018), these findings are promising.

Context-specific coursework for urban public schools serving under-resourced communities can also disrupt candidates’ deficit orientations about children of color and support their self-efficacy for culturally responsive practice (Fitchett et al., 2012; Matsko & Hammerness, 2014; Waddell, 2013). Waddell’s (2013) study of the summer community immersion course found that participants became more critically aware of their own racial identities, and the experience helped them see children and communities through a strengths-based lens. Matsko and Hammerness’ (2013) qualitative study of 10 graduates of an urban teacher preparation program in Chicago found context-specific coursework provided participants with a larger vision for change and possibility in urban schooling; helped them develop an asset-based lens for understanding children in poor, urban communities, and that it equipped participants with concrete tools to navigate the complex realities of public schools serving under-resourced communities. Although many of the studies on the coursework in
urban teacher education programs are small, qualitative studies (Matsko & Hammerness, 2014; Waddell, 2013), and the quantitative studies tend to have small sample sizes and look at short-term outcomes (Fitchett et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2010), they begin to create an argument for the positive effects of grounding urban teacher candidates in coursework that critically examines place.

At Oakes, students and alumnae who were interviewed for the needs assessment articulated that while they have been deeply steeped in strong models of progressive practice and feel well-prepared for teaching in general, they feel underprepared for teaching in urban public schools serving under-resourced communities. Alumnae who were teaching in such settings also articulated that they did not see enough explicit models of how to translate what they were learning at Oakes to the specific needs of their contexts. To better prepare Oakes candidates for teaching in urban public schools and to support the development of a stronger commitment to these settings, faculty would benefit from exploring ways to strengthen context-specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions for working in urban public schools in their teaching practice.

There is a shared vision at Oakes of education as a lever for social justice (Oakes, n.d.). The institution’s outcomes, however, as measured by the numbers of graduates who seek out positions in urban public schools, reveal an opportunity to strengthen faculty’s role as well as their practices related to teacher preparation for urban public schools. As Chapter 1 demonstrated, strengthening teacher preparation for urban public schools is a critical social justice issue tied to creating more equitable schooling experiences and outcomes for all students. The literature reviewed on successful professional learning in education and strong models of urban teacher preparation informed the development of an intervention that was aimed at better aligning Oakes’ stance on social justice with its outcomes.
Intervention Overview

To engage faculty in a professional learning experience aimed at strengthening the preparation of Oakes students for urban public schools serving under-resourced communities, I invited a group of faculty to work collaboratively in a community of practice over the course of the fall 2020 and first portion of spring 2021 semesters. The CoP focused on exploring with faculty how they conceptualized their role in developing students’ urban commitment and supporting faculty to develop and strengthen teaching practices that would provide Oakes’ teacher candidates with more robust learning experiences teaching in urban public schools serving under-resourced communities. The design of this intervention and its evaluation plan are described in greater detail in Chapter 4.

The proximal goals of the intervention were the development of faculty role and practices. More distal goals were the development of stronger candidate self-efficacy for teaching in urban public schools serving under-resourced communities and increased candidate commitment to seek out employment in such settings. See Figure 3.2 for a graphic that illustrates the relationship between the theoretical frameworks, research literature, and the intervention.
The CoP design aligned with Desimone and Garet’s (2015) five features of professional development. The content was focused on problems of practice related to teacher preparation for urban public schools. Strengthening graduate students’ self-efficacy for and commitment to teaching in public schools aligns with the priorities of the Dean and is part of the institution’s strategic plan. Although as the facilitator I established overarching goals for the work, participants had a critical role to play in shaping the experience such that their own interests
and needs helped to drive the activities of the group. Group members brought examples of their practice to the group for collaborative inquiry and development with the goal of identifying new, or deepened practices to implement in their teaching and/or field supervision in the latter half of the spring 2021 semester. The intervention was of sustained duration with the group meeting monthly for 60-90 minutes over the course of the academic year. Data collection occurred from September through February. The reason for this was that in February participants articulated their goals for implementation and the intervention the study, described in Chapter 4, focused on the development of a CoP and not on the application of practice.

Core principles that guided the design of the CoP were faculty co-construction of the goals (McKinney & Capper, 2010; Mertens, 2018) and processes (Mertens, 2018) of the group, and the integration of the AI framework to ground the work in faculty strengths (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). The content of the CoP was centered on the development of practices that might better foster candidates’ self-efficacy for and commitment to urban public schools. Which aspects of their practice faculty choose to focus on and how they choose to build a learning community with colleagues was largely emergent (Mertens, 2013, 2018).

Faculty were invited to share and consider practices related to both teaching and to their supervision of students in the field. In addition, larger ideas around changes to programmatic and institutional practices and priorities emerged. Finally, I anticipated that there might not be a shared vision for this work across all group members. I strove to welcome generative dissonance in order to create a space that did not limit the full participation of group members by privileging some perspectives over others (Lea, 2005).

**Conclusion**

The challenge of preparing teachers who will seek out and persist in urban public schools serving under-resourced communities is a complex one with multiple contributing
factors (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2018; Ronfeldt et al., 2017; Scafidi et al., 2007). At Oakes, students express low commitment to teaching in urban public schools serving under-resourced communities informed by low self-efficacy for such settings, some feeling of dissonance about their ability to enact progressive practices in public schools, and a dearth of direct field experiences in public schools serving under-resourced communities. In addition, faculty do not hold a unified vision of their role in supporting the development of urban commitment in students and most faculty interviewed did not articulate that their role was to cultivate urban commitment. Students’ experiences with faculty in courses and in fieldwork provide a key opportunity at Oakes to work with faculty to strengthen students’ orientation to and preparation for public schools serving under-resourced communities. Research indicates that one way to strengthen faculty’s commitment to urban teacher preparation would be to engage faculty in collaborative learning experiences (Gallagher et al., 2011; Golden, 2016; He & Oxendine, 2019), aimed at exploring their role with students and strengthening their capacity to support students’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions for teaching in urban public schools. In the chapter that follows, I describe in further detail the proposed intervention aimed at these goals and the intervention evaluation design.
Chapter 4

At Oakes College, fewer than half of the teacher education graduates seek positions in public schools and many articulate that they feel underprepared to teach in settings serving under-resourced communities. The needs assessment found that students and recent alumni expressed low intent and low self-efficacy for teaching in public schools serving such communities. Faculty expressed mixed perspectives about their role in developing students’ urban commitment with many interviewees reporting that they did not see their role as being to directly influence student intent to teach in urban public schools. Many factors that the college has minimal influence over might contribute to Oakes students’ career pathways, including students’ prior experiences in urban public schools, the cost and burden of certification, financial incentives to work in independent schools (such as paid field experiences and tuition support), and hiring timelines in NYC that result in independent schools offering positions months ahead of most public schools. Leverage points the college can control are the experiences students have in their courses and field placements, spheres of influence that can affect urban commitment and preparation for teaching in public schools (Eckert, 2013; Frankenberg et al., 2010). Changes in these areas, however, require some changes to faculty practice and orientations. Professional learning experiences that are grounded in constructivist and situated learning frameworks and that draw on participant strengths are one way to support transformative change in higher education.

The intervention that followed from the needs assessment findings and the intervention literature, therefore, was to engage faculty at Oakes in a community of practice focused on examining faculty’s role in nurturing students’ commitment to public schools and supporting the development of faculty practices aimed at strengthening students’ preparation for teaching in public schools. An additional aim of the CoP was to generate momentum with a small group of
faculty across programs to critically examine how the social justice mission of the college intersects with the issue of urban teacher preparation and to plant seeds for change that might eventually transcend the work of the group. To assess the intervention, I conducted a process and outcomes evaluation. The intervention processes assessed included adherence as well as participant engagement and experiences. The outcomes question examined how faculty’s conception of their role with students changed over the course of participating in the CoP and the ways in which the intervention helped cultivate an experience in which participants built knowledge, developed practices, and shifted perspectives.

**Intervention**

In order to engage faculty in exploring their role and developing their practices, I implemented a community of practice focused on the preparation of Oakes teacher candidates for positions in public schools. The CoP public school inquiry group met from October 2020 through June 2021. This study focused on the activities that occurred from October-February. The first five meetings of the CoP—the sessions under study—were aimed at helping each faculty member articulate goals and action steps for the implementation of new or deepened practices in their spring courses and/or field supervision.

The activities of the CoP were grounded in the appreciative inquiry model in order to build from faculty strengths, foster engagement, and create a collective sense of ownership of the CoP outcomes (Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; He & Oxendine, 2019). Faculty engaged in *defining* and *discovering* through an exploration of the needs assessment data and articulation of existing strengths, *dreaming* through discussion of hopes for growth, and *designing*, through sharing practice and articulating personal and programmatic goals. Although the study did not follow faculty through to *delivery*, the CoP continued meeting through the spring semester, which allowed faculty to support one another as they tried new
practices. The work of a CoP should emerge from and be co-constructed by its members (Gallagher et al., 2011; Golden, 2016; Lave & Wenger, 1990; Wenger, 1998). At the same time, faculty benefit from professional learning experiences that are clear and explicit in their structure (Dempster et al., 2012; McKinney & Capper, 2010). The AI model offers a framework that allows members of a learning community to co-construct authentic learning experiences and goals in support of meaningful outcomes (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). What follows is a description of the context in which the intervention occurred, the theory of change that undergirded the intervention (see Appendix D, Figure 1 for a graphic depicting the logic model), as well as a description of the planned activities of the CoP.

Context

The CoP was integrated into an existing culture of professional learning in the graduate school and was one of four inquiry groups faculty were able to participate in during the graduate school’s monthly division meetings during the 2020-2021 academic year. The division meeting is a three-hour required attendance meeting chaired by the Dean for all faculty in the Teaching and Learning, and Leadership Departments. In addition to faculty, staff from student services and individuals involved with college research centers and professional development initiatives attend this monthly meeting. For the past five years, the Dean has set aside one to two hours of each division meeting for inquiry groups. One reason I chose to implement this intervention during the division meetings is because of the dedicated time to small-group, cross-programmatic inquiry work. Participating in the CoP would not require additional faculty time, and I assumed that faculty engagement would increase if the time for this work was built into existing meeting structures rather than added on to other responsibilities. The Dean was supportive of the intervention, as strengthening preparation for public schools aligned with broader institutional priorities. See Appendix D, Figure 1 for additional assumptions that were
built into the logic model, including that at least four faculty with a range of skills and perspectives would self-select to participate.

The focus of the graduate school inquiry work has evolved but has largely centered on studying programs and faculty practice. Topics have included the study of field advisement and coursework, program mapping, as well as the investigation of larger themes such as racial literacy, emergent multilingualism, and developmental variations. Each year, the Dean has presented faculty with four or five inquiry group topics to select among. She has organized faculty into groups of about 10, and these groups and their topics remain stable for the full academic year. During the 2020-2021 academic year, the public school CoP was one option for faculty and staff to select. The other three choices were a study of the culminating master’s thesis project, case studies of graduates, and an articulation of a canon of core readings and ideas all graduate students should engage with during their studies at the college.

Although the CoP intervention and the traditional structure of faculty professional development in the graduate school share in common a focus on engaging faculty through authentic inquiry, there were differences between the intervention and the existing approach. The structure of faculty development in the division has been grounded in the descriptive inquiry framework developed by the Prospect Center. This approach focuses on close observation and description of work (Prospect Center, 2002; Seher, Traugh, & Cheng, 2018). Through the process of deep looking, describing, and reflecting, multiple perspectives can be surfaced, understandings of and appreciations for individuals and their work can be deepened, and colleagues can build a collaborative learning culture (Seher et al., 2018). The discipline of descriptive inquiry emphasizes the process of inquiry-guided study with less focus on measurable outcomes (Seher et al., 2018).
The descriptive inquiry work in the graduate school has traditionally surfaced broad ideas about strengthening program and practice but has not required faculty to articulate implementation plans and has not collected data on the outcomes of the inquiry process. The CoP intervention differed in that it built from the foundational skills faculty have learned through participating in descriptive inquiry and integrated a more explicit expectation of outcomes. In the CoP, faculty studied practice, identified specific areas for further growth and development, and created action plans. In addition, the intervention integrated the dimension of assessment. The college has not engaged in a systematic study of the effects of the descriptive inquiry work. The evaluation of the CoP intervention allowed for an assessment of the intervention processes and outcomes and provides a model for self-study that could be applied more broadly to other professional development activities at the college.

Finally, an additional critical aspect of context to consider is that the plans for this study were developed two and a half months into the COVID-19 pandemic. Oakes has a small number of fully online programs, but the majority of the college operations, prior to March 2020, were in-building. In mid-March, the college leadership moved all programming and operations fully online and decided to continue all programming online through the spring 2021 semester. For this reason, the intervention was implemented fully online through Zoom and email communications. Before March 2020, the majority of faculty development activities at the college were in-person. Faculty had five months of fully online interactions prior to the start of the intervention.

**Outcomes and Theory of Change**

The distal and proximal outcomes of the intervention are undergirded by sociocultural learning theory. The intended proximal outcomes of the CoP were for faculty to develop a stronger role in cultivating students’ urban commitment and for faculty to begin to broaden the
practices they draw on in course instruction and field supervision to support students’
knowledge, skills, and dispositions for teaching in public schools serving under-resourced
communities (see the logic model in Appendix D, Figure 1). A minimal effect sought was that
most faculty in the CoP would see themselves as having some role in influencing students’ urban
commitment and would have one or two new ideas they could try in their teaching and/or field
supervision to strengthen student practice for teaching in public schools serving under-
resourced communities. A stronger effect could take many possible pathways, such as a deeper
commitment across all faculty in the CoP to transforming their practice and/or a desire to
engage with colleagues in more systematic program reform.

More distal effects sought, though not measured in this intervention, were shifts in
student self-efficacy for teaching in public schools serving under-resourced communities and an
increase in their urban commitment. In addition, the intervention aimed to stimulate
momentum for larger institutional change with a longer-term goal of increasing the number of
Oakes students who teach in public schools. To reach these proximal and distal outcomes, the
intervention needed to help faculty develop a space where they could take an inquiry stance to
their work and bring practices to share and reflect on with colleagues (Lave & Wenger, 1990).

The key mechanisms driving the intended change processes were grounded in
sociocultural theory (Gee, 2008; Lim & Renshaw, 2001; Rodriguez, 1998; Vygotsky, 1978),
situated learning theory (Brown et al., 1989; Cobb & Bowers, 1999; Lave & Wenger, 1990), and
the transformative paradigm (Mertens, 2013). The intervention also integrated the AI
framework (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987) into the CoP design. See Appendix D, Figure 2 for a
graphic outlining the theory of change. Situated learning theory, which emerged from
sociocultural theory, suggests CoPs can support the development of knowledge and skills
through group members’ reciprocal engagement around shared interests and practices (Lave &
Wenger, 1990). Novices in a group develop mastery through increasingly embedded and sophisticated interaction within the learning community (Lave & Wenger, 1990). Within this context, I conceptualized a novice as a faculty member who was uncertain of their role in developing students’ urban commitment and/or who employed few strategies to develop students’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions for teaching in public schools serving under-resourced communities. The transformative paradigm suggests that engaging stakeholders in the design and implementation of an intervention can strengthen the work, as outcomes can become more authentically embedded in a community when research is done with and not done to (Mertens, 2013). As described in Chapter 3, the AI processes of define, discovery, dream, design, and deliver (Priest et al., 2013) have the potential to create a shared vision of change and to shift practices and beliefs (Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; He & Oxendine, 2019; Priest et al., 2013). Finally, given the data from the needs assessment, I anticipated perspectives about the role of faculty in developing teachers who will seek out and thrive in public schools serving under-resourced communities might be divergent across participants. I intended to welcome generative dissonance to create a space that did not limit the full participation of group members by privileging some perspectives over others (Lea, 2005; Mertens, 2013).

**Activities**

The work of the CoP occurred from October 2020 through June 2021. This study collected data on activities from October-February, focusing on the design of new or deepened practices to be implemented in the spring 2021 semester. See Appendix E for a timeline of the intervention and an outline of the activities. The intervention activities lay out a framework for engaging faculty in an inquiry into practice. Structures and processes for engagement, as well as some guiding questions and activities, were specified in advance, but specific ways the group
engaged in the work, such as the nature of the practices they brought to the group and ways to use the time together, were intended to be emergent to create conditions for authentic inquiry and the co-construction of knowledge (Lave & Wenger, 1990; Mertens, 2018). The arc of the CoP sessions under study was designed to follow the AI cycle of define, discover, dream, and design (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). I designed each CoP session to follow a similar structure: review an agenda, reflect on an opening question, examine resources and practices, engage in discussion, and plan next steps. Should group members have been reluctant to share practices or had few existing practices to draw on, the design allowed for the group to spend more time examining practices and approaches that have been written about in the literature on the preparation of teachers for public schools serving under-resourced communities. What follows is a description of the faculty selection process and the plan for specific intervention activities session-by-session, inclusive of activities that occurred between sessions.

Invitation to participate. At the first division meeting in September, held over Zoom, the Dean shared with all faculty their choices for the 2020-2021 inquiry groups, including the CoP inquiry into preparation for public schools. Faculty had a few days to consider their options and submitted their choices directly to the Dean, who then formed the inquiry groups. See a more detailed description of the recruitment process in the evaluation design section that follows later in this chapter.

Pre-session meeting. The original plan was to meet with the group of faculty who selected to participate in the CoP in mid-September and describe again the intervention and data collection processes. I anticipated that a minimum of four to 10 faculty would select and be assigned to this group. The plan was for this, and all subsequent meetings described, to occur over Zoom. This meeting was intended to provide faculty an opportunity to ask questions and make a more informed decision about participation. At this pre-session meeting, I planned to
share data from the needs assessment for review. I planned to provide focusing questions for the needs assessment review grounded in the AI framework (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987), including: a) What strengths emerge from this data? b) What themes do you see? c) What are your responses to and/or wonderings about this data? See Appendix E for a full list of questions.

**Pre-session participant work.** In preparation for the first session together, the plan was for participants to review the needs assessment data using the focusing questions as a guide for inquiry. Participants were not expected to produce anything formal for the first session.

**Session 1.** The first session of the group was to occur in October. This session and all subsequent sessions were designed to last 60-90 minutes. The reason for this range is that the group met during the division meeting, which the Dean chairs. She sets the agenda and pacing for the larger three-hour division meeting. The time she allocates to group work from month to month can vary. Historically, inquiry groups have typically had 60-90 minutes for their work. The design of the intervention was flexible enough to allow for this range. It was possible to adjust how many examples of practice we would explore, how long we would engage in discussion about any one individual’s practice, and whether we would discuss practice in the full group or break into smaller sub-groups, for example.

During this first session, the plan was to begin with establishing community and engaging in the defining and discovering stages of the AI cycle. In this session, we would establish group norms and define our work by discussing our hopes for the CoP and our goals for the outcomes of our work together. I also planned to engage participants in a conversation about what we mean when we talk about public schools serving under-resourced communities to develop some shared definitions. From definition, we would move to discovery through a discussion of strengths and an investigation of the needs assessment data. The purpose of looking at the needs assessment data was to begin to build a shared commitment to the larger
need for this work at the college by giving participants a window into students’ experiences in their fieldwork and courses. In addition to opportunities for growth, the needs assessment also points to areas of strength. I planned to engage faculty in questions about the strengths that are visible in the data to enter the work with an appreciation for the skill and expertise that faculty hold. After looking at the data and articulating strengths, growth areas, and goals, the plan was to launch into a short and informal share of practices. Questions to guide this part of the conversation included: a) What is one practice you currently use in your teaching/field supervision that you feel helps prepare our candidates for under-served public schools? b) What do you value in this practice? c) What makes this work challenging at Oakes? In the larger field? d) Are there ways to reframe these challenges as possibilities? See Appendix E for additional questions. Finally, the plan was to conclude this session and each subsequent session with a reflection on our time together and to plan for the next session.

**Intersession participant work.** Between sessions, I planned to meet with each participant one-on-one for about 15 minutes. The goal of these meetings was to reflect on prior sessions, to support each participant with their design processes, and to elicit feedback to plan future sessions. Between Session 1 and Session 2, the plan was also to ask participants to collect an artifact or reflection on practice to bring to the group. If group members did not feel they had examples from their practice related to developing students’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions for teaching in public schools serving under-resourced communities, they would be invited to share practices that they wanted to build on and extend, such as an assignment that could be adapted. Participants would also be invited to share examples of practice from the literature to explore with the group. The exact nature of what members would share and how to frame the inquiry questions would depend on how the group decided to structure their work together.
**Session 2.** Session 2 was planned for November and would launch the dream phase of the AI cycle and lay the groundwork for design. The plan was to open with a focus question: What are your hopes for our time together today? This question was aimed at building shared ownership of the space and the group's work together. The plan for the majority of this session was to invite faculty to share practices they employ in their course instruction and/or field supervision that support graduate students in developing knowledge, skills, and dispositions for teaching in public schools serving under-resourced communities and to begin to imagine together what it might look like to extend and deepen these practices. Focusing questions for this sharing of practices would be established in the prior session, but would look something like: a) What do you value in yourself/in your colleague in this work? b) What do we notice about our stories? c) What are the themes that are emerging? d) What would it look like if this practice could be extended or deepened? Between Sessions 3 and 4 the plan was for faculty to identify some new or deepened aspect of practice for implementation in the spring semester. I planned to introduce the concept of design during Session 2 so faculty would have time to consider what aspect of their teaching or field supervision to focus on.

After sharing and discussing practices, the plan was again to engage in some reflection on the session and plan for the subsequent session. In addition, based on the practices members shared and the questions and themes that emerged, we would think together about what more we might need to know to advance the work. I planned to discuss resources from the intervention literature review with the group and to decide with the group on a few studies to read together that examine strong practices in teacher preparation for public schools serving under-resourced communities. The group would also have the option to read some of the synthesis of these studies from Chapter 3.
**Intersession participant work.** In addition to my one-on-one meetings with participants, between Sessions 2 and 3, the plan was for participants to complete the reading(s) we would have identified at the end of Session 2 and to continue to collect artifacts and/or reflections on practice to bring to the group.

**Session 3.** Session 3 was to occur in December and would largely follow the same outline as Session 2. At the end of the session, rather than focusing on selecting readings, I planned to ask each group member to choose one aspect of their practice to extend or deepen in anticipation of trying it out in their teaching and/or field supervision in the spring semester. Participants would also have the option to choose to develop something new instead of building on an existing practice.

**Intersession participant work.** Between Sessions 3 and 4, the plan was for each member of the group to choose one aspect of their practice to extend or deepen in anticipation of their teaching and supervision work in the spring semester. Participants would bring this work to our final session. In addition, I planned to continue individual meetings with participants.

**Session 4.** The plan for Session 4 was for faculty to share and continue to get feedback on their designs and plans for the spring semester. As with Sessions 2 and 3, the plan for the January session was to open with the question: What are your hopes for our time together today? The plan was for the majority of this session to be spent sharing and discussing the practices that members planned to implement in the spring. Questions to guide the sharing and discussion of practice would include: a) What questions do we have to better understand what is being presented? b) What are the strengths of this work? c) What critical friends feedback can we provide? d) What do we learn from this? After the sharing of practice, we were to spend time reflecting on the four sessions and looking ahead. Questions to guide this last phase of the work might include: a) What have we learned from and with each other? b) What was effective
about this work? c) What were some challenges? d) What are some ongoing goals as we look ahead to the spring and to eventually sharing this work with the larger faculty?

The intervention was aimed at addressing the findings of the needs assessment. Its design was grounded in sociocultural and situated learning theory and the literature on professional learning and transformative change in higher education. I planned to draw on strong practices in urban teacher preparation to support the content of our discussions. In the section that follows, I describe the design of the intervention evaluation.

**Evaluation Study Design**

An intervention should have at its heart the goals of improving the conditions of stakeholders, strengthening the broader context in which the intervention is enacted, and bettering society at large (Mertens, 2018; Phillips, 2018; Rossi et al., 2019). The proximal stakeholders and context for this intervention were the faculty and college. The more distal stakeholders were the graduate students and of course eventually their students and the schools and communities in which they work. The goal of the intervention was to support faculty development in ways that could have a direct effect on graduate students’ experience. The larger aim of strengthening teacher preparation for urban public schools is grounded in principles of social justice and equity. The evaluation of this intervention focused on the intervention processes and the outcomes for the graduate faculty who participated in the CoP. The study design includes a description of the study’s purpose, research questions, methods, and approach to data analysis.

**Purpose**

The goal of shifting the pattern of where Oakes alumni teach and strengthening candidates’ preparation for public schools requires larger institutional change. To understand the role a CoP can play as a catalyst for change, I sought to explore both how the CoP unfolded
as well as the ways faculty’s thinking about their role and their practice developed over the course of the intervention. An additional purpose for this study was to contribute to the literature on faculty professional learning in higher education, specifically how faculty professional learning activities might be a lever for strengthening teacher preparation for urban public schools. To explore these issues, I framed the study with the following research questions. The questions evolved over the course of the study, and I describe final questions and their evolution later in this chapter.

**Original process evaluation questions.**

RQ 1: In what ways did the activities and goals of the CoP adhere to the intended plan?

RQ 2: What activities and interactions did faculty engage in as members of the CoP?

RQ 3: How do faculty describe their experiences in the CoP?

**Original outcomes evaluation questions.**

RQ 4: How did faculty conception of their role in developing students’ intent to teach in urban public schools change over the course of the intervention?

RQ 5: In what ways did this intervention cultivate the development of a CoP in which members engaged in activities and interactions, generated knowledge, developed practice, and shifted perspectives?

RQ 6: In what ways did faculty in the CoP change and/or develop their practices based on their experience in the CoP?

**Methods**

To explore the questions posed above, I designed a process and outcomes evaluation grounded in Creswell and Plano Clark’s (2018) mixed methods research typologies. The study employed a convergent parallel mixed methods design with emphasis given to the qualitative methods and data. As described previously in Chapter 2, Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) define
mixed methods as an approach in which the researcher collects, analyzes, and integrates both qualitative and quantitative data within a clearly articulated research design that is grounded in both a philosophical paradigm and theoretical framework. The strengths of mixed methods research are that the researcher collects, analyzes, and integrates multiple sources and types of data, allowing for elaboration and triangulation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This approach can also surface divergences in findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018), increasing trustworthiness and suggesting future avenues for inquiry (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003).

This study was grounded in a pragmatic paradigm in that it drew largely from constructivist and transformative orientations while integrating some quantitative data collection and analysis. The study was constructivist in its integration of inductive approaches and the primacy given to the multiple perspectives of participants in data collection and analysis. The transformative paradigm centers social justice and participant participation (Mertens, 2013, 2018). The study drew from this orientation through inviting participants to co-construct the goals and activities of the CoP and through the distal social justice goal of the intervention, which was to address educational inequity through strengthening teacher preparation for public schools serving under-resourced communities.

The process dimension of the evaluation sought to study the fidelity of the intervention. Fidelity is the degree of similarity between the enacted practice and the program design (Anderson, 2017; Dusenbury, Brannigan, Falco, & Hansen, 2003). Core determinants of fidelity include assessment of the adherence to the program activities, the context in which a program is delivered, the level and nature of dose delivered, the level and nature of dose received, the engagement of participants, program reach, and recruitment processes (Rossi et al., 2019; Saunders, Evans, & Josi, 2005). For the purposes of this evaluation plan, I focused on assessing implementation fidelity through an examination of adherence to program activities and two
aspects of participant responsiveness: faculty engagement in the intervention and faculty experience with the intervention (Dusenbury et al., 2003). See Appendix F, Table 1 for the process evaluation indicator matrix, which outlines the questions, constructs, data sources, and measurement tools for the process evaluation.

The second dimension of the intervention evaluation was an assessment of outcomes. The outcomes evaluation was descriptive in nature and was intended to provide insight into the ways faculty thinking and practice evolved as well as how the intervention supported the development of a CoP. The approach to the outcomes evaluation was grounded in the values and social justice branches of evaluation research. The values branch emerged from the constructivist paradigm and privileges a focus on social improvement (Mertens, 2018). This branch emphasizes including the voices of participants in the intervention and study design, and holds that knowledge is contextual, constructed, and subjective (Mertens, 2018). The values branch overlaps with the social justice/transformative branch, which keeps social justice, power, and positionality at the center of any evaluation process (Mertens, 2013, 2018). The outcomes evaluation questions were focused on more deeply understanding faculty perspectives on the development of their role, knowledge, practices, and orientations. See Appendix F, Table 2 for the outcomes evaluation indicator matrix, which outlines the questions, constructs, data sources, and measurement tools for the outcomes evaluation. My goal was to create an opportunity for faculty to co-construct approaches that felt meaningful in the context of their practice. I viewed faculty as partners in this work and their perspectives, needs, and values drove both the intervention activities and evaluation.

**Population and eligibility.** The Dean invited all eligible faculty to join the CoP at the first division meeting of the year. To understand how eligibility was determined, it is important to have some institutional context as Oakes has a somewhat unusual approach to defining faculty
role for an institution of higher education. Oakes does not have a traditional faculty ranking or tenure system. The college has two broad categories of faculty: faculty on a three-year renewable contract and faculty on an annual contract, renewable subject to programmatic need. All faculty, except a small percentage with release time for administrative work or grant-funded projects, do field supervision along with course instruction. A small group of faculty do only field supervision and hold the title of part-time faculty. Adjunct faculty have teaching responsibilities only, work only part-time at the college, and do not have an annual contract. The graduate school is divided into two departments: the Leadership Department, which houses programs leading to school building and district leader certification, and the Teaching and Learning Department, which houses programs leading to teacher certification. For this study, eligible faculty were defined as full- or part-time faculty (not adjuncts) on three- or one-year contracts whose primary responsibilities were teaching and/or fieldwork supervision in teacher certification programs in the Teaching and Learning Department.

The total population for this study was 21 faculty. Of this group, 86% were women and 43% were individuals of color. Their length of employment at the college ranged from several decades to one year. Faculty eligible for this study taught across the full range of teacher certification programs, including general, special, and bilingual education, infant and family development, literacy education, and teachers of English as a second language.

**Recruitment procedure.** I employed convenience sampling to recruit participants. The primary rationale for convenience sampling is that this approach aligns with the structure of how faculty select into inquiry groups in the division meeting. As previously described, at the first division meeting in September, the Dean shared with graduate school faculty and staff the inquiry group choices. The Dean shared this information verbally and followed up with an email describing the four choices and providing faculty a form to rank order their top two groups of
interest. The Dean included in this email my description of the CoP inquiry group and information for faculty regarding the nature of the research study (see the recruitment email in Appendix G). Faculty had a few days to consider their choices and submitted their selection directly to the Dean, who formed the inquiry groups. All faculty were assigned a first- or second-choice group. After I received a list of the CoP group members, I reached out to the entire group via email and re-sent the description of the study. I reached out individually to potential participants from the Teaching and Learning Department inviting questions and offering to speak in further detail about the study. Of the original list of members that I received from the Dean, all faculty from the Teaching and Learning Department decided to proceed with the study and submitted signed informed consent forms. All members from outside of the department also decided to participate in the group.

In my role as department chair, I serve in a supervisory capacity with faculty, so there are several safeguards I put in place to avoid coercion. I communicated via email to all faculty who signed up for the group that there would be no negative consequences for those who opted not to participate and that anyone could leave the study at any time without penalty. I repeated this message verbally during our first meeting. Participants had the option at any point in time to join one of the other inquiry groups. Switching groups is not typically an option for the division inquiry studies, but I sought and received explicit permission from the Dean that this would be possible given the special nature of my inquiry group. In addition to providing clear options for opting out, I designed the study such that it would be non-evaluative in nature; rather, it was an open exploration with faculty of existing and new practices. Findings from the study were not integrated in the annual faculty appraisal process. The annual review process, which I overseen for my department, is called a “faculty reflection” and provides an opportunity for faculty to self-reflect on their work for the year, set goals for the upcoming year, and share
aspects of their practice in a non-evaluative way with colleagues. Faculty use this opportunity to share problems of practice and to support each other’s growth. Oakes has a collegial environment, and the types of discussion that were generated in the CoP are part of the regular, day-to-day practices of division, department, and program meetings, as well as of the more informal kinds of shared learning faculty seek out with one another. The CoP, therefore, fits well into an existing culture of collaboration, reflection, and improvement of practice.

Study participants and community of practice membership: The final size of the CoP group was 13, with seven participants from the Teaching and Learning Department and six additional non-participant faculty and staff from the Leadership Department, research institutes, and funded projects. The non-participant members engaged fully in the group but as they were not faculty in the Teaching and Learning Department, I did not collect or analyze data related to their participation. The seven participants from the Teaching and Learning Department were all women; two of the seven were women of color. The participants ranged in length of employment at the institution from one to seven years. One member of the group served in a part-time field supervision role only, four were engaged in both teaching and field supervision, one had only teaching responsibilities, and one had both teaching and administrative responsibilities. All of the faculty in the group had done field supervision of students in the past. The participants ranged in areas of expertise including literacy education, bilingual education, and early childhood and childhood special education. In the sections that follow, I define the constructs under investigation and describe the data sources and tools as well as the methods for data analysis.

Constructs. The central constructs that the study explored were adherence, engagement in CoP activities and interactions, experience, role, knowledge capital, changes to practice, and changes in perspectives. See Table 4.1 for an operational definition of each
construct. For the process evaluation, I drew on Dusenbury and colleagues’ (2003) work on fidelity. Dusenbury and colleagues outline five dimensions of fidelity: a) adherence, b) dose, c) quality, d) responsiveness (which includes engagement and experience), and e) program differentiation. Given my larger purpose in learning more about the degree to which the intervention unfolded as planned and as well as how participants engaged with one another, I focused on constructs related to adherence and responsiveness in the study design. To elaborate on engagement and to operationalize the constructs in the outcomes questions, I drew on Wenger, Trayner, and de Laat’s (2011) framework for assessing CoPs. This framework identifies five characteristics and outcomes of a learning community: a) activities and interactions, b) generation of knowledge capital, c) changes in practice, d) reframing (or the shifting of perspectives and values), and e) performance improvement (Wenger et al., 2011). As this intervention did not assess application or performance, I focused on the first four of these characteristics. See Appendix F, Tables 1 and 2, for the evaluation matrices that show the relationship between questions, constructs, tools, and methods.

Table 4.1

**Operational Definitions of Study Constructs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Operational Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adherence</td>
<td>The “extent to which implementation of particular activities and methods is consistent with the way the program is written” (Dusenbury et al., 2003, p. 241).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement in CoP Activities and Interactions</td>
<td>The activities and interactions that are indicators of CoP engagement include bringing practice to the CoP space, providing collegial support/feedback, sharing information and resources, reflecting, challenging/debating, and questioning (Wenger et al., 2011).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Participant experience is a dimension of participant responsiveness and includes participants’ views of and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
reactions to an intervention as well as potential recommendations or critiques (Dusenbury et al., 2003).

**Role**

The behaviors, identities, and expectations individuals acquire within particular contexts (Biddle, 1986). In the context of this study, role refers to participants’ behaviors, identities, and expectations within the context of their teaching, field supervision, and other faculty responsibilities.

**Knowledge capital**

Knowledge capital is the resources produced or engaged with within the boundaries of the CoP experience (Wenger et al., 2011). This includes a) personal assets, b) relationships and connections, c) tangible resources, d) reputational capital, and e) learning capital, or the capital gained through experiencing a new way to learn through CoP participation (Wenger et al., 2011).

**Changes to practice**

Within the context of a CoP, Wenger and colleagues (2011) define changes to practice as, “changes or innovations in actions, practice, tools, approaches, or organizational systems” (p. 20). The first part of this definition refers to the changes in practice that occur for individual members of a CoP and the last part of the definition refers to changes at the organizational level (Wenger et al., 2011).

**Changes in perspectives**

Wenger and colleagues (2011) refer to shifting perspectives as *reframing*, which they define as “reconsideration of the learning imperatives...This includes reframing strategies, goals, as well as values” (p. 21). Reframing can occur at both the individual and organizational levels (Wenger et al., 2011).

---

*Adherence.* Dusenbury and colleagues (2003) operationalize adherence as, “the extent to which implementation of particular activities and methods is consistent with the way the program is written” (p. 241). As it relates to the intervention, this means the degree to which the key outputs of the logic model (see Appendix D, Figure 1), including activities and participation, were delivered as described. Good adherence would look like the CoP meeting as intended for the pre-session and for all four full sessions between October and January, and following the agendas as outlined in the timeline (see Appendix E). These agendas note where
there were opportunities for members to co-construct areas of focus and processes. O’Donnell (2008) describes the tension that can exist between educational activities and the concept of adherence, given that teaching and learning is not a formulaic act, but a dynamic, responsive, and dialectical relationship. In the case of this intervention, not all of the activities of the CoP were predetermined. The work of the CoP evolved based on the experiences, interests, and needs of group members (Lave & Wenger, 1990). Adherence in this case, therefore, must be partially assessed by looking at the degree to which the CoP itself was given the tools and structures to co-construct the activities of the group.

**Engagement in CoP Activities and Interactions.** One dimension of participant responsiveness is *engagement*. Dusenbury and colleagues (2003) define engagement as, “the extent to which participants are engaged by and involved in the activities of a program” (p. 244). I drew on Wenger and colleagues’ (2011) operationalization of CoP activities and interactions for coding and data analysis. In their framework for assessing CoPs, the authors provide common indicators of CoP activities and interactions, including providing collegial support/feedback, sharing information and resources, reflecting, challenging/debating, and questioning (Wenger et al., 2011).

**Experience.** Another dimension of participant responsiveness is *experience*. Dusenbury and colleagues (2003) define this aspect of responsiveness as “how participants viewed their participation in an intervention” as well as participants’ “reaction to and recommendations about programs” (p. 244). As Mertens (2013) notes, a transformative lens requires the evaluator to invite and include participant perspectives. I used the transformative paradigm as a framework to design a participatory intervention with faculty, which suggests the value of extending this framework as a lens for the process evaluation as well (Mertens, 2013). Given the power dynamics of the situation, my role in facilitating the group, and my role in collecting the
process evaluation data, I needed to be particularly attuned to creating a space for faculty to share the full range of their responses to the intervention, including negative or neutral responses.

**Role.** The concept of *role* is grounded in the field of sociology and is defined as the socially bound behaviors, identities, and expectations assumed by individuals within specific contexts (Biddle, 1986). In this study, faculty role was defined more narrowly as the set of behaviors, identities, and expectations faculty assume and enact related to the preparation of their students.

**Knowledge capital.** Wenger and colleagues (2011) define knowledge capital as the resources produced or engaged with within the boundaries of the CoP experience. These resources include: a) personal assets, b) relationships and connections, c) tangible resources, d) reputational capital, and e) learning capital, or the capital gained through experiencing a new way to learn through CoP participation (Wenger et al., 2011). I focused on the first three dimensions as this study did not assess responses to the CoP outside of the boundaries of the group and inquiry groups are not a wholly new way of learning for faculty.

**Changes to practices.** Within the context of a CoP, Wenger and colleagues (2011) define changes to practice as, “changes or innovations in actions, practice, tools, approaches, or organizational systems” (p. 20). The first part of this definition refers to the changes in practice that occur for individual members of a CoP, and the last part of the definition refers to changes at the organizational level (Wenger et al., 2011). As the focus of this intervention was on practice specific to the role of teacher education faculty, my data analysis focused on evidence related to teaching practices including course goals, content, assignments, discussions, and activities. Changes to organizational practices, such as processes for assigning field placements,
and institutional practices, including the work of marketing and career services, were also explored.

**Shifts in perspective.** Wenger and colleagues (2011) refer to shifts in perspectives as *reframing,* which they define as, “reconsideration of the learning imperatives...This includes reframing strategies, goals, as well as values” (p. 21). Reframing, or shifts in perspective, can occur at the individual level as participants explore their personal values and orientations (Wenger et al., 2011). Shifts in perspective can also occur at the organizational level as participants consider the goals and mission of the larger institution (Wenger et al., 2011). To assess the constructs described, I drew on a range of sources of data and data collection instruments.

**Data Sources and Instruments.** I collected data using a pre- and post-survey, session plans and notes, attendance records, audio-recordings of sessions, notes from intersession meetings, and semi-structured interviews. Integrating multiple sources and types of data is one step a researcher can take to increase the credibility of their findings (Guba, 1981). Data collection drew on a mix of qualitative and quantitative tools. The qualitative tools and data collection methods were dominant. See Appendix H, Tables 1 and 2, for matrices displaying the data sources and tools I employed for each of the research questions. The sources of qualitative and quantitative data for this study came from me, as the facilitator of the CoP, and from the study participants.

**Pre- and post-survey.** I designed a short survey with Likert-type responses to administer to faculty pre- and post-intervention (see Appendix H, Table 1). The survey has four questions and responses range along a five-point scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” The questions focus on both role and practice related to course instruction and field supervision. They include: a) Part of my role as a course instructor is to cultivate my students’ intent to seek
out teaching positions in public schools serving under-resourced communities; and b) I have a range of practices that I draw on in my field supervision that provide students with knowledge, skills, and dispositions for teaching in public schools serving under-resourced communities. This survey is not validated, and I can make no claims as to its reliability (Shadish et al., 2002).

Session plans, notes, and attendance records. To measure adherence, or the degree to which the plans for the CoP were carried out with fidelity, I collected and compared session plans with session notes after each CoP session and recorded any discrepancies in a matrix that allowed for side-by-side analysis. Attendance records for pre-session and CoP meetings provided a quantitative measure of faculty engagement.

Recordings of sessions and notes from participants. I recorded portions of each of the sessions. Given sessions were conducted over Zoom, I was able to record during times that the CoP met as a whole group. At the time of implementation, Zoom did not allow for individual recordings of break-out rooms. When the CoP split into small groups, I asked one member of each small group to serve as a facilitator and note-taker and provided a template for recording written notes. The data from these recordings and notes provided insight into both the process and outcomes questions.

Semi-structured interviews. After the last session, I interviewed each participant using a semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix H, Table 2). The protocol addressed both process and outcomes evaluation questions. Interview questions included: a) What are some reflections you have on the process of sharing/constructing practices in this way with colleagues? b) Which structures were effective/less effective? What else might we have done together? c) In what ways, if any, did your sense of your role in shaping student intent to work in public schools serving under-resourced communities shift over the course of this experience? If there were shifts, what might have contributed to this for you? A semi-structured interview
provides a useful guide that can support a more focused exploration of the phenomena under study while allowing the researcher the flexibility to be responsive to emergent themes (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017).

**Data collection.** Data collection occurred before, during, and after the intervention (see Appendix F, Tables 1 and 2). Before the first CoP session, participants filled out the short quantitative survey using Qualtrics (see Appendix H, Table 1). For each of the CoP sessions, I kept written notes on the agenda, recorded portions of each session, and took attendance. In addition to collecting signed consent before the start of the intervention, I asked for verbal permission to record at the beginning of each session. During intersession meetings, I took written notes on the conversations. At the conclusion of the CoP sessions, I conducted a semi-structured interview with each participant. I recorded each interview over Zoom. All recordings from sessions and interviews were downloaded and converted into written transcripts using Otter.ai. I deleted audio and video files. All written data was stored securely in password-protected files. I anonymized transcripts, surveys, notes, and attendance records to remove identifying information.

**Data analysis.** Through the process of data collection and analysis, the outcomes research questions evolved (see Table 4.2). The process questions remained unchanged. Given the emergent nature of qualitative and mixed methods research, research questions may change over the course of a study (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006). The reason for the shift in RQs 5 was that it became clear through data analysis that “activities and interactions” are the process of engagement in a CoP and not the outcomes of a CoP. Activities and interactions were analyzed in RQ 2. As reanalysis would have been redundant, I deleted “activities and interactions” from RQ 5. I removed RQ 6 as the construct of shifts in practice was
explored in RQ 5 and it became apparent that analysis of data for RQ 6 would yield no new findings.

Table 4.2

Evolution of the Outcomes Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Outcomes Research Questions</th>
<th>Final Outcomes Research Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ 4: How did faculty conception of their role in developing students’ intent to teach in urban public schools change over the course of the intervention?</td>
<td>Unchanged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ 5: In what ways did this intervention cultivate the development of a CoP in which members engaged in activities and interactions, generated knowledge, developed practice, and shifted perspectives?</td>
<td>RQ 5: In what ways did this intervention develop a CoP in which members generated knowledge, developed practice, and shifted perspectives?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ 6: In what ways did faculty in the CoP change and/or develop their practices based on their experience in the CoP?</td>
<td>Removed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I explored the final research questions using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Although the emphasis from the outset of the study design was on the qualitative methods and data, over the course of data analysis, the quantitative data took an increasingly diminished role. The majority of quantitative data came from the pre- and post-survey. As a non-validated survey, I anticipated the use of this data would be limited but that it might surface findings related to role and changes in practice that would raise questions for further investigation, or that it would corroborate or contradict patterns that emerged from the qualitative data. Several participants reflected on the survey during intersession meetings and the post-intervention interview, so there is some evidence that the survey questions sparked reflection. I explore this further in Chapter 5. The small sample size and the fact that not all participants completed the
post-survey limited the utility of the quantitative data that emerged from the survey, however. I calculated descriptive statistics for each item from survey data using Excel but limited the integration of these findings with the qualitative data. An additional source of quantitative data was participant attendance, which I explored in RQ 2.

The major findings from the study emerged from the qualitative data. I analyzed qualitative data both deductively and inductively. For each question, I did an initial round of analysis using a priori codes drawn from the operationalization of constructs and the research literature. I engaged in a second round of emergent coding to explore whether this would surface themes not revealed by the a priori codes. For some questions where the emergent coding did surface new patterns, I engaged in an additional round of coding using an integration of the a priori and emergent codes. See, for example, the approach to coding for RQs 3 and 5 described in Chapter 5.

Throughout the process of data collection and analysis, I worked to strengthen the trustworthiness of my findings (Guba, 1981). Central to this process was attending to the possibility of confirmation bias, as researchers have a tendency to provide positive assessments of interventions that align with their beliefs about a program (Rossi et al., 2019). I hold a strong commitment to teacher preparation for public schools and am invested in supporting larger institutional change in this area, which puts me at potential risk for confirmation bias. As Brinkmann and Kvale (2005) note, for example, researchers employing interviews as a form of data collection are at risk of having, “the interviewer’s research project and knowledge interest set the agenda and rule the conversation” (p. 164). To limit bias, I engaged in reflexivity (Guba, 1981; Lochmiller & Lester, 2017), taking notes on my own wonderings and responses to the work of the CoP and individual participants. I used annotations to reflect on possible
assumptions that I might bring to activities such as interviewing and analyzing the data from sessions and intersession meetings.

Additional activities I engaged in included employing member checking and peer review, triangulating across data sources, and creating an audit trail, all of which can strengthen trustworthiness (Guba, 1981; Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). Before writing my results, I shared my codes, themes, and emergent big ideas with participants for their review and feedback. One participant reviewed my work at this stage and provided feedback on themes related to social justice. Although her feedback did not change my approach to coding, I used it to refine my thinking and analysis. Peer debriefing was another strategy I employed, as my dissertation advisor reviewed my data analysis at multiple stages and provided critical feedback on my codes, themes, and findings. I used this feedback to revise and refine my analysis. For each research question, I used multiple data sources such as interviews, session transcripts, meeting notes, and artifacts. This allowed me to triangulate themes across data sources. Finally, I maintained a detailed and organized record of the data and data analysis process, which would allow an external reviewer to examine my methods of analysis and findings. In the chapter that follows, I share the results of my data analysis.
Chapter 5

Oakes College is an institution committed to social justice (Oakes College, n.d.) with a strong reputation for excellence in teacher preparation (Lit & Darling-Hammond, 2015). However, the institution grapples with preparing its graduates for urban public schools serving under-resourced communities, an issue facing the larger country as well (Hanushek et al., 2016; Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2018; Ronfeldt, Loeb, et al., 2013). In the needs assessment, the majority of Oakes students and recent alumni reported low self-efficacy for or commitment to working in urban public schools. Those alumnae who did have a strong commitment to working in public schools described wishing for stronger preparation experiences for these contexts. Student and alumnae stories, coupled with findings from the faculty interviews, revealed opportunities to strengthen practices and an organizational culture at Oakes related to teacher preparation for urban public schools serving under-resourced communities.

Faculty at Oakes have a strong culture of collaboration and a history of engaging in descriptive inquiry work. The intervention I designed, engaging faculty in a community of practice, emerged from this foundation. The theory of change underlying a CoP framework is grounded in sociocultural (Vygotsky, 1978) and situated learning theory (Brown et al., 1989; Cobb & Bowers, 1999; Lave & Wenger, 1990), which hold that knowledge, skills, and values are developed through individuals’ reciprocal engagement around shared interests and practices within the specific boundaries of a learning context (Lave & Wenger, 1990). I employed the structure of appreciative inquiry in designing the CoP as grounding an improvement process in participant strengths can help to nurture engagement and create space for risk-taking and change (Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; He & Oxendine, 2019).

The evaluation of the CoP work examined both the intervention processes as well as proximal outcomes. The processes questions assessed adherence to the intervention as well as
participant engagement and experiences. The outcomes questions assessed how faculty’s conception of their role in nurturing urban commitment changed over the course of the CoP as well as how participants built knowledge, developed practices, and shifted perspectives. In the sections that follow, I explore the results of my data analysis. I conclude by discussing the larger implication of the study as well as study limitations.

**Process Evaluation Findings**

The goals of a process evaluation include better understanding the degree to which the delivered intervention matched the intended plan as well as what participants experienced along the way (Dusenbury et al., 2003; Rossi et al., 2019; Saunders et al., 2005). Should fidelity be poor, it is not possible to conclude the extent to which outcomes are connected directly to the intervention design or to derive understandings about the nature or quality of the planned intervention (Dusenbury et al., 2003; Rossi et al., 2019; Saunders et al., 2005). At the same time, rigid adherence that is unresponsive to the emergent and specific needs of a community or context may not in all cases produce better results (Dusenbury et al., 2003). Furthermore, even if fidelity is high, if participants have averse responses the design of the intervention itself must be called into question (Mertens, 2018). Assessing participants’ responsiveness to an intervention offers a deeper understanding of the intervention’s strengths and vulnerabilities (Dusenbury et al., 2003) and centers participant voice as critical to intervention findings (Mertens, 2018). The process evaluation for this intervention sought to understand: a) the degree to which the activities and goals of the CoP adhered to the intended plan, b) what activities and interactions faculty engaged in as members of the CoP, and c) how faculty described their experiences in the CoP.
Adherence

Research Question 1 concerned adherence, which is defined as the degree to which program activities and methods align with the intended plan (Dusenbury et al., 2003). Attending to both alignment and variation can provide insights into the fidelity of the intervention while revealing deeper insight into how an intervention may change in the face of contextual factors (Dusenbury et al., 2003). To answer RQ 1, I examined whether or not contact hours with participants matched the intended plan. In addition, I compared the intervention plan as described in Chapter 4 with a detailed description of session agendas and notes.

I engaged in a two-step coding process of this data, first coding each session as adherent or semi-adherent. No sessions were coded as non-adherent. Adherent sessions followed the session agenda as planned, and semi-adherent sessions followed the agenda with small variations. I then conducted a second round of emergent coding to explore the nature of these variations. See Table 5.1 for a definition of codes and subcodes. The central findings that emerged from the data analysis were that the level of adherence was high with small variations to the original plan. Variations occurred in response to contextual factors and allowed the intervention to be responsive to the needs and interests of the group.

Table 5.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Subcodes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adherent: No variation from the planned agenda</td>
<td>No subcodes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-adherent: Small variations from the planned agenda</td>
<td>Variations of sequence: Planned for activities occurred but in a different sequence than originally planned for.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Variations of format: Planned for activities occurred but with individuals rather than in the whole group.

Variations of addition: New activities were added.

Variations of omission: A planned activity within a session did not occur.

Analysis of agendas and notes revealed that the intervention did adhere to the planned contact hours. The CoP met the intended number of sessions. I was not able to hold a pre-session meeting but did add a session at the end for a total of five sessions under study. See Figure 5.1 for a timeline of the intervention as implemented. I had intended each session to last for 1-1.5 hours. Sessions 2-5 all met within the range of the intended time, while Session 1 met for two hours. In addition, I met between Sessions 1-4 with each of the seven participants for a total of three intersession meetings. These intersession meetings lasted from 15-30 minutes. Overall, this shows a high level of adherence to the intended time for engagement in the CoP activities.

Figure 5.1

Timeline of Intervention
I also analyzed the degree to which the intended plan aligned with what occurred. See Table 5.2 for a matrix analyzing the intended versus actualized plan. The main activities of the CoP were accomplished. Sessions 1-4 all had small variations, which I coded as semi-adherence. The fifth session adhered completely. Intersession one-on-one meetings had no variation from the intervention proposal and individual intersession work plans varied slightly. Variations fell into four categories: variations of sequence, format, addition, or omission. Variations can be instructive as they provide insight into how an intervention is enacted in a dynamic relationship with contextual factors and participant agency.

Table 5.2

*Adherence Matrix*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Plan</th>
<th>Actual Plan</th>
<th>Degree of Adherence and Types of Variation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-session meeting</td>
<td>This meeting did not occur.</td>
<td>Semi-adherence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe the purposes and structure of the CoP work. Answer questions. Collect written permissions. Administer short pre-survey.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Format variation: Orientation to study occurred individually with participants over Zoom and email.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share data from needs assessment for individual participant review. Provide focusing questions.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sequence variation: Review of the needs assessment data was moved to session 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-session individual work</td>
<td>No pre-session individual work occurred.</td>
<td>Semi-adherence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants review needs assessment data using the focusing questions.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sequence variation: These elements were moved to session 1 in the whole and small groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 1</td>
<td>Session 1</td>
<td>Semi-adherence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish norms and hopes for the group.</td>
<td>Described the purposes and structure of the CoP work.</td>
<td>Adherence: Group members each spent time talking about their personal relationships to...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### General discussion of strengths of Oakes’ programs related to the preparation of students for urban public schools.

Participants shared why they chose this group and what their hopes were for our work together.

Sequence variation: Discussion of a general perception of strengths and sharing of practice moved to Session 2.

### Discuss needs assessment data:

Discuss needs assessment data: Engage in a group discussion using focus questions from the pre-session.

Participants took time to read the needs assessment data and discussed it in small groups.

Adherence: Group members read and discussed data.

### Share practices: Invite faculty to share current practices they identify as strong models that can support the preparation of teachers for urban public schools.

Big ideas were shared in the whole group.

Format variation: Group members shared ideas for future work in the group but planning discussions were moved to 1-on-1 intersession conversations with participants given the large size of the group.

### Planning for next month.

Discussion: What are some of the challenges we face in supporting more of our students in being prepared for public school settings? What are the implications for our practice?

Sequence variation: Discussion of a general perception of strengths and sharing of practice moved to Session 2.

### Intersession work

Participants will collect an artifact/reflection on practice to bring to the group for feedback and development.

Adherence and addition: The word cloud was an unplanned activity that emerged in response to a discussion on assumptions and biases in Session 1.

### Session 2

Opening question: What are your hopes for our time together today?

Reflection on word cloud: What biases/assumptions might we be carrying that we unwittingly communicate to students?

Format variation: I did not start each session with a discussion of hopes for the session. Given the size of the group, this would have taken too much time. I used intersession 1-on-1 meetings to check on people’s hopes for the work and to assist with planning.

Share practices. Depending on the size of the group we may take turns having members share some aspect of their practice or divide into smaller groups to share practice. Focusing questions for this share will be established in the prior session.

Strengths of our current practices:

- Discussion in small groups of how our current practices help to develop students’ capacity to work in public schools.

Additional: The group spent time exploring perspectives and biases related to public schools using a word cloud.

Planning for next month. Discuss with the group resources from the intervention literature review and choose a few studies to read together that examine teacher preparation for urban public schools.

Whole group discussion: What would it take to strengthen a sense of intent and self-efficacy for public schools in our students?

Adherence: Participants shared examples of strengths of practice in small groups as described in Session 1.

Adherence: Group members shared ideas for future work in the group but planning discussions were moved to 1-on-1 intersession conversations with participants given the large size of the group.

Investigate in a group discussion using focus questions from the pre-session.

Adherence: Group members read and discussed data.

Share practices: Invite faculty to share current practices they identify as strong models that can support the preparation of teachers for urban public schools.

Big ideas were shared in the whole group.

Format variation: Group members shared ideas for future work in the group but planning discussions were moved to 1-on-1 intersession conversations with participants given the large size of the group.

Planning for next month.

Discussion: What are some of the challenges we face in supporting more of our students in being prepared for public school settings? What are the implications for our practice?

Sequence variation: Discussion of a general perception of strengths and sharing of practice moved to Session 2.

### Intersession work

Participants will collect an artifact/reflection on practice to bring to the group for feedback and development.

Adherence and addition: The word cloud was an unplanned activity that emerged in response to a discussion on assumptions and biases in Session 1.

### Semi-adherence

As planned with the addition of an asynchronous word cloud for participants to share anonymously their associations with “NYC Public School.”

Format variation: I did not start each session with a discussion of hopes for the session. Given the size of the group, this would have taken too much time. I used intersession 1-on-1 meetings to check on people’s hopes for the work and to assist with planning.

Session 2

Opening question: What are your hopes for our time together today?

Reflection on word cloud: What biases/assumptions might we be carrying that we unwittingly communicate to students?

Format variation: I did not start each session with a discussion of hopes for the session. Given the size of the group, this would have taken too much time. I used intersession 1-on-1 meetings to check on people’s hopes for the work and to assist with planning.

Share practices. Depending on the size of the group we may take turns having members share some aspect of their practice or divide into smaller groups to share practice. Focusing questions for this share will be established in the prior session.

Strengths of our current practices:

- Discussion in small groups of how our current practices help to develop students’ capacity to work in public schools.

Additional: The group spent time exploring perspectives and biases related to public schools using a word cloud.

Planning for next month. Discuss with the group resources from the intervention literature review and choose a few studies to read together that examine teacher preparation for urban public schools.

Whole group discussion: What would it take to strengthen a sense of intent and self-efficacy for public schools in our students?

Adherence: Participants shared examples of strengths of practice in small groups as described in Session 1.
Next month: Preview of practice shares in Sessions 3 and 4 and an invitation for participants to present to the group in Session 3. Format and sequence variations: See notes in Session 1 for variations to the planning process. Introduction of readings occurred during Session 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intersession work</th>
<th>Intersession work</th>
<th>Semi-adherence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants will read resources that explore preparation for urban public schools in other settings.</td>
<td>Participants reflected on practice. During one-on-one meetings, I supported three participants who volunteered to bring work to the group to shape their share and develop framing questions.</td>
<td>Adherence: Three group members prepared examples of practice to present to peers for critical-friends feedback. Sequence variation: Reading was not introduced until Session 3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 3</th>
<th>Session 3</th>
<th>Semi-adherence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening question: What are your hopes for our time together today? Reflection on shared reading. Sharing practices. Depending on the size of the group we may take turns having each member share some aspect of their practice or divide into smaller groups of 2 or 3 to share practice. Focusing questions for this share will be established in the prior session. Planning for next month. Group members will choose one aspect of their practice to extend or deepen that they will implement with students during the spring semester. We will discuss together how to prepare for and use the next session.</td>
<td>Opening question: As you enter, please write in the chat: Who is someone you have felt appreciative of this week? Review big ideas from Session 1 and 2: What is one thing that has stood out to you in our conversations thus far? Sharing Practice: Three participants share practice in small groups for feedback and development using a protocol and questions developed by the presenter. Next month: An invitation for participants to present to the group in Session 3. Suggested readings shared for discussion during Session 4.</td>
<td>Format variation and addition: See notes in Session 2 for variations to the opening question. I added a question in chat for community building. Sequence variation: Readings were introduced and the invitation to discuss occurred in session 4. Adherence: Three participants shared examples of practice for collegial feedback in small groups. I worked with participants to develop focus questions for these shares. Format and sequence variations: See notes in Session 1 for variations to the planning process. Planning goals for the spring semester was introduced during Session 4.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intersession work</th>
<th>Intersession work</th>
<th>Adherence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Each member will choose one aspect of their practice to extend or deepen (or they can develop something new) in anticipation of the spring semester. Participants</td>
<td>Participants were invited to read resources that explore preparation for urban public schools in other settings.</td>
<td>Adherence: Resources were introduced as initially planned for intersession work between sessions 2 and 3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
will bring this work to our final session.

Three new participants volunteered to bring work to the group, and I met with these participants individually to help shape their shares and develop framing questions.

Adherence: Participants continued to reflect on practice to bring to the group.

Session 4

Opening question: What are your hopes for our time together today?

Sharing practice: Participants will share goals for new/developed practice to implement in the spring. Depending on the size of the group we may take turns having members share or divide into smaller groups of 2 or 3.

Final reflection on this phase of the work including a reflection on the ideas that have been generated and looking ahead to how to use our sessions for the remainder of the year.

Semi-adherence

Session 4

Opening question: If there is something you are feeling hopeful about, please add it to the chat.

Exploring resources: Participants were invited to add ideas from the readings to a Padlet. Few ideas were added so we quickly transitioned to a general conversation prompted by a story one participant shared of a recent experience in her class.

Sharing Practice: Three new participants share practice in small groups for feedback and development using a protocol and questions developed by the presenter.

Next month: Think about your goals/action steps for the spring semester as well as goals for the group for the remainder of our meetings.

Semi-adherence

Intersession work

Not in the original plan

Participants reflected on individual goals and spring action plans for their practice as well as goals for the remainder of the CoP spring session.

Adherence: This was the plan for the intersession work between Sessions 3 and 4.

Session 5

Not in the original plan

Opening question: What is something you have read or watched recently that has

Adherence: Session 5 followed the plans for Session 4.
As a group we look at notes that capture the ideas about practice we have generated to date:

What do you notice?
What would you add?
What questions/thoughts does this raise?

In small groups, members share personal goals/action steps for the spring semester.

In the whole group, we brainstorm how to use the remaining sessions.

As is captured by the adherence matrix (Table 5.2), many of the variations were delays to the planned sequence. Due to a compressed timeline, I was not able to hold the first pre-session meeting. I, therefore, introduced the needs assessment data later than originally intended. I chose not to share the data via email with group members, preferring to be able to provide some context and framing for the data in person. This decision meant I had to make adjustments to the first full session, including allowing substantial time for in-session reading. These adjustments rippled across subsequent sessions. Our delayed start also contributed to my decision to add a fifth session to the study.

In addition to shifting when activities occurred, I also made some changes to the format and setting of some activities. The group was made up of 14 members, including myself. Our first activity together established hopes for how the group would work together and allowed members to describe what drew each of them to choose this group. Participants and group members were eager to share, and each told compelling stories about their experiences as public school students and/or teachers, their commitments to public schools, and the questions...
they hoped to explore in the CoP. It felt important to allow each member the time to tell their story as a way to build cohesion and welcome each voice, even as the initial share took longer than anticipated. This early activity provided important information to me as the facilitator about the group members, group dynamics, and patterns of communication. It contributed to my decision early on that the group was too large to spend significant in-session time on agenda planning. Instead, we spent time reflecting on our work together, but the details of planning occurred in one-on-one conversations between sessions and over email as I shaped agendas, sought feedback, and supported participants in structuring their practice shares and generating framing questions for the group. I also did not open each session with a conversation about hopes for the session for the same time concerns. Instead, I checked in frequently one-on-one and over email to gauge the pulse of the group.

Another variation to adherence was the addition of a few activities. In response to a discussion of assumptions and biases in Session 1, I added a word cloud activity I had not originally planned. This activity asked participants to contribute between Sessions 1 and 2 to a word cloud that prompted CoP members to write their associations with the phrase “New York City Public School.” We began Session 2 with a discussion of what emerged from this activity. Finally, instead of starting sessions by discussing hopes, in Sessions 3-5, we began with quick warm-ups over chat in the Zoom space. The prompts for these were: people we were feeling grateful for, things we were feeling hopeful about, and book and media recommendations. The goal of this activity was to help members get to know one another in more informal ways as I learned that many members of the group had had minimal interaction prior to being in the CoP. I also generated these prompts in response to the larger context. The CoP meetings occurred during a time of a global pandemic, a contentious and contested U.S. election, and ongoing racially motivated violence across the country. These stressors and others were top of mind for
participants. Beginning with moments of community building and recognition of the people and ideas that sustain one through challenge can help nurture a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1990; Wenger, 1998). As Wenger (1998) notes, the “value of the atmosphere of friendliness” and “personal exchanges” is critical to the kind of coherence needed for a group to become a learning community (p. 74). In addition, these activities align with the framework of appreciative inquiry, which is grounded in nurturing an appreciative mindset in support of change processes (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987).

Finally, there was only one aspect of the planned intervention that I omitted from the sessions under study. This activity was omitted in response to participant engagement. The group did not discuss readings that explored strong practices in urban teacher preparation in other institutions of higher education. Although I invited participants to choose among a few resources, it was clear during Session 4 that not enough participants had done the reading to have a conversation. I had not framed reading as a requirement for CoP members as I sensed faculty were experiencing stress due to a range of contextual factors. In addition, I suspect pressures on their time made it difficult for faculty to prioritize this reading. During Session 5, however, group members identified personal action plans and articulated goals for the remaining spring CoP sessions (these subsequent sessions were not included in the study itself). Several participants articulated a desire to circle back to these readings, and a subgroup used remaining CoP sessions to read about and discuss the San Francisco Teacher Residency Program and The University of Chicago’s Urban Teacher Education Program.

Overall, adherence to the intended activities of the CoP was high. O’Donnell (2008) notes the tension that can exist between educational activities and the concept of adherence, given that teaching, or in this case facilitation of adult learning, exists not only in a set of articulated plans, but also in the dynamic, responsive, and often fluid space in which those plans
are enacted. By definition, the activities of a CoP cannot be fully prescriptive as the work of authentic CoPs evolves based on the experiences, interests, and needs of the group (Lave & Wenger, 1990). Assessment of adherence must therefore reflect the fact that an authentic CoP is shaped by its participants. For this reason, the original plan outlined a sequence of examining data, sharing practice, exploring external resources, and developing action plans, with considerable space given for members to decide what kinds of practice to share and how to share it. Ultimately only one core activity was omitted from the planned sequence, and this activity was taken up later by a subgroup of CoP participants.

Most variations to the plan were in response to contextual constraints, such as the lack of time post-recruitment to hold a pre-session meeting. Other variations may have helped to contribute to the development of a strong learning community and participant agency by allowing time for participants to come to know one another in more personal ways and being responsive to the limited time participants had to devote work to the CoP outside of each session. Although adherence is an important dimension of a process evaluation, it is limited in what it can reveal about the characteristics of the experience itself. In the sections that follow, I examine participant responsiveness (Dusenbery et al., 2003) through examining how participants engaged in the CoP as well as their perspectives on the experience.

**Engagement**

The second process question sought to understand one dimension of participant responsiveness, which was the nature of the activities and interactions faculty engaged in during the CoP experience. The concept of engagement is grounded in Dusenbery and colleagues’ (2003) framework for process evaluation. I drew on Wenger and colleagues’ (2011) evaluation framework for CoPs to define the activities and interactions of a CoP. In their definition of CoP activities and interactions, Wenger and colleagues provide indicators that I used for my initial
coding of session transcripts and notes. I engaged in a second round of emergent coding during which time I refined and consolidated codes according to the emergent patterns in the data. See Table 5.3 for details on the evolution of the coding scheme. In addition to coding for evidence of activities and interactions, I analyzed attendance and participation data, as “level of participation” is another key indicator of activities and interactions in Wenger and colleague’s (2011) framework (p. 25). The major findings from this analysis were that levels of attendance and participation were high. The central activity participants engaged in was sharing teaching practice. In addition, programmatic and institutional practices were explored. Patterns also emerged about the nature of collegial interactions, the role of reflection in the CoP, as well as the presence of more challenging moments.

Table 5.3

Evolution of Codes and Themes for Analysis of CoP Activities and Interactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Codesa</th>
<th>Final Codes</th>
<th>Major Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Bring practice to the CoP space | Bring practice to the CoP space | Sharing/developing faculty practices  
Strengthening programmatic practices  
Strengthening institutional practices |
| Providing collegial support/feedback | Collegial interaction | Supporting/affirming  
Providing feedback  
Providing resources/information |
| Information and resource sharingb | -- | -- |
| Reflecting | Reflecting | Biases and assumptions  
Faculty role  
Tensions between progressive practices and urban teacher preparation |
Challenging language use Challenging assumptions about CoP purposes

Questioning

| Codes derived from Wenger and colleagues’ (2011) evaluation framework for CoPs. | Information and resource sharing was merged with collegial interaction in final coding. | Questioning occurred when faculty shared practice, provided feedback, reflected, and challenged one another so was not coded separately in the final coding scheme. |

**Attendance and participation.** Attendance and participation levels were high, with some variability in the ways participants engaged in the group. Six participants had 100% attendance at each of the five sessions, and one participant missed one session due to illness resulting in an attendance rate of 97%. There was 100% attendance by all seven participants in each of the one-on-one intersession meetings with me. Participation rates were similarly high. Each participant contributed through verbal discussion to each of the CoP sessions in which they were present. Some participants spoke more in small groups than in the larger group and some participants used participation features in Zoom, such as chat, to contribute to group discussions while others did not. I chose not to quantify rates of participation as the volume of comments does not equate to the depth of engagement and, as Wenger and colleagues (2011) note, listening is itself a core CoP activity with the potential to be transformative for participants. Using session notes and transcripts, I coded the observable evidence of participation to develop a deeper understanding of the nature of CoP participation.

**Bringing practice to the CoP space.** As a community of practice, a core objective of the intervention was to encourage participants to share and build practice with one another. Three themes related to engaging in practice emerged from the session data (see Table 5.3): a) participants most frequently engaged in discussions of practice related to teaching and field supervision, b) participants also engaged in brainstorming ways to strengthen programmatic...
practices related to preparation for public schools, such as mapping courses and rethinking clinical placements, and c) several participants raised questions related to institutional practices that could be strengthened at the college to support student intent to seek out positions in public schools. I define programmatic practices as those that cut across courses or a students’ full program of study and that fall outside of what one individual faculty member could have sole influence over. I define institutional practices as those that fall outside of the control of graduate school faculty, including the practices of marketing and communications, the admissions office, and the career service office. See Appendix I for a full list of ideas generated by the group across these three areas of practice.

The core type of practice participants engaged in was related to their teaching and clinical supervision. Over time, discussions of faculty practice took on greater depth and specificity. Using the principles of AI, the first two sessions of the CoP were designed to look at practice through the lens of strengths. In the first session, participants were invited to look at the needs assessment data and notice both opportunities for growth as well as evidence for existing programmatic strengths. In session two, each participant shared at least one example of their work that they identified as a strong practice that could support preparing teachers for urban public schools. Participants built on these experiences in later sessions as they shared work for further development.

From the first session, several participants made a direct connection between the needs assessment data and implications for the development of their practice. Helen\textsuperscript{11} reflected in response to data about students’ perspectives on public schools, “I kept thinking about, what can I do?...[Helping students feel more confident in public school contexts] is something that I

\textsuperscript{11} All names have been changed.
really need to do more of.” Later in the session, Grace offered, “So, I’d love if next time we spend some time actually reflecting on that, like, what are actions?...What does it look like to shift our practice to better support students?” Building on that idea, Mia shared, “So what would it look like for us all to think about the action and how that can look in each of our sessions with teachers and the spaces where we’re working?” During Sessions 3 and 4, six of the participants shared in greater depth areas of practice they had identified as needing growth for discussion with colleagues. Finally, in the last session, as noted earlier, participants identified goals for their teaching, field advisement, or work as a program director to put into action during the spring semester. I explore the evolution of participant practice in further detail in my discussion of the outcomes questions later in this chapter.

The strong presence of faculty practice in the CoP points to a robust professional learning experience and aligns with the principles of situated learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1990). One of the core characteristics of successful professional learning is that the experience is grounded in meaningful problems of practice relevant to participants’ specific work demands and driven by participants’ felt needs and goals (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone & Garet, 2015; Rohlwing & Spelman, 2014). Throughout the CoP, participants identified strengths and needs in their practice and used the group to further their growth and development.

In addition to exploring their own practice, participants engaged in exploring programmatic and institutional practices over the course of the intervention (see Appendix I). The programmatic practices most frequently discussed included strengthening students’ field experiences in public schools and engaging in program mapping. In the first session, Helen noted, “the idea of placements and where we have our relationships seems like such an important avenue...Having some models that really feel authentic and where students can see that [positive models of practice in public schools serving under-resourced communities] can
happen seems really important.” The topic of providing more robust field experiences for students in public schools serving under-resourced communities and strengthening institutional partnerships with public schools was revisited by the group in each of the subsequent sessions. Additional programmatic ideas, such as collecting more data on student experiences and mapping courses across a program to identify where students are learning to enact progressive practices in more traditional public school settings, emerged as well.

Finally, group members discussed institutional practices such as how funding might be allocated to support students in public school pathways and the role offices such as marketing, communications, and career services could play in creating stronger pipelines to public schools. Wenger and colleagues (2011) note that one outcome of a CoP can be kindling a commitment to larger institutional change. For this to occur, a group must name and engage with larger structural and institutional issues in their discourse. As with faculty practice, I explore the specific ideas faculty generated about programmatic and institutional practices in greater depth in the outcomes section of this chapter.

**Collegial interactions.** Sharing practice within a CoP occurs through the mechanism of collegial interaction. There were specific patterns of how participants interacted that emerged through the data analysis. Over the course of the CoP, participants most frequently referenced each other’s comments and ideas, expounded on each other’s thinking, offered ideas and tangible resources, and provided affirmative statements. I explore moments when participants challenged one another in a separate section. There was less collegial interaction in the first session as group members spent the majority of the time sharing personal stories and responding to the needs assessment data. It could also be that members were still coming to know one another. Although the college is a small institution with a total of 40 full and part-time
faculty, the CoP was the first time this particular configuration of individuals had an opportunity to work together closely.

By the second session, collegial interaction increased substantially. In the whole group verbal discussions and chat, about half of the participants started a comment by referencing a peer. Typical statements included, “I want to build on Mia's idea,” “Eva, I was thinking about your point,” and, “I want to just quickly second what Ellen said.” In the third, fourth, and fifth sessions, collegial interactions were again frequent as participants actively provided feedback and resources to one another in the context of practice shares and supported each other in developing personal action plans. Feedback participants provided included helping colleagues to refine assignments and course activities, and participants shared resources including connections to guest speakers, videos and case studies, sample activities, and expertise. Interspersed across sessions were affirmative and supportive statements such as, “Thank you, Ellen, for all the wonderful ideas,” “I so appreciate that,” “Great point, Eva,” and “I so agree, Olivia.” High levels of positive collegial interaction observed during the sessions may have contributed to participants citing their experience with colleagues as a highlight of the experience during the post-intervention interviews. “Relations of mutuality” lie at the core of community (Wenger, 1998, p. 184), and joint enterprise and collaborative engagement are critical features of successful professional learning activities (Avalos, 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone & Garet, 2015; Jensen et al., 2016). Research has found that CoPs that cultivate care, trust, and reciprocity have the potential to increase a participants’ ability to learn from and with one another (Gallagher et al., 2011). The strong collegiality among this group may have played a role in the positive outcomes explored later in this chapter.

**Reflection.** Wenger and colleagues (2011) identify reflection as another core activity of CoPs, noting that the act of “collective reflection can trigger out of the box thinking and open
new perspectives” (p. 19). During the intervention, collective reflection looked like participants sharing open questions they were wrestling with as well as questions they wanted to wrestle with collaboratively to spark critical thinking, elicit other perspectives, and shape the focus of practice shares. Participants, most often through the use of rhetorical questions, reflected on bias and assumptions faculty may carry about public schools, faculty role in influencing public school commitment, as well as the tensions that can exist between progressive pedagogy and preparation for urban public schools. Levels of reflective discourse were highest in the first two sessions as participants responded to the needs assessment data and considered ways the group could support the development of practice.

Early on, participants engaged in reflection about biases and assumptions faculty may carry about public schools. In Session 1, Eva wondered aloud, “How are faculty talking about particular communities? Because if we say under-resourced...is it in itself presenting a set of assumptions and biases to students?” In a similar vein, Olivia invited collective reflection asking, “What are the messages we might be unintentionally communicating? I’m wondering about the importance of us as a faculty exploring our own unconscious biases related to public versus private schooling.” Anya picked up on this thread in Session 2 reflecting aloud about her own potential biases, “I was also wondering how clearly I communicate with students when I use certain language. What are my definitions, intentions, etcetera?” These comments from Eva, Olivia, and Anya invited critical examination of the ways language can communicate values and biases that might influence student thinking about public schools.

Reflecting on faculty’s role in shaping student intent was another theme that emerged in the first two sessions. Grace shared,
One thing for me, that comes up as a question...is just our influence, and what's our influence? Where would we even want to be our influence? What are some self-reflection things that need to happen, for us? What are the conversations?

Later she reflected in a more personal way, “How do I get students to consider working with diverse populations of students?” Anya picked up on this theme, wondering in response to an earlier comment from Mia,

You got me thinking...how am I building those connections in public schools, strengthening what are the connections I already have, and then sharing that with students as a way to really get them excited and feel like there is a place for them with someone who will understand them and care for them?

Ann wrestled with the concept of role when reflecting on the shifts in her thinking about one of her advisees who works in an independent school,

And I think...my kind of unconscious feeling was...you know, she may come around, and she may move into a public school setting. That feeling that, that she'll come around, that that's what I would, I would see as more fulfilling to her. But then thinking, wait a minute, she is...one of the few teachers of color in the school. Now I’m looking at it differently and thinking that she's playing a really important role there too.

These examples of wondering aloud provided a type of metanarrative, revealing participants' thinking in response to the larger conversation about role happening in the group.

Finally, several participants reflected on the tensions that can exist between progressive practices and some of the more standards-driven or scripted approaches in some public—and also some independent—schools. Grace wondered how and why students perceive the tension as being centered on public schools, sharing,
The association [students make] of progressive with independent and non-progressive with public is troubling to me and makes me think about how the roots of progressivism are so deeply embedded in urban public schools...I've been in a lot of private school settings now with my students, placements that are not progressive and are very traditional. And, so, I'm just curious why we have these associations.

The group identified that some tensions exist between what students at Oakes learn and what they might be asked to enact in the field. Eva wondered, “I'm teaching [this course]. Where am I talking about each of the tensions?” Mia made a connection to the ways she navigated these tensions as a graduate student and public school teacher herself, “I often think about my own challenges and the tensions I felt while [I was] a student and a teacher in a public school.” Here, Mia’s reflection built empathy with and connection to the larger problem of practice under investigation. Grace reflected on the issue of navigating tensions, saying, “How do we maintain a critical lens towards some things, like standards and box curricula, without throwing it out the window and supporting students to modify or negotiate those tensions they can feel?” Grace’s question did not appear to be intended for a direct or concrete answer but rather to elicit thinking from the group and invite group members to share practices in future sessions that could support the development of these skills and orientations in students.

Participant reflections about assumptions, role, and tensions in the work may have helped to lay the groundwork for faculty to identify areas of practice for further development as well as to name institutional priorities. This type of engagement can influence the focus of group discussions in a CoP, can be a mechanism for processing complex ideas (Golden, 2016), and support the development of a learning community (Gallagher et al., 2011).

Challenging. As compared to the other activities and interactions described in the previous sections, challenging occurred with the least frequency with only three of the seven
participants engaging in discourse that I coded as challenging, and these instances only occurring a few times, mostly in Sessions 1 and 2. Challenging should not be interpreted as a de facto negative interaction, although some forms of challenge can certainly inhibit participation (Lea, 2005). As Wenger and colleagues (2011) acknowledge in their framework, debate on critical topics is an important indicator of CoP activity.

Challenging comments occurred in response to several topics. Most commonly, challenges were raised in response to concepts or language as well as underlying assumptions about whether faculty should be influencing student intent to seek out public schools. In all instances, it appeared that challenges were offered as collegial and constructive, although it is the case that not all participants may have perceived them this way. In the first session, Eva offered some challenges to the use of the word “under-resourced” in the needs assessment data questioning the precision of the language and wondering if the word itself may have skewed participant responses. She noted, “it in itself is presenting a set of assumptions and biases to students.” Eva also felt there was an assumption in the needs assessment that independent schools were not serving students from under-resourced communities saying, “Because to me, it seems like the data that was currently examined is assuming a particular type of independent school. And I think it might be more complicated than that.” She concluded her thinking by questioning the idea that the goal should be to influence students in seeking out public schools,

I think it’s challenging to think about influence in terms of career-choice decision-making when it’s premised on an assumption about where students are intending to work. I also am less inclined to aim to influence someone’s choice of where to work when they are interested in religious or specified special education programs.
In Session 2, Ann similarly noted the value of preparing students for independent schools, “We should be encouraging students to go out into the public schools, but there’s this whole segment of society that is fairly white and quite privileged, so of course we also want our students in those settings.” In a later session, Ann challenged the very idea that a teacher preparation program could have a substantially positive effect on teacher retention in urban public schools serving under-resourced communities, noting,

Part of me feels that no matter...how well they've been prepared...their longevity [is] determined by the kind of community they have that will sustain them....I kind of feel like there's this terrible failure. And I know I’m being very simplistic here, but it’s being blamed on their teacher preparation... If there's an unwillingness on the part of society to make certain structural changes, what are, what can we in education do?

Counterpoints such as these can help to sharpen and shift thinking in a CoP (Wenger, 1998).

Notably, when participants shared moments of discomfort with CoP activities, which I explore in the discussion of RQ 3, the moments of challenge described here were not what was cited. That little debate or challenge occurred during this intervention may reflect something about the larger culture of the college or the particular local culture created by this group, my facilitation style, the existence of high levels of agreement among participants, and/or other factors.

An examination of the activities and interactions participants engaged in as members of the CoP reveals a rich and layered experience. Participants exhibited high levels of participation and attendance. As members of the group, they shared practice, explored implications for programs and for the larger college, engaged constructively with each other over time and in a variety of ways, brought questions for critical reflection into the space, and, if to a lesser degree, challenged thinking and perspectives. The final dimension of the intervention process I explore is participants’ characterization of the experience.
Experience

The last process question examined another dimension of participant responsiveness, which is participant experience. Rossi and colleagues (2019) refer to this component of process evaluation as participant satisfaction. Participant experience includes participants’ views of and reactions to an intervention as well as potential recommendations or critiques (Dusenbury et al., 2003). To answer RQ 3, I analyzed data from the post-intervention interviews with each participant. In my initial coding of the interviews, I used codes from Dusenbury and colleagues’ (2003) definition of participant responsiveness. I then re-coded the data using emergent codes and engaged in a final round of coding that integrated both the a priori and emergent codes. See Table 5.4 for details about the evolution of codes and themes. The central findings that emerged from the data analysis included that: a) participants described being part of the CoP as a positive experience, particularly the opportunity to engage deeply with colleagues around problems of practice; b) although the experience was described as positive by all participants, six of the seven described complexities or tensions in the experience; and c) five of the participants had constructive recommendations to strengthen or further the work.

Table 5.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Codes</th>
<th>Final Codes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>View of the intervention</td>
<td>View of/reaction to the intervention: Positive responses to the CoP experience</td>
<td>Opportunity to share and develop practice with colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction to the intervention</td>
<td>View of/reaction to the intervention: Complexity of the CoP experience</td>
<td>Complexity of group dynamics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Opportunity to share and develop practice with colleagues
Structure of time and resources
Complexity of group dynamics
Contextual pressures
Positive responses to the CoP experience. Participants’ responses to the CoP were overwhelmingly positive. The major themes that emerged were positive responses to the opportunity to share and develop practice with colleagues and the structure of the CoP experience, in particular the blend of whole-group and small-group engagement and access to a range of resources. Each of the seven CoP participants spoke favorably in the interviews about the experience of engaging in discussions of practice with peers. Participants spoke directly about the importance of working through ideas and getting feedback from colleagues, as well as the value of hearing colleagues share their practices. A comment from Anya eloquently captures some of the spirit that emerged across participants,

It always deepens what I know about my own work through other people talking in explicit ways about their work...All of the conversation we’ve had seeps into my work in a way that makes my own work more recognizable to me.

The experience of receiving critical-friends feedback from peers was named as valuable by most participants. Helen reflected, “the process of having a group where I could say what I was thinking. Like with this final project in [my class], and just the feedback...it feels kind of transformative for me.” Similarly, Eva noted,

Dialoguing about what are the actual practices that are required to work in the public schools...is really important. So, like, we had...a conversation [about an assignment], where [a group member] said, “To me, this is great, but like this activity you’re doing is great. But, like...when do you pause it? When do you pause the inquiry and have the
students say something like, these are my action items for my classroom, right?”...And I go, “Yeah, that's a good point, I don't have that.”

Sharing their practice also offered participants an opportunity to deepen collegial connections. Anya reflected on this when she spoke about the session during which she shared her practice, It felt great to present the...work and break down some of the action plans...And then Silvia was in my small group. So, you know, Silvia said, let me know if you want to talk...I can give you my experiences there. So, it was also an opportunity to deepen my connection with that work in a way that I wouldn't have had it not been for that group.

In addition to the value of sharing their own practice, participants reflected on the benefits of engaging with their colleagues’ practices. As Ann shared, “It's been interesting hearing other colleagues presenting their ideas.” Olivia similarly reflected on how a member of the group pushed her thinking,

I really liked being able to hear about...how [Mia] sort of frames her teaching...How she feels like she's centering public education in like a different way than I had been thinking about it. I just think...it's been really helpful to hear from colleagues in a small group.

Mia’s work also resonated with Grace who shared, “I learned so much from [Mia] and what she's doing and had concrete ideas that I could take away for my own practice. And then also hearing my colleagues reflect on it. I really enjoyed that.” These findings align with research that has found that collaborative experiences in CoPs can contribute to developing faculty’s pedagogical practice (Gallagher et al., 2011; Golden, 2016; Hoyert & O’Dell, 2019). Collaboration is a core component of successful professional learning activities as interactions between colleagues can deepen learning and contribute to a strong professional learning culture (Avalos, 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone & Garet, 2015; Jensen et al., 2016).
Participants also reflected on the value of the group having been made up of members representing a range of perspectives and roles. Grace noted, “I love the mix of voices and experiences and backgrounds that were present. And so, I feel like I learned a lot just from the different perspectives.” Helen, similarly, reflected, “I really enjoyed having different members who were kind of in different parts of their career and in different work at the college.” Eva named the value of collaborating with colleagues outside of her program, reflecting,

I would say that I don't talk a lot with leadership folks typically...Being...grouped with them several times has been really helpful. Talking to people who've been, who are long-term principals of schools in the context of what we've been talking about...that was a highlight.

Core to the definition of a CoP is that it is a space in which colleagues co-construct knowledge, skills, and dispositions through reciprocal processes (Lave & Wenger, 1990). These findings contribute to scholarship that has found experiences with peers in a CoP can contribute to faculty's sense of belonging as well as their learning (Gallagher et al., 2011; Golden, 2016). Typically, members of a CoP bring with them varying degrees of experience and expertise. Learning occurs as expertise is shared and new meanings are negotiated across the group (Lave & Wenger, 1990; Wenger, 1998).

In addition to appreciating the experience of building practice with colleagues, five of the seven participants reflected positively on structural elements of the group when discussing their CoP experience. Over half of the participants reflected on the importance of having time with the full group as well as time in smaller configurations. Olivia’s comment on the subject was fairly typical, “We spent a good amount of time, in like, whole groups, small groups...I think that the time, the way that time is structured, I really like.” Grace commented that time in smaller groups, which were typically made up of 3-5 members, allowed folks to “dig deeper.”
This finding connects with research that has found opportunities to engage in dialogic processes with peers—made easier in small groups where opportunities to participate in discussion rise—can deepen professional learning (Raphael et al., 2014; Rohlwing & Spelman, 2014).

Participants also responded positively to the use of resources in the CoP. Olivia, Mia, and Anya all spoke about various artifacts they made use of over the course of the CoP including notes, articles, and excerpts of the findings from the needs assessment. Olivia noted,

So, I liked being able to go back and read those notes [from each of the session discussions]. And then I looked over some of the...other examples of programs that are partnering with public schools. So yeah, I, I really appreciated that...organizational piece.

Mia also referenced the notes, which were shared with all group members in a Google Drive folder, remarking, “you're good at...the threads and reminding us and continuing the conversation from there.” Finally, Anya reflected on the value of reading the needs assessment data, “reading the chapter that you wrote and thinking more about it and it being explicit in conversations that I was having...I think for sure has caused shifting.”

The use and production of artifacts and resources within the context of CoPs connects to Wenger’s (1998) concept of reification, or the “use of tools, symbols, [and] stories” that is central to encoding meaning and developing practice (p. 59). Access to a range of resources helped some participants hold on to the big ideas and introduced new ways of thinking. The positive nature of participant experiences such as these was balanced with the existence of some challenges. As Wenger (1998) notes, “Most situations that involve sustained interpersonal engagement generate their fair share of tensions and conflicts” (p. 77).

**Complexity of the CoP experience.** Community of practice groups are dynamic, multidimensional structures that exist within larger institutional contexts (Wenger & Lave, 1990), as such even positive group experiences are likely to have frictional aspects.
Understanding the nature of these complexities can help facilitators think critically about ways to mitigate tensions that may detract from the work. Six of the seven participants described complexities in the CoP that caused some tensions or challenges and their comments fell into two themes: complexities related to group dynamics influencing patterns of participation and the complexity of contextual pressures affecting engagement. It should be noted, however, that the volume of comments related to complexity was far smaller than the volume of positive responses.

Three participants spoke about how group dynamics shaped the experience, particularly when the group came together as a whole. Communication styles, tone, and positioning all influenced these participants' experience of the group. Olivia noted, “It's hard for, you know, everybody's voice to be heard in the big group. And I know not everybody's comfortable sharing in the big group.” Olivia went on to name some of the skills that can support or inhibit engagement in a larger group, saying, “I think some of us are sort of better at being active listeners, and...kind of better at...taking what everybody's saying and synthesizing it, and then, like, bringing forth your own ideas.” Grace reflected on how group dynamics influenced her participation directly, noting that times when the conversation about graduate students took on a deficit quality, she felt herself retreat,

[There was a view] I didn't always feel comfortable with because I do think it's on us...So there are things like that where...I would feel myself kind of pull back from the conversation because I didn't really feel comfortable with where I felt like it was going.

Finally, Ann reflected on how her perception of her positioning in the group affected her confidence, “I'm often sort of questioning my voice...I'm thinking everybody else here is teaching a class and I'm just doing supervised fieldwork. Do I really have, you know, the same stuff to contribute?” The experiences of these participants illustrate how real or perceived
power hierarchies, dissonance in values or stance, as well as patterns of communication such as the presence or absence of listening and synthesizing, can inhibit full participation in CoP spaces. As scholars have noted (Barton & Tusting, 2005; Harris & Shelswell, 2005; Lea, 2005), a CoP does not by default become a generative and inclusive space. Although the challenges described here did not outweigh the constructive value of the CoP, it is instructive to listen closely as such stories suggest the importance of engaging with CoP participants about their experiences in ongoing ways in order to strive to create inclusive and participatory spaces.

In addition to reflecting on the complexity of group dynamics, six of the seven participants spoke about how contextual factors such as the frequency of meetings and engagement in other activities at the college may have influenced their experience of the CoP. The frequency of the experience was a challenge cited by several participants. Four participants spoke about the challenge of meeting only monthly and expressed a desire for more frequent meetings. Grace reflected, “I always felt like we would get to a really rich idea. And then it would be a month. And so, then it was hard to always remember even with the notes.” Helen, similarly, said, “there's just so much going on in all of our lives that it's, you know, when you have that long [between meetings]...it just felt like as soon as we dipped in and we were like there, then our time was up.” Research has found that frequency and duration are critical factors in successful professional learning activities (Avalos, 2011; Desimone & Garet, 2015; Jensen et al., 2016).

As noted, the CoP was only one of many obligations pulling on faculty time and attention. Grace reflected,

I didn't have enough time to pause and read all the materials you shared in a meaningful way and, like, really digest things. And so that, I think, feels unfortunate and also feels like such a consequence of doing all this in the middle of a pandemic when we’re just
putting out fires left and right daily. And so...you don't get the reflection time that you
want.

Eva also reflected on how stretched she felt, particularly related to her participation in other
kinds of learning spaces at the college,

It's a lot of inquiry groups that we ask faculty to participate in. And I think that that's
hard to manage...I can't speak for other folks, but I do think that it's asking faculty to
read a lot outside of what they're reading for their courses, within multiple meetings.
And I think the result is that not everyone's always prepared for inquiry...I'm not saying
that it's specific to this inquiry group. It seems more like a global inquiry thing...I'll, like,
get up earlier than I normally do in the morning, and be like, “Okay, I need to read for an
hour.” Or I don't know what's going on and it's because...it's like four or five different
inquiry threads.

Eva described here that she participates in several inquiry groups at the college, which pulls on
her time and can make it challenging to keep clear the distinct focus of each group. Although
this CoP differed from existing open-ended descriptive inquiry groups in its focus on developing
specific action steps related to practice and program, aspects of its meeting structure mirrored
other groups, and themes such as racial and linguistic equity emerged, which are areas of focus
in other spaces at the college. Embedded inquiry and continuity of priorities across professional
learning experiences can deepen and extend faculty growth (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017;
Desimone & Garet, 2015; Firestone & Mangan, 2014), but Eva raised an important point about
the challenges of participating in multiple, distinct, yet overlapping professional learning spaces.

**Recommendations.** The last dimension of participant experience that Dusenbury and
colleagues (2003) suggest evaluators attend to are recommendations that participants make
related to their experience. Five of the participants in the CoP offered constructive suggestions
about the experience itself. Most focused on the idea that the group could have met with
greater frequency, as described above. Additional recommendations included that the work of
the group should be ongoing in the upcoming academic year and that more faculty should be
included in the conversation. As Mia said, “It’s an ongoing conversation that needs to
continue...in this space with these folks, but also with other folks.” Anya, similarly, reflected on
the value of an inquiry that can last more than one year, “I really like when there is an
opportunity to follow up on the work in year two and year three.” Further exploration of faculty
attitudes and biases around public schools was a suggestion made by one participant, and
another participant suggested allotting session time for reading. Finally, two participants
reflected on how the outcomes for the group were sometimes challenging to hold on to. Ann
noted, “I'm kind of going with the flow without entirely maybe...understanding how it's all
fitting in together.” Anya similarly said, “it would help me to sit in the process differently
knowing what ...is it that we're, we're working toward...maybe what we're working toward is
that we're all coming out of this with, with an actionable step...in our own work.” She articulates
here some confusion about the outcomes and then names precisely the goals of the group,
which suggests she, and perhaps others, might have benefited from a more frequent
articulation of these intended goals.

Across the interviews, participants painted a rich picture of their experiences in the CoP.
The central finding was the deep appreciation participants felt for the opportunity to engage
with colleagues around the topic of developing practice to support students in public school
contexts. Participants had opportunities to develop their practices and to learn from peers.
Members of the group ranged in age, race, length of employment at the college, area of
expertise, as well as department and program affiliation. This diverse mix was cited by many as
contributing to their growth and learning. In addition to the collegial interaction, participants
reflected on the ways in which they interacted with a range of artifacts over the course of the experience. These artifacts shared institutional data, provided examples of practice external to the institution, and captured the internal thinking of the group. Several participants noted they wished they had had more time to explore and reflect on these resources. This desire connects to another key finding, which is that the CoP is not an idealized space, but a real space reflective of the larger tensions that exist for individuals in the context of their work. Group dynamics and contextual pressures affected patterns of participation and engagement and the ways that participants conceptualized their experiences. Finally, participants had constructive ideas to deepen and extend the work. As a co-constructed space, attending to participants’ voices is a critical factor in understanding the process of what unfolded in the CoP. Participant reflections provided important insight into strengths of the process as well as opportunities to strengthen the ways faculty come together in learning spaces. In the section that follows, I explore how faculty’s perception of their role evolved over the course of the CoP as well as the ways CoP activities and interactions supported faculty in generating knowledge, developing practice, and shifting perspectives.

Outcomes Evaluation Findings

An outcomes evaluation seeks to understand changes that occur to participants over the course of an intervention (Rossi et al., 2019). This study’s design and methodology are descriptive in nature with the focus on an in-depth analysis of peoples’ lived experience (Miles et al., 2014). Participant responses may be instructive to supporting ongoing change processes at Oakes college as well as to others seeking to implement CoPs in higher education contexts. The outcomes evaluation for this study sought to understand: a) how participants’ perception of their role in developing students’ intent to teach in urban public schools changed over the course of the intervention, and b) the extent to which the intervention cultivated the
development of a CoP in which members generated knowledge, developed practice, and shifted perspectives.

Shifting Role

The first outcomes evaluation question explored the shift in participants’ perception of their role in developing students’ intent to teach in urban public schools. I drew on Biddle’s (1996) definition of role as the behaviors, identities, and expectations individuals acquire within particular contexts, examining participants’ perception of their role with students in the context of their teaching, field supervision, and other faculty responsibilities. I analyzed data from the session transcripts and notes, intersession meeting notes, interview transcripts, and pre- and post-survey. In my coding, I identified places where participants used the word role explicitly when speaking about themselves. In addition, sometimes participants spoke about their behaviors with students or their expectations of students’ career pathways in ways that implied a sense of role. Analyzing coded data, I identified the type and nature of change evident for each participant. See Table 5.5 for a summary of the findings.

Table 5.5

Change to Faculty’s Sense of Their Role in Developing Students’ Intent to Teach in Urban Public Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Type of change</th>
<th>Nature of change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Olivia</td>
<td>Stronger sense of role with students</td>
<td>Reflected that she made a “big shift” in centering public schools more in her work with students. Articulated a more affirmative view of public schools with students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>Stronger sense of role with students</td>
<td>Described her role as more explicitly helping students who want to teach in public schools feel successful in applying what they are learning to those contexts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Envisions that it is possible for faculty to help shape student intent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Shift in Sense of Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anya</td>
<td>Stronger sense of role with students and with colleagues</td>
<td>Described a stronger commitment to talking with students about public schools and disrupting negative discourse about public schools. Reflected that she has not engaged program faculty as much in these conversations and would like to do more of this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mia</td>
<td>Stronger sense of role with colleagues</td>
<td>Came to the group articulating a clear commitment to preparation for public schools. Reflected that she came to understand the ways she can influence her colleagues in supporting the development of their practice and shifts in orientation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>Small shift in sense of role with students</td>
<td>Came to the group articulating a clear commitment to preparation for public schools. Has generated ideas and deepened interest in supporting programmatic and institutional change. Reflected that she is increasingly aware of how explicit she needs to be with students in thinking about their preparation to work in public school contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eva</td>
<td>No evidence of a significant shift in role</td>
<td>Described a strong commitment to public schools but is wary of influencing intent for students who want to teach in special education or religious schools. “Everyone deserves good teachers.” Described that she is learning more about the gaps in knowledge Oakes students may have about public schools and is attending to this in her teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann</td>
<td>More confusion about her role and stronger commitment to preparation for independent schools</td>
<td>Reflected that the process left her more confused about her role. Sees the value, in particular, of students of color choosing to work in independent schools. Has become more explicit and intentional in supporting students with certification.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Major findings were that five of the seven participants articulated having a stronger perception of their role with students and/or with colleagues related to preparing students for positions in public schools, with nuanced variations across participants. One participant did not show much evidence of shift, and one participant described feeling greater confusion about her role, although it is not clear if this growing confusion was fully attributable to participation in the CoP. The degree of shift experienced by a participant was not necessarily reflective of a participant’s level of commitment to candidate preparation for urban public schools. For example, Grace and Mia entered the CoP possessing a strong sense of their role as being to prepare students for public schools and their sense of their role in this regard did not shift over the course of the intervention.

Unlike Grace and Mia, four participants reflected that their experiences in the CoP helped to cultivate a stronger role in preparing candidates to teach in public schools, although they stopped short of saying their role was to direct students into public schools. Participants shared that they felt an increased sense of their role to ensure that all students are well-prepared for public schools. The hesitation to see their role as steering students into public schools may be connected to a sense that the mission of the college is not exclusively focused on the preparation of teachers for public schools. As discussed later in this chapter, however, participants did identify a desire to reexamine this larger mission.

Several participants articulated that they developed a clearer sense over the course of the intervention that their role was to help students be well-prepared for public schools should they seek those positions or not. Anya captured this idea when she reflected in the post-intervention interview on how her responses to the survey shifted,

The first question was...do you believe that, or do you have a commitment to talking about public schools public school education in, in your coursework? And I very strongly
agreed with that now, and very quickly...Do I think it's my place to make sure everyone lines up in a public school? And while I, I don't think that...I do have a commitment to, in my coursework, to talking about what folks are going to encounter in the public school system, highlighting that, uplifting the work that's done and really training folks for that setting.

Similarly, Helen reflected that if a student of hers was working in an independent school,

I don't feel like it's my role to say, hey, like, you need to be...teaching in a public school, but I rather, I feel like where I've grown through this process is, if you ever wanted to teach in a public school, here, like I can help you bridge that gap...[I] feel more driven to help students understand or kind of translate the work they're doing at [Oakes] into a public school setting.

Although participants did not want to actively push students, they imagined that they might have a role in cultivating student commitment to public schools. Olivia reflected on a shift that she believed may set a different kind of expectation for students’ career pathways,

I've now shifted into...centering public programs within my work with my advisees and within my teaching...And I think it dispels the myth that this is just like, you can't, that system's too big, it's going to be too complicated...If I center public schools, yes, I'm not going to determine where, where they go...But in my own practice, I'm centering public schools. I am, I'm sending them a message.

In sum, participants were wary of pressuring students but did conceptualize that centering public schools in their teaching and field supervision could shift students’ attitudes and readiness.

Several participants spoke about developing a stronger sense of their role with other faculty around the issue of student commitment to public schools. Mia entered the CoP with a
clear view of her role in preparing teachers for public schools and confidence in her skills. Where she experienced a shift was in her conception of the role she could play with colleagues in strengthening student commitment to public schools. In her interview, Mia reflected,

I think that one thing I've learned about myself is that I, I need to like notice the...ways that I can make a difference...I think it's pretty easy to start having this conversation and then helping [my colleagues] unpack it and start to see it and say, “Oh, yeah, you know, so the case studies I show as samples are all in independent schools. Or maybe they're in public schools but I don't mention that, right?” And even just naming that can make a difference for students sitting in that class who're not seeing themselves in public schools, right? So, I think little things like that can make a big difference.

Similarly, Anya, during an intersession meeting, reflected on the fact that she intended to bring ideas around fostering students' urban commitment to colleagues in other spaces, noting, as a “next step I want to engage with program faculty. We have not really had these conversations in specialization meetings.” One outcome of successful CoPs can be deepened collegial engagement (Gallagher et al., 2011; Golden, 2016). Wenger (1998) also describes how individuals can serve as boundary brokers connecting the work of a CoP to other individuals or communities within an organization. Mia and Anya, whether explicitly or not, are conceptualizing their role as one of being a boundary-broker in their desire to engage in this work with others outside of the group. This type of brokering may be critical to larger institutional change.

The four students and alumni who articulated a strong commitment to urban public schools whom I interviewed for the needs assessment all spoke of negative rhetoric around the public system that they had encountered while at the college. Although there are systemic
issues in public schooling worth critique, as the needs assessment demonstrated, the tenor of these discussions can send explicit or implicit messages to students at Oakes about the value or viability of entering the public school system. New teachers who develop affirmative attitudes about urban public schools (Aragon et al., 2014; Frankenberg et al., 2010) and who are prepared explicitly for those contexts (Freedman & Appleman, 2008; Schultz et al., 2008; Ronfeldt, Reininger et al., 2013; Whipp & Geronime, 2017; Whipp, 2013) have a stronger commitment to working in urban public schools. Faculty conception of their role is critical to developing this commitment. A CoP may be an environment where faculty can explore and deepen their perspectives and their expectations for students.

Participants in the CoP, unsurprisingly, did not all experience the same shift in their perception of their roles related to the preparation of Oakes’ students for public schools. Two participants—both of whom shared a commitment to preparing teachers for public schools—spoke over the course of the intervention about their commitment to preparing students for independent school settings as well. Eva shared during Session 1, “I…am less inclined to aim to influence someone’s choice of where to work when they are interested in religious or specified special education programs.” Eva’s stance on independent schools was centered on the idea that many independent schools, such as religious and special education schools, serve students who have been under-served by the education system. Eva saw the importance of “getting more students in [public school] work.” At the same time, she was clear that her role was to prepare students for a range of school settings. By the end of the intervention, there was no evidence that her perception of her role in this work had shifted.

Ann, similarly, advocated for the importance of preparing students for independent schools, but through a racial equity lens. Ann shared how working with one of her students, a woman of color who taught in a private school, began to shift her thinking,
I think...my kind of unconscious feeling was...she may come around, and she may move into a public school setting...Partly because she's one of the few teachers of color in the school, now [I am] looking at it differently, and thinking that she's playing a really important role there too, as the, as the school is attempting to look more at issues of equity, and diversity, and racial literacy...And me...valuing that.

Ann described how her perception of her role became more complex over the course of participating in the CoP, although not all of this shift may have been attributable to her experience in the group. In the post-intervention interview, she said,

"It's also been hard for me to know what is, what of my thinking is coming out of this, and what is coming out of just sort of the natural process or continuum of being an advisor...I think maybe I've gotten a little more confused...which I think, I think is part of the process. And, yeah, I might have come in just, in terms of that question, of orienting our students towards working in public schools with an "absolutely" kind of feeling to it. And now...I still feel that way kind of ideologically, and in terms of interests, and in terms of values, and yet I also feel like there is that door into private schools that I think it's important to engage with."

Although Eva and Ann saw the importance of teacher preparation for public schools, they were less inclined to privilege this lens in their role with students.

Finally, the pre- and post-survey had two prompts about faculty role, one related to the work of course instruction and the other to field supervision (see Appendix J). I calculated descriptive statistics from survey data, but the results are limited in use given the small n and the unvalidated nature of the tool itself. Nothing in the survey findings, however, contradicted the findings from the qualitative analysis and both items about role indicated a stronger
agreement that faculty have a role in cultivating student intent to seek out teaching positions in public schools serving under-resourced communities in the post-survey than in the pre-survey.

One of the objectives of the CoP was to strengthen faculty’s perception of their role in preparing students for urban public schools (see the Logic Model and Theory of Change in Appendix D). Five of the seven participants did articulate a positive shift in orientation. It is beyond the design of this study to hypothesize about why some members experienced a shift and others did not, or even shifted in unexpected ways, although the work of a CoP is typically not linear or unidimensional (Lave & Wenger, 1990; Wenger, 1998). Shifts in a conception of role are meaningful when accompanied by changes to practice, which is another critical outcome of the intervention I explored.

**Shifts in Knowledge, Practice, and Perspectives**

The last outcomes question examined the extent to which the intervention cultivated the development of a CoP in which members generated knowledge, developed practice, and shifted perspectives. For the qualitative data, I engaged in a priori and emergent coding processes drawing on Wenger and colleagues’ (2011) conceptual framework for assessing CoP’s to generate codes for *knowledge, practice, and perspective*. In addition, I generated emergent codes from the content of participant discussions and interviews. For each construct, I analyzed data from the session transcripts and notes, intersession meeting notes, and interview transcripts. When exploring shifts in faculty practice, I also analyzed the pre- and post-survey results. Knowledge, practice, and perspective are not possible to fully disentangle. For example, knowledge, in the form of skills and information, can inform developments in practice and developments in practice can be driven by shifts in perspectives and values (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002; Guskey, 2002). It is instructive to look at each dimension on its own, but important to recognize the ways they work in concert.
**Shifts in knowledge.** One intended outcome of a CoP is the generation of knowledge capital (Wenger et al., 2011). Wenger and colleagues (2011) define knowledge capital as the resources produced or engaged with within the boundaries of the CoP experience. Wenger and colleagues operationalize knowledge capitals as: a) personal assets, b) relationships and connections, c) tangible resources, d) reputational capital, and e) learning capital, or the capital gained through experiencing a new way to learn through CoP participation. For my analysis, I focused on the first three dimensions, as this study did not assess responses to the CoP outside of the boundaries of the group and inquiry groups are not a wholly new way of learning for graduate faculty. Important to note is that the activities of a CoP can produce knowledge capital that is “not immediately realized” but that has “potential to be realized later” (Wenger et al., 2011, p. 19). See Table 5.6 for a list of definitions, codes, and emergent themes for knowledge capital.

Table 5.6

*Definitions, Codes, and Themes for Knowledge Capital*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definitions</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal assets: Skills, information, and/or confidence gained by a participant.</td>
<td>Skills Knowledge Confidence</td>
<td>Growing confidence in engaging with students. Growing confidence in engaging with colleagues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources: The development or use of artifacts and documents within the boundaries of the CoP.</td>
<td>Faculty artifacts CoP generated documents Resources</td>
<td>Engagement with notes, readings, and artifacts from colleagues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships and connections: The potential for collaboration, and/or the development of a sense of companionship with other participants.</td>
<td>Relationships Connections Collaboration</td>
<td>Opportunities for future collaboration. Deepening connections between participants.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Definitions and codes from Wenger and colleagues’ (2011) conceptual framework for assessing CoPs.*
There was some evidence for the generation of knowledge capital among participants, although less than as compared to the evidence for the development of practice, which is explored later in this chapter. Several participants shared ways they developed personal assets, in particular confidence. Participants reflected on learning from colleagues but did not speak with specificity about factual information or skills gained. Although the group engaged with a range of resources, evidence of how these resources contributed to the generation of knowledge capital was scarce. Finally, the development of prospects for future collaboration outside of the CoP was an area of knowledge capital generation that was more visible in the data.

**Personal assets.** Four of the seven participants reflected on the ways they gained confidence and a readiness to engage with students about public schools over the course of the CoP experience. In the post-intervention interview, Helen reflected on an increased confidence in helping students advocate for progressive practices in settings where this might not be the norm,

> So, I feel more confident in saying...“Many of you teach at this point in independent schools...and if you were to teach in a public school, or if you...had curriculum that was, you know [restrictive], I want you to be able to push back in certain areas and be able to understand and draw from research...that will support you in talking to your administration or your parents.” It feels like it's been a really good time for me to learn and grow in this area.

Similarly, in Session 3, Olivia shared,

> My being in this group has pushed me to be more critical about the way I talk about systems that the students are operating within...I think my first year I wasn't combating some of what was coming up in, you know, their language around how they would talk
about public services and systems. And now I feel just more of a readiness and also a
necessity to do it.

Olivia and Helen were describing ways in which participation in CoP helped them develop
personal assets that informed new ways of working with students.

Several participants also spoke about developing their confidence in and commitment
to engaging with colleagues. Mia reflected in her interview on her growing realization that she
can support larger change at the college through engaging with peers about their practice. She
shared,

I tend to get overwhelmed easily with the bigger picture of things and I think you've
noticed this because you have pointed out several times, like “oh, but you can do this,
you can do that.” And I'm, before you say it, I'm like, “I can't do anything.”...So I think
that one thing I've learned about myself is...the ways that I can make a difference.

Mia developed growing confidence that she could “make a difference” in the effort to better
prepare Oakes students for urban public schools serving under-resourced communities while
recognizing that this is a complex issue without quick solutions. The needs assessment revealed
that student and alumnae participants encountered negative rhetoric around public schools and
had difficulty understanding how to translate progressive practices to public school classrooms.
That several participants in the CoP developed greater confidence and ability to engage directly
in this work with students and colleagues speaks to the potential of a CoP to support faculty
development in this area.

Throughout sessions and interviews, several participants also spoke about the value of
information shared by colleagues, such as strategies for supporting emergent multilingual
students and knowledge about the public school system. References to explicit knowledge
sharing and concrete information emerged infrequently in the data, however. Participants also
did not reflect on the acquisition of specific skills. The fact that the focus of the group was on the development of practices rather than knowledge or skill development may help explain this finding.

**Resources.** There is evidence that some knowledge capital may have been developed through participants’ use of resources, although, as with information and skills, the data here is not robust. As a group, the CoP engaged with a range of tangible resources including, data from the needs assessment, artifacts of practice that members shared, notes from sessions that documented ideas generated by the group, and articles and websites describing strong examples of urban teacher preparation at other schools of higher education. Resources were collected and organized in a Google Drive folder and members contributed materials to the folder. These resources were referenced in session discussions and used in ongoing ways. For example, notes were sent to participants between each session to support continuity. Participants engaged with these notes with varying degrees of depth. Olivia reflected on her engagement with resources in the interview, saying, “I liked being able to go back and read those notes and...some of the, like, other examples of programs that are partnering with public schools.” Despite evidence that group members used resources to support discussions and practice shares, there was no explicit reflection from participants on the relationship between these resources and the development of their knowledge capital. Participants more frequently referenced their experiences with colleagues as contributing to their development.

**Relationships and connections.** The majority of participants reflected on knowledge capital gained through the development of relationships and connections with other CoP members. Anya, talking about an upcoming project with the NYC Department of Education (NYCDOE), shared, “Sharon was in my small group. So, you know, she said, let me know if you want to talk about how to, like get in with District [X], I can give you my experiences there.”
Similarly, Grace spoke about a connection that developed as a result of work in the CoP that she planned to cultivate outside of the group,

I’m going to meet with Anya and Rochelle, who have been working on placements, on figuring out, kind of looking at the data of where our students go and to think about, to kind of continue this thinking I was doing last year around placements.

In another example, a non-participant group member shared some of her research that was taking place in public schools and Olivia asked to connect with her about opportunities for student engagement, an example of potential realization of knowledge through future opportunities (Wenger et al., 2011). Finally, as I discussed earlier in the analysis of engagement, CoP members spoke frequently about ways to foster deeper collaboration across the Leadership and Teaching and Learning Departments. During the second half of the spring semester, a subgroup within the CoP made a formal proposal for a cross-departmental committee to meet in ongoing ways to strengthen work at the college related to public schools. As Wenger and colleagues (2011) note in their discussion of knowledge capital, connecting to and networking with colleagues can build the capacity of individuals and institutions through facilitating knowledge distribution as well as through opportunities for future collaborative knowledge generation. Within the cycle of CoP value creation, knowledge capital also serves to inform changes to practice (Wenger et al., 2011).

**Shifts in Practice.** Wenger and colleagues (2011) define changes in practice as “changes or innovations in actions, practice, tools, approaches, or organizational systems” (p. 20). The first part of this definition refers to the changes in practice that occur for individual members of a CoP and the last part of the definition refers to changes at the organizational level (Wenger et al., 2011). Using this framework, I analyzed data from sessions, interviews, and intersession meetings for evidence of idea generation around changes to faculty practices and changes to
organizational practices. Organizational practices discussed by CoP members fell into two broad
categories: programmatic practice and institutional practice. I used previously described
definitions for these categories (see also Table 5.7). As the CoP framework is broadly applicable
to any professional context, I developed emergent codes specific to the practices described by
participants for data analysis. These included changes to course goals, content, assignments,
discussions, and activities. See Table 5.7 for a list of definitions, codes, and themes related to
practice. In addition to the qualitative coding, I analyzed data from the pre- and post-survey
items related to changes in faculty practice. The assessment of this intervention did not look at
the application of new practices.

Table 5.7

Definitions, Codes, and Themes for Shifts in Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition of Coding Categories</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those that faculty have control</td>
<td>Course goals and content</td>
<td>Developing culturally, linguistically, and developmentally responsive practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over in the context of their teaching, field supervision, and other domains of work.</td>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>Centering public schools and cultivating students’ self-efficacy for teaching in public schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities and discussions with students</td>
<td>Field supervision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing student knowledge, skills, and dispositions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programmatic practices: Those that cut across courses or a students’ full program of study and that fall outside of what one individual faculty member could have sole influence over.</td>
<td>Program content/innovation</td>
<td>Strengthening public school partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fieldwork placements</td>
<td>Fieldwork placements</td>
<td>Curriculum mapping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Institutional practices: Those that fall outside of the control of graduate school faculty, including the practices of marketing and communications, the admissions office, and the career service office

Funding allocation
Systemic innovations
Practices of student services and other college offices

Strengthening structural supports for public school pathways

Major findings from the data analysis include that there was evidence that participants’ thinking about their practices evolved as well as evidence that the group developed ideas for larger programmatic and institutional change. Participants reflected on the ways that participation in the CoP helped them make content around public schools more explicit and centered in their teaching. Participants also reflected on the development of their practices related to fostering students’ self-efficacy for teaching in public schools. At the organizational level, group members generated actionable ideas for strengthening public school partnerships and proposed engaging in curriculum mapping to strengthen the threads of public school preparation across a students’ full program of study. Finally, the group generated ideas around larger systemic changes at the college to help nurture student pathways into public schools.

Changes to faculty practice. Changes to faculty practice fell into two broad themes: changes to ways faculty thought about the connection between preparing students to work in culturally, linguistically, and developmentally diverse contexts and preparation for public schools, and changes to the ways faculty centered public schools in their teaching and field supervision. Many participants reflected that supporting students in developing culturally, linguistically, and developmentally responsive practice was an existing area of commitment and/or strength. Several participants spoke of a growing appreciation for the need, however, to connect these practices more explicitly to public schools for students. The work of the CoP was structured around appreciative inquiry, and in Session 2 all participants were invited to share
what they identified as strengths of their own practice. Some examples participants shared are listed in Table 5.8. Not all participants had initially connected these kinds of practices to preparation for public schools, however. During our first one-on-one meeting, I asked Olivia what strengths of practice she might share during Session 2 and she responded, “When I think about what are my practices that support [students] for public settings, nothing comes to mind, but I will think about this. I am going to think more about what I am doing.” Similarly, after Session 1 Helen shared, “The questionnaire really made me think, how much do I talk about public schools?” Helen and Olivia had difficulty connecting their practices, initially, to preparation for public schools.

Table 5.8

*Practices Shared During Session 2*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current practices that help prepare students for public school classrooms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Using case studies of multilingual children in courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Integrating more content on culturally responsive practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Engaging students in role plays to practice communicating with families for whom English is not a dominant language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Asking students to explore their own racial identities and implicit biases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Engaging students in challenging narrow and normative views of development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By the second session, however, the majority of participants, including Olivia and Helen, reflected on how culturally, linguistically, and developmentally responsive practice could be framed for students in ways that more clearly connected these practices to public school contexts (see a list of ideas generated in Appendix I). During the post-session interview, Olivia reflected directly on how she saw preparing students to work with a diverse range of children and families as clear preparation for public school settings, saying,
I need to remind myself...[that the] work we are doing...you know, role playing, case studies, when...the racial, ethnic makeup of your children and your families are very different than your own...[will help prepare you] when you go into a public school.

Grace also reflected on how making this connection more explicit with students was showing up in her teaching,

I think a big priority for me has been emphasizing the social justice lens in my courses just across the board this year. And I feel like that does, that relates to the public school work because some of it is, like, when we're talking about social justice in my coursework and I'm giving all these examples of children and families, families of color families, from disenfranchised communities...[I am] very explicit...I think I'm noticing that with my students...that a lot of them have been talking to me more about public schools recently.

Mia echoed the importance of connecting culturally and linguistically responsive practice more directly to public schools, sharing,

One big takeaway from this is that teaching in public schools and teaching emergent bilinguals, teaching diverse groups of children...is intertwined...The conversation [about public schools]...needs to happen with the conversation about race, and the conversation about multilinguals.

These comments reflected an understanding among participants that a focus in their teaching practice on race, language, and social justice did not automatically translate to students drawing a connection to public schools but that these connections could be made more explicit for students.

During Sessions 3 and 4, participants applied these ideas in concrete ways to the development of their practice. As an example, during Session 3 Olivia presented her plans for
teaching a new course in the spring semester, and CoP members helped her think about ways to strengthen connections between content on student diversity and public school preparation.

Written notes from the group included,

- [Help students] see the ways we privilege ableism, monolingualism, etc. Attend closely to who is being presented in case studies (e.g., intersection of race, language, gender, and disability). Include a public school parent speaker who can focus on these intersections.

- Address issues of overrepresentation, racism inherent within public [special education] referral processes.

Although outside of the scope of this study, Olivia implemented many of the ideas generated by the group during the spring semester and in May shared with the CoP what came of her work with students for further discussion.

During Session 4, Eva shared an assignment for feedback. Her goal was to have the group help her think about how the assignment could be adjusted to better support teacher practice in the context of public school teaching. The feedback she got from the group focused on how the assignment could help students develop advocacy skills for children with disabilities in ways that would support their practice in public school contexts. Notes included,

- Can you apply the assessments to a case study student? Could they think about how...they might describe this child on an IEP [Individualized Education Program]? How would you communicate this with a family? Role-play the conversation w/ the families.

- What role does public funding play in the classification? How can they apply this to how they articulate some of these ideas to families?
-What does it mean to take a progressive stance on giving feedback on areas of struggle? [Have students] practice writing narrative report cards, mid-year reports that explain what the areas of need are.

As with Olivia, Eva tried some of these ideas out and circled back in May to share her work with the group.

In addition to being more explicit about linking practices aimed at supporting linguistically, racially, and developmentally diverse students to public school preparation, participants spoke of bringing more public school content into their teaching and field supervision (see Appendix I). For several participants, this was already a routine part of their practice. Others reflected on opportunities they saw to strengthen their work in this area. Participants reflected on expanding the range of resources they use, supporting students in seeking certification for public school jobs, and modifying assignments to better align them with the skills needed for teaching in public schools. Olivia reflected on changes to the resources and content she uses in her teaching, saying,

I am thinking a lot more about the models I share with students. Now more so than a year ago...For example, who are the guest speakers? Who is represented and what...what are resources that come from public schools, like, videos, guest speakers, and case studies.

In her post-intervention interview, Olivia shared, “So that’s one thing that shifted for me. I come into advisement and coursework with the, sort of, mindset of, how am I going to center our public systems? That shifted a lot.” Anya also spoke of more deliberately centering public schools, saying, “I have been more explicit about the purposes of practices and I have talked more about public schools.” Grace, in her practice share, generated ideas with the group about how to center public schools more in her field supervision work. Activities the group generated
included bringing students who are working in independent schools on field trips to public schools and inviting public school teachers to speak with students about their experiences.

In addition to bringing more public school content and experiences to students, several participants recognized the importance of decreasing barriers to public school entry for students. Both Grace and Ann reflected on how they were prioritizing certification with their students. In NYC certification, which can be a lengthy and costly endeavor, is required for teaching in public schools while it is not required for many independent schools. As Grace said, “I've been pushing the certification really hard. I had a couple students who were like, ‘I'm never going to work in a public school.’ I was like, just get certified. Just do it.” Ann spoke about specific tools and resources she had begun to use with her students to demystify the certification process and, over the course of the CoP, she shared these resources with faculty.

Other participants spoke about shifts they were making to course assignments. As an example, Helen shared one of her course assignments with the group. With feedback from participants, Helen redesigned the assignment to have a more explicit focus on preparing students to navigate a common NYC public school literacy curriculum. In her reflection during the post-intervention interview, she shared,

I found that [being in the CoP] has shifted my practice significantly...Like with this final project in [my class]...feels kind of transformative for me, because I think I always felt like I didn't know how to bridge that...I think I'm just being more explicit with my students...I used to teach and say basically, like, I want them to know these theories. I want them to know this, this content, but I didn't explicitly...like translate it into their workspace, if that makes sense. And so now I feel like I'm doing that a lot more.
Eva spoke of the ways she planned to integrate more explicit attention to the state standards, required in public schools but not in many independent schools, in a lesson planning assignment,

I do think that I probably didn't realize the extent to which my students don't know, the public school system. So, this probably illuminated for me how, the extent to which I might need to do more grounding...Like, I just realized yesterday that I had a student who doesn't know that New York uses the Next Generation Standards...and I am feeling real regret that I didn't talk to her about this in the fall on her lesson plans.

A recurring theme in the needs assessment was that Oakes student and alumnae participants lacked affirmative models of what progressive teaching and learning can look like in NYC public schools. Urban teacher education programs that embed context-specific content and skills in coursework can have a positive effect on their candidates’ urban commitment (Fitchett et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2010). It is, therefore, promising that there is evidence that participants in the CoP were able to generate actionable ideas about ways to center more explicitly public school content and practices in their teaching and field supervision.

Centering public school content and experiences contributes to candidates’ self-efficacy for teaching in public schools (Bleicher, 2011; Fitchett et al., 2012; Mentzer et al., 2019). The needs assessment brought to light that some students at Oakes do not feel confident about teaching in urban public schools. Participants in the CoP noted these findings and, from the first session, identified building students’ self-efficacy as a lens to bring to practice (see Appendix I). As Mia asked during Session 1, “What would it look like if we answered some of these doubts that the students mention?”

Several participants reflected that students already exhibit strong self-efficacy for working in challenging contexts, a reflection that is corroborated by the findings of the needs
assessment. These participants saw opportunities in their practice to help students understand how their existing resiliencies could translate to public school contexts. As Olivia noted,

I watched our students in March transition to online learning with children...It’s literally bonkers what our students did, and the creativity that they showed, and what they’re doing now with some students being virtual, some students being blended, and some students being on-ground. And I’m in there watching the work that they’re doing and I’m like, “If you can do this, you can do anything.” And I wonder about using their experience now as a way for them to gain confidence in their skills.

In a one-on-one conversation, Grace similarly reflected on the strength shown by many Oakes graduate students in the face of difficult work contexts and spoke of her intent to help students see and recognize this capacity within themselves. Grace shared her desire to “look deeper when students say, ‘I am not ready for public schools’” to better understand what students mean by this and how she could help her students cultivate a feelings of readiness.

Participants also developed thinking about how centering public schools in their teaching might help students develop greater resiliency in the face of struggles they might face in some public school contexts. During Session 2, several participants engaged in a chat about this during the discussion of the word cloud activity. Eva wrote, “The word struggle is interesting because struggle isn’t necessarily a bad thing. It makes me think about whether students might have an aversion to struggle.” Ann replied, “Yes because struggle is an important part of creating change or can be. On the other hand, there are kinds of struggle that wear people down.” This led Anya to write, “I’d like to think more about how we engage students in conversations about sustaining themselves.” Olivia reflected in the post-intervention interview on the ways discussions with her advisees in fieldwork had shifted to more clearly address some students’ lack of confidence about teaching in public schools,
I am really working on [helping students with] navigating complicated systems. I think...they understandably go towards, you know, “I have questions about this child, or this interaction with a family was really difficult.” And I really want to honor that...But then I think what are, we not getting at, around some of the anxiety about entering the public schools and it being...like a huge system that [they] can't navigate...I want to do more, sort of bringing that out into the open...I think it dispels the myth that this is just like, you can't, that system's too big, it's going to be too complicated.

As teacher self-efficacy can affect urban commitment (Eckert, 2013; Rockoff et al., 2011), this is a promising outcome of the intervention. There is evidence from the qualitative data that participation in this CoP supported group members in developing new or deepened ideas for teaching practices that could better support Oakes students’ preparation for urban public schools.

The pre- and post-survey had two prompts that focused on faculty practice, one related to the work of course instruction and the other to field supervision (see Appendix J). I calculated descriptive statistics for each item from survey data but as previously discussed the results are limited. Both items about practice indicated slightly less agreement that faculty had a range of practices to draw on that provide students with specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions for teaching in public schools serving under-resourced communities. All participants responded to the pre-survey. In the post-survey, six of the seven participants responded to one of these items and only five to the other. Given the small n, it is not possible to draw conclusions about the group as a whole from this survey as one or two additional respondents could have shifted the mean significantly. It is also important to note that the survey items asked about the application of practice, which was not assessed in the analysis of the qualitative data.
**Changes to organizational practices.** Although the majority of the work CoP members engaged in was centered on the development of faculty teaching and field supervision practices, throughout the experience ideas regarding potential changes to organizational practices emerged as well. The two areas of organizational practice included programmatic practices, such as strengthening connections to public school partners and engaging in program mapping, and institutional practices funding allocation and strengthening the work of the career services office to better support students in following a public school pathway. Many of the organizational change ideas discussed in the CoP predated the work of the group. What evolved over the CoP experience was a deepened focus on and commitment to these ideas as well as the development of concrete ideas for next steps.

The two areas for programmatic development most frequently discussed by the group were strengthening public school partnerships and engaging in curriculum mapping work (see Appendix I). Finding ways to make more robust Oakes’ partnerships with public schools was a goal the majority of participants articulated. Much of the discussion in this area was aimed at finding ways to diversify students’ field placements and making more visible to students existing public school relationships at the college. In Session 2, Anya shared work she had been doing to study her program’s placements prior to joining the CoP,

> Work [with another program] sparked a sense of urgency in thinking about [my program]. We are working to gather more data on the public schools where we place students, looking more critically at economic, racial data, data on students with IEPs. This has made me think more critically about the choices we are making regarding placements. The importance of students spending time in public school classrooms serving under-resourced communities became a recurring theme of the group. Eva reflected, “without a range of
placement it is hard to foster, or combat students’ false sense that they cannot enact progressive practice in public school.” Similarly, Grace shared, “It feels critical that we offer our students more experiences in public schools.” Ann, likewise, said, Deepening our connections with public schools, and also creating opportunities for our students, and also our faculty to visit public schools is something that’s really important...if we had a roster of [Oakes] grads...to feed our students into more consistently so that they would be in many mentoring situations... because I feel like that would make a profound difference.

During the last session of the CoP that was under study, participants decided that for the remainder of the spring semester a subgroup of the CoP would work to develop actionable programmatic ideas related to strengthening and diversifying placements that could be implemented in the upcoming academic year. As research has shown, strong field placements in urban public schools can positively affect teachers’ urban commitment (Bleicher, 2011; Gomez et al., 2009; White, 2017). Although the call to diversify placements did not originate with this group, for the first time faculty across a range of programs had an opportunity to work collaboratively to develop an action plan for change.

In addition to diversifying placements, participants also saw the value of continuing to strengthen programmatic connections to the larger NYCDOE. As Olivia reflected, I think the programmatic piece that just sticks out with me the most is like, what are we...doing around our, like, partnerships with the DOE? And, you know, is this an opportunity right now for [Oakes] to sort of build in some sort of...system with the DOE, where we have teachers who are getting on track to get their certification and are really interested in going to the public schools.
Olivia reflected here that strengthening this connection might help create a more explicit pathway into public schools for students. Anya similarly shared her interest in,

Expanding partnerships, but also digging into the partnerships we already have...and Sharon, you’re sharing this great idea about how to make those partnerships visible to our student body, maybe through the website. So, lots of directions for us to go from there.

The ideas shared by Olivia and Anya are areas for potential value realization (Wenger et al., 2011) that participants hope will better prepare students for public school teaching positions and showcase for students existing places where programs have successful partnerships with the NYC public school system.

The majority of participants also advocated for engaging in curriculum mapping processes to strengthen public school content across a full program of study and not simply in individual courses. As Mia shared,

One big takeaway from this [group] is that the teaching in public schools...has to be woven across students’ experiences in order for us to plant seeds for them to imagine themselves teaching in public schools from the very beginning, right when they enter...I feel like we can do that, if we really work towards that. So, I think that I’m excited about that possibility. I honestly didn’t think about that before.

Grace, who connected social justice work and preparation for public schools, shared,

In terms of programmatic [work]...if the students are, throughout all their coursework, getting those clear threads and lines of communication, and that social justice piece is really deeply embedded throughout as a primary [thread] not like after progressive ed...that seems important.

Finally, Eva reflected,
How do we identify some of those tensions, like test prep, standardized assessment, standards-based curriculum, box-curriculum?...Where are they embedded [in our courses]?...And maybe it’s about us talking to public school teachers [about these tensions] making a list and then mapping it into syllabi?

As studies have found, teacher education programs with an explicit mission and philosophy of urban teacher preparation woven into the program design (Eckert, 2013; Frankenberg et al., 2010) have high levels of urban commitment among their student body.

The group generated a smaller number of ideas related to institutional structures and processes that could help strengthen students’ pathways into public schools (see Appendix I). These ideas included investigating how the relationship between Oakes and NYC public schools is conceptualized and promoted from marketing to admissions, through the work of the career services and alumni offices. As Anya asked, “Is there opportunity and resources for some of this work to happen outside of coursework?...I am thinking about the trajectory pre-application time to post-graduation...opportunities maybe that could exist there.” The group also discussed stronger support for enrolled students who have a commitment to urban schools. Anya, reflecting on the isolation described by some of the alumnae and student participants in the needs assessment, shared,

We have a couple of folks that reached out asking if there was an affinity group for folks that are teaching in public schools and when that happened, it, it didn’t surprise me. But I was also like, where does, where do folks in public schools go if they’re not getting support from fellow public school educators or students with the intent to be in public schools in their conference group?

Several participants also spoke of how institutional funding strategies might support more students in choosing a public school pathway. As Olivia asked,
So, what are we doing as an institution to make sure that we’re creating sustaining programs like residency programs [which pay students for residency placements in public schools]? We are charging a lot in tuition and I think while...it is money well spent, it is a lot of money and if we think about our social justice orientation I think we sort of have to question that.

Helen and Ann both spoke of seeking funding to provide induction support to alumni who choose to enter public schools.

Although direct action on organizational change and innovation was not taken during the course of the intervention, the group generated ideas that have the potential to spread beyond the boundaries of the CoP and around which there was momentum for ongoing engagement. For example, the subgroup of the CoP that developed a proposal for a standing cross-institutional committee dedicated to strengthening a focus on preparation for public schools across the college planned to present their ideas to the Dean for implementation in the upcoming academic year. There is evidence that the CoP experience supported participants in cultivating their practice as well as concrete ideas to support larger systemic change. Using the structure of appreciative inquiry within the group may have supported this outcome as AI has been found to empower faculty to engage in innovative design processes in higher education (He & Oxendine, 2019; Priest et al., 2013).

Shifts in perspectives. The last dimension of the intervention explored in RQ 5 was the extent to which participants in the CoP shifted perspectives over the course of the experience. Wenger and colleagues (2011) refer to shifting perspectives as reframing, which they define as “reconsideration of the learning imperatives...This includes reframing strategies, goals, as well as values” (p. 21). Reframing can occur at both the individual and organizational levels (Wenger et al., 2011). To learn about shifts in perspectives among participants related to themselves as
well as their views of the institution, I analyzed data from sessions, intersession meetings, and post-intervention interviews. See Table 5.9 for the categories, codes, and themes drawn from Wenger and colleagues’ framework. The majority of shifts in perspectives for participants centered on their changing sense of role in developing students’ urban commitment. As I addressed this theme earlier, I will not revisit those ideas here. An additional finding concerning shifts in participants’ perspectives was that several participants developed a more affirmative and intentional orientation towards public schools. At the organizational level, participants articulated an interest in examining biases and assumptions faculty may hold about public schools as well as examining the larger mission of the graduate school related to teacher preparation for public schools.

Table 5.9

*Codes and Themes for Shifts in Perspective*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants’ shifts in perspectives about themselves</td>
<td>Individual goals</td>
<td>Developing a more affirmative and intentional orientation towards public schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual values</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants’ shifts in perspectives about the organization</td>
<td>Organizational goals</td>
<td>Interest in engaging faculty in a collective examination of biases and assumptions about public schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational values</td>
<td>Interest in collective examination of the mission of the graduate school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Shifts in individual perspectives.* In addition to shifts in perspectives about their role, several participants developed a more positive orientation towards public schools and/or a sense that they wanted to promote more positive feelings about public schools with their students. Olivia shared during an intersession meeting, “Public schools practices actually feel
less oppressive right now and this is shifting my perspectives.” In the post-intervention interview, Olivia shared that engaging with students about public schools was influenced by a shift in her values, saying, “I think there is sort of a there’s more of like a, like, a sort of ethical feeling for me now.” Anya, similarly, reflected on a deepening commitment to “uplifting” the work of public schools with her students. In the same vein, in the post-intervention interview, Helen shared, “I think, more than ever...I have this deep conviction...I feel like there’s so much to gain for students being in a public school.” These participants all described a type of reframing of values or priorities. Not all participants shifted in the same ways, however.

As with perspectives about faculty’s role, several participants came to the group with strong convictions already in place about developing affirmative views of public schooling with their students and one participant’s perspectives about public school preparation became more hesitant. Ann, who expressed her value for public schooling, shifted away from feeling she needed to promote this perspective with her students. This shift did not come without some internal conflict as she reflected, “I am wondering, why am I not feeling a passion or urgency that they be in public schools?” Ann’s perspective was an outlier, but given the findings of the needs assessment, her views may be representative of perspectives held by some faculty outside of the CoP. The findings of this study connect to research that has found that shifts in perspective among higher education faculty are supported when space is created to wrestle with divergent views and progress can occur even as faculty acknowledge unresolved complexities (McKinney & Capper, 2010).

**Shifts in organizational perspectives.** In addition to the potential of a CoP to shift individuals’ values or orientations, the work of a CoP can influence a larger organizational conversation about “what matters” (Wenger et al., 2011, p. 23). Starting in the first session and prompted by a reflection on the needs assessment, several participants spoke of wanting to
engage with colleagues across the graduate school in conversations about assumptions faculty may carry about NYC public schools. Holding implicit assumptions is a human condition and several participants reflected on how conversations in the CoP around assumptions shifted their thinking. Participants identified the potential value of engaging in these conversations across the larger faculty. Anya, reflecting on the next steps for the work in the post-intervention interview, said,

I was really engaged in a lot of the conversation we were having around the stereotyping and assumption making that happens...around public schools versus private and independent schools...and [how] biases that I hold then seep into my practice...and maybe talking a little bit more about that with folks.

Similarly, Olivia shared during Session 1, “I’m wondering about the importance of us as a faculty exploring our own unconscious biases related to public vs. private schooling.” Mia suggested exploring assumptions around language with faculty. She shared with the group,

I’m thinking about, you know, how do we establish what the norm is? And how is that done in implicit ways, right?...If we all break down the dominant ideologies and starting points [about language] that we treat as if they're neutral, but they're not.

Mia was making a larger point that assumptions around English language dominance among faculty can affect graduate students’ preparation to work with emergent multilingual students, which she connected explicitly to preparation for public school contexts in NYC.

A related theme around institutional change that emerged was a shared desire to examine the larger mission of the graduate school. Olivia’s reflection during the post-intervention interview summed up the tenor of this thread: “You know...I think that we as a faculty maybe need to all ask ourselves that question, ‘What are we, what are we preparing our educators for? And why, why does it matter?’” During an intersession conversation, Ann asked
similar questions, “What is [Oakes’s] reputation? Who comes to [Oakes] and why? How might we attract students with a different kind of intention?” In the whole group, Ann wondered,

When I think about [Oakes]...I've always felt that commitment to justice and equity, and inquiry into racially and linguistically and culturally diverse practices. So, it seems that there is a kind of hypocrisy if we have this overall philosophy. We have this overall, what I consider a progressive worldview and yet what we're doing in our classrooms is not steering students towards this in public education. There's kind of a disconnect, maybe.

Ann named a tension noticed by others in the group between the larger social justice mission of the college and the patterns of where students end up teaching. Participants did not have easy solutions, recognizing the reasons for these patterns are complex and diverse, but several articulated the value of prioritizing a wider engagement with colleagues around these kinds of questions. As Grace shared in the post-intervention interview,

I think it would be really fascinating to sit in a faculty meeting and look at our program and just say, like, if we were to say that our job is to prepare our students to teach in public schools...what would that mean for our program? I think that would be a really interesting question. Yeah. But sometimes I feel like that's not the starting assumption.

And so, then it doesn't always get better.

Here, Grace was calling for faculty to come together to re-examine the purposes of an Oakes education and suggesting that without engaging in these larger questions, change may be difficult.

Change processes in higher education are complex and rarely linear (McKinney & Capper, 2010; Klempin & Karp, 2018). The findings of this study connect to research that has found transformative change can occur when members of an organization co-construct a vision for change that is connected to an institution’s strengths as well as its aspirations (Bushe &
Kassam, 2005; Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; He & Oxendine, 2019). In the case of Oakes faculty, a strong commitment to social justice and critical self-reflection are strengths participants drew on as they considered opportunities for personal and institutional growth. There is evidence that participants in the CoP generated knowledge, developed practices, and shifted personal perspectives about preparation for public school as well as perspectives on institutional priorities. Of the outcomes explored by this study, there was the strongest evidence for shifts in practice and perspectives.

**Discussion**

Findings from the study have implications for both practice as well as research in teacher education. In the sections that follow I explore the ways in which study findings can inform professional learning practices in higher education. I also surface some areas of inquiry raised by the study worth further research. Finally, I describe some of the study’s limitations.

**Implications for Practice**

Findings from this study may contribute to the literature on supporting faculty learning and change processes in higher education and can bridge professional development literature to research on strengthening teacher preparation for urban public schools. I will highlight two findings here. The first is that a CoP can provide a space for higher education faculty to share and build practices together aimed at nurturing students’ urban commitment. The second is that a CoP can provide opportunities for faculty to examine their values and orientations towards urban public schools and urban teacher preparation, which may contribute to momentum for larger institutional change. The CoP framework is grounded in sociocultural and situated learning theory, which hold that collaborative experiences with peers support individuals in extending, solidifying, challenging, and contextualizing learning (Brown et al., 1989; Cobb & Bowers, 1999; Vygotsky, 1978). Across all participants in the study, the opportunity to engage
with colleagues in deep and sustained ways was cited most frequently as a critical and positive dimension of the experience. Participants reflected on how they built or strengthened connections, were exposed to a range of thinking and perspectives, received valuable feedback, and learned from colleagues’ practices as they developed their own practice and orientations.

As this study demonstrated, higher education faculty in a CoP can strengthen teaching practices aimed at better preparing candidates for urban public schools serving under-resourced communities. As intentional communities formed around common interests and questions, CoPs support individuals in developing their practice through shared inquiry (Gallagher et al., 2011; Golden, 2016; Lave & Wenger, 1990; Wenger, 1998). Over half of the participants in the study developed teaching practices to implement in the spring semester, and three returned to the group in May to report on what they had learned from trying new assignments and activities with students. As one participant shared with me in May, after the conclusion of the study, “Knowing I was going to come back to the group to share was, you know, really motivating for me. It kind of kept me focused on the changes I wanted to make.” Other participants developed plans for supporting larger programmatic and institutional changes with slightly longer time horizons for implementation. Most participants articulated a commitment to finding venues to continue the work in the upcoming academic year. Teacher education programs considering ways to strengthen candidate preparation for urban public schools might employ CoPs as spaces for faculty to share, develop, and innovate practice in this arena.

A CoP can also be a space where faculty explore their values, orientations, and perspectives regarding preparation for urban public schools, as well as the values or mission of the larger institution. Early on, participants noticed a disconnect between the social justice orientation of the college and outcomes related to urban teacher preparation. Over the course of the experience, the majority of participants developed a stronger commitment to centering
public schools in their teaching and to creating a more affirmative discourse around public
schools with their students. Although many participants did articulate that they had a role in
preparing students for public schools, most remained reluctant to say that their role was to
direct students into public schools. This may connect to larger questions that were raised about
the overall mission of the graduate school. As Olivia shared, “You know...I think that we as a
faculty maybe need to all ask ourselves that question, ‘What are we, what are we preparing our
educators for?’” Momentum was built within the group to engage with these questions
internally as well as to bring these questions to the larger faculty.

In higher education, change in mission or values can be a slow and complex process
(McKinney & Capper, 2010; Klempin & Karp, 2018). The findings from this study support other
research that has found that change processes are strengthened when faculty have a voice in
shaping priorities and needs (McKinney & Capper, 2010; Klempin & Karp, 2018). The role of
leadership in in creating spaces for faculty to come together in these ways is critical. As a
participant researcher, I recognize the ways in which my positionality as a leader and my many
years as an educator and faculty member shaped this experience. I brought my own experiences
with and commitments to urban public schools and a belief that preparation for urban public
schools is a priority social justice issue for the college, although I strove not to impose these
perspectives on the group. Given the urgency of preparing teachers for urban public schools,
creating spaces for teacher education faculty to surface and interrogate their beliefs, to wrestle
with complexities, and to collaboratively generate new thinking and practice may contribute to
prioritizing this goal across an institution. To echo Olivia, by centering public schools, I do not
pre-determine outcomes but I send a message.
**Implications for Research**

Along with implications for practice, this study has implications for further research. Three areas that I will focus on are the need for more research on what structures and interactions contribute to a successful CoP, the need for a validated tool to assess CoP outcomes, and the role that faculty and program mission can have on teacher preparation for urban public schools serving under-resourced communities. Well-designed professional learning can be a mechanism to transform practice, culture, and outcomes in educational institutions (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Learning Forward, 2011). A deeper understanding of the structures and outcomes of these experiences in higher education contexts and their potential role in strengthening urban teacher preparation would be instructive.

This intervention demonstrated that a CoP in a graduate school of education can support the development of faculty practices as well as begin to shift faculty perspectives about their role with students as well as the larger mission of the college. Further research could illuminate what structures and interactions within the CoP experience contributed to these outcomes. For example, this CoP employed an AI structure and research could shed light on how this structure, or others, might support or inhibit the kinds of activities and interactions that lead to successful CoP experiences. The role of debate, challenge, and tension as well as participant positionality on the dynamics and outcomes of a CoP would also be worthy of further exploration. Research on CoPs often focuses on positive outcomes without more deeply investigating the complexities of such spaces. A question worth investigation, for example, is whether CoPs can help groups learn to experience and move through discomfort or tension and how this might contribute to deeper learning or more lasting change. Another structural element relates to time and continuity of professional learning experiences in higher education. Many participants reflected that they wish they had had more time with the CoP group. They
also noted that pressures on their time sometimes distracted them from digging deeper into the work. Further research could investigate what degree of session frequency would strike the right balance of consistency without overload and provide insight into how to plan more cohesively for the range of professional learning experiences in which higher education faculty participate.

To better measure the outcomes of CoP participation in higher education, the field would also benefit from a validated instrument. At the time of writing, I was not aware that such an instrument existed. A survey to examine the generation of knowledge, practice, and perspectives in a CoP would allow for stronger mixed methods or quantitative studies of CoPs.

Finally, this study suggests avenues for further research on the preparation of teachers for urban public schools. Under-researched areas include the role that higher education faculty play in shaping students’ urban commitment and self-efficacy as well as how the culture and mission of a program might influence urban teacher preparation. Sociocultural and situated learning theory suggest that learning is a socially constructed activity developed and enacted through interactions within specific cultural contexts (Brown et al., 1989; Cobb & Bowers, 1999; Lave & Wenger, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978). Individuals develop not simply through the acquisition of knowledge and skills but through processes of acculturation (Brown et al., 1989; Cobb & Bowers, 1999; Lave & Wenger, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978). This study did not examine more distal effects of the intervention on Oakes students’ perspectives or career pathways. Further research on the degree to which faculty and institutional values shape students’ urban commitment as well as whether interventions aimed at shifting these values can affect the types of schools candidates seek out and their levels of retention in urban public schools serving under-resourced communities would be of value.
**Limitations**

There are several limitations to the study, including vulnerabilities in the study design, characteristics of the sample, study instruments and tools, duration of the intervention, and researcher bias. The study was originally proposed as mixed methods design with the qualitative strand dominant. Although I analyzed a small amount of quantitative data, including attendance and survey data, the quantitative results played an even smaller role in final data analysis than anticipated. This means some of the affordances of a mixed methods approach, such as robust data triangulation across methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018), were not fully realized in the context of this study.

Characteristics of the study sample also require consideration. The sample size was small, which limits the generalizability of the findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In addition, participants elected to join a CoP focused on preparation for public schools. Faculty not interested in this topic were at liberty to select another inquiry group. It is, therefore, probable that members of the CoP were predisposed to think critically and productively about their practice in this area. It may also be that members of the CoP were more likely than other faculty at the college to see a need for institutional change in this area. In addition, faculty came to the group with several years of experience participating in descriptive inquiry groups, which may not be typical of faculty in other institutions of higher education and may have affected positive outcomes related to engagement and experience.

Another limitation was the study tools. The pre- and post-survey was not validated and has only been used in this study. It, therefore, could not be used for anything other than descriptive analysis and could not be used to make inferences about the constructs under study (Shadish et al., 2002). In addition, the interview protocol (see Appendix H, Table 2) focused more heavily on some of the study constructs than others. For example, I asked participants
directly about the experiences of the CoP and shifts in practice but I did not ask about knowledge generation. A different set of interview questions likely would have yielded different data.

Additionally, the intervention was of limited length and duration. The group met for a total of only eight hours over a 5-month period. Intersession one-on-one meetings occurred three times over the course of the intervention and lasted for 15-30 minutes with each participant. Research on professional learning has found that effects are strongest when professional learning experiences occur consistently and over sustained periods (Avalos, 2011; Desimone & Garet, 2015; Jensen et al., 2016). Lasting change in practice at an institutional level can take years to achieve (Learning Forward, 2011). It is possible that effects would have been stronger had the group met with greater frequency or had the study followed participants through to the end of the academic year.

Finally, bias is always a vulnerability in research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Miles et al., 2014). Although I took steps to limit bias and strengthen trustworthiness, as described earlier in this chapter, several potential forms of bias are worth noting. As a participant researcher, it is possible that my presence had an effect on the case (Miles et al., 2014). Consciously or unconsciously, participants may have been eager to engage with each other and engage with me in ways that they perceived supported my larger goals. In addition, my relationships with participants and investment in the larger goals of this work may have shaped my approach to engagement during the intervention and data analysis processes (Miles et al., 2014). Ultimately, the story told and conclusions drawn from this study are framed by my identity and experiences. The hope is that I have been transparent enough for the results to be of value and for readers to draw their own meanings from this work.
References


(Eds.), *Handbook of professional development in education: Successful models and practices, Prek–12* (pp. 319–338). Guilford Press.


Gonser, S. (2016). This may be the best way to train teachers, but can we afford it? *Education Digest, 82*(1), 51–56. Retrieved from https://hechingerreport.org/may-best-way-train-teachers-can-afford/


doi:10.1111/ssm.12314


Retrieved from


Retrieved from

https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_clr.asp#:~:text=In%202017%E2%80%9318%2C%20about%2079,1%20percent%20of%20public%20school


development in education: Successful models and practices, PreK–12 (pp. 145–173).

Guilford Press.


## Appendix A

### Survey Respondent Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>91.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Matriculation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumnus/na</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>81.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current student</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic American/Latinx</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Asian American</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Arab, Middle Eastern</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/European American</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>69.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bi-racial/multi-racial</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current teaching setting</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent school</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>51.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public or public charter school</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Othera</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not currently a classroom teacher</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length of fieldwork URPSb</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No time</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 weeks or less</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 semester</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 or more semesters</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>34.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intention to teach next year in URPSb</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>49.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not know</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N=120.*

*a Five respondents indicated they were teaching outside of K-12 schools, for example in museums and in universities.

b URPS=Under-resourced public school.
## Appendix B

### Survey

Teacher Self Efficacy Beliefs Scale-Short Version (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>None at all</th>
<th>Very Little</th>
<th>Some Degree</th>
<th>Quite a Bit</th>
<th>A Great Deal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?
2. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in schoolwork?
3. How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?
4. How much can you do to help your students value learning?
5. To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?
6. How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?
7. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in schoolwork?
8. How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?
9. To what extent can you use a variety of assessment strategies?
10. To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?
11. How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?
12. How well can you implement alternative teaching strategies in your classroom?
Culturally Responsive Self-Efficacy Scale (Siwatu, 2011b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No confidence at all</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Completely confident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I am able to adapt instruction to meet the needs of my students.
2. I am able to identify ways that the school culture (e.g., values, norms, and practices) is different from my students’ home culture.
3. I am able to implement strategies to minimize the effects of the mismatch between my students’ home culture and the school culture.
4. I am able to assess student learning using various types of assessments.
5. I am able to obtain information about my students’ home life.
6. I am able to build a sense of trust in my students.
7. I am able to establish positive home-school relations.
8. I am able to use a variety of teaching methods.
9. I am able to develop a community of learners when my class consists of students from diverse backgrounds.
10. I am able to use my students’ cultural background to help make learning meaningful.
11. I am able to use my students’ prior knowledge to help them make sense of new information.
12. I am able to identify ways how students communicate at home may differ from the school norms.
13. I am able to obtain information about my students’ cultural background.
14. I am able to teach students about their cultures’ contributions to science.
15. I am able to greet English Language Learners with a phrase in their native language.
16. I am able to design a classroom environment using displays that reflect a variety of cultures.
17. I am able to develop a personal relationship with my students.
18. I am able to praise English Language Learners for their accomplishments using a phrase in their native language.
19. I am able to communicate with parents regarding their child’s educational progress.
20. I am able to help students to develop positive relationships with their classmates.
21. I am able to revise instructional material to include a better representation of cultural groups.
22. I am able to critically examine the curriculum to determine whether it reinforces negative cultural stereotypes.
23. I am able to design a lesson that shows how other cultural groups have made use of mathematics.
24. I am able to model classroom tasks to enhance English Language Learners’ understanding.
25. I am able to communicate with the parents of English Language Learner’s regarding their child’s achievement.
26. I am able to help students feel like important members of the classroom.
27. I am able to use examples that are familiar to students from diverse cultural backgrounds.
28. I am able to explain new concepts using examples that are taken from my students’ everyday lives.
29. I am able to obtain information regarding my students’ academic interests.
30. I am able to use the interests of my students to make learning meaningful for them.
31. I am able to teach students about their cultures’ contributions to society.
Urban Teaching Barriers Survey (Adapted from Creasey, Mays, Lee, & D’Santiago, 2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>It is not a barrier</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is a barrier large enough to prevent me from teaching in an under-resourced NYC public school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. There was a lack of coursework in my program that involved preparation for under-resourced public schools.
3. I do/did not have enough teaching experience to work in a NYC public school right after I graduate(d).
4. I do not feel prepared to work with large percentages of students who are learning English as a new language.
5. I do not feel prepared to work with parents who do not speak English well.
6. There are difficult classroom management issues to deal with in under-resourced public schools.
7. There may be a lack of mentorship in an under-resourced public school.
8. There is a lack of community in under-resourced public schools.
9. There is a lack of professional development in under-resourced public schools.
What is your gender?
__Male
__Female
__Gender non-binary or gender non-conforming
__I prefer not to answer

How would you best describe your racial/cultural identity?
__Black or African American
__Hispanic American/Latinx
__Native American, American Indian, Alaska Native, First Nation
__Asian or Asian American
__American Arab, Middle Eastern, or North African
__Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
__White/European American
__Bi-racial/multi-racial
__I prefer not to answer

Have you graduated from Oakes?
__Yes
__No

What program were/are you in while at Oakes?
________________________________________

How long did you spend doing supervised fieldwork while at Oakes teaching in an under-resourced public school or setting?
__I did not spend time while at Oakes doing supervised fieldwork in an under-resourced public school or setting
__5 weeks or less
__1-semester
__2-semesters
__More than 2-semesters

How long have you been an assistant and/or head teacher?
__0 years
__1 year
__2 years
__3 years
__More than 3 years

What is your current position?
__Head teacher
__Assistant or associate teacher
__Student teacher
__I am not currently teaching

What best describes the type of school where you are currently teaching?
__Independent general education school
__Independent special education school
__Public school serving a well-resourced community
__Public school serving an under-resourced community
__Public school serving a mixed-income community
__Other, please describe ____________________________________________
__I am not currently teaching

Do you plan to continue teaching in or seek a position in an under-resourced public school next year?
__Yes
__No
__I don’t yet know
Appendix C

Semi-Structured Interview Protocols

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Interview Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What is your sense of what your role is (or isn’t) in the development of graduate students’ sense of commitment to teaching in under-resourced public schools?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Interview Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What program are you in?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Did you do/are you doing any of your student teaching in an under-resourced public school or setting? If so, how long did you spend in this setting?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Where do you intend to teach? (Where are you looking for a teaching position?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Why are you choosing to teach in _________ (schools and communities mentioned in #3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What kind of school setting would be your ideal place to work and why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What experiences before coming to Oakes have prepared you to work with children of various racial and socioeconomic backgrounds? (Probes: friendships, elementary/high school experiences, family influences, community activities/experiences, work or volunteer experiences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. What experiences during your teacher preparation have prepared you to work with children of various racial and socioeconomic backgrounds? (Probes: specific courses, readings, instructors, field experiences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. What other experiences outside of your teacher education classes and activities but during your time in teacher preparation have prepared you to work with children of various racial and socioeconomic backgrounds? (Probes: friendships, family influences, community experiences, employment, volunteer experiences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Where do you see yourself working a year from now?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Five years from now?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. If you are comfortable answering, how would you best describe your racial identity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. If you are comfortable answering, how would you best describe your gender?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alumni Interview Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What program were you in while at Oakes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Did you do any of your student teaching in an under-resourced public school or setting? If so, how long did you spend in this setting?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How many years have you been employed as a teacher?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Where are you currently employed as a teacher?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What is the school’s location?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Why have you chosen to teach in this particular school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. What experiences, in-services, or additional education has added to your knowledge, beliefs and attitudes about teaching children of various racial and socioeconomic backgrounds? Explain in what ways these experiences have had an impact on you.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Has anything else happened to you outside of your teaching experiences that has contributed to your knowledge, beliefs, or attitudes about teaching children of various racial and socioeconomic backgrounds? (Probes: personal relationships, conversations, world events, family influences, community activities/experiences, volunteer experiences).

9. Where do you see yourself working a year from now?

10. Five years from now?

11. If you are comfortable answering, how would you best describe your racial identity?

12. If you are comfortable answering, how would you best describe your gender?

Note. The student and alumni interview questions were adapted from Whipp and Geronime's (2017) interview protocols.
## Appendix D

### Logic Model and Theory of Change

**Figure 1**

**Logic Model**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Long-Term</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Short-Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time: Regular times for the CoP to meet. Time for individuals to reflect on and develop their practices individually.</td>
<td>Participation: Four 60-90 minute on ground or online CoP sessions Oct.-Jan. with individual work before and between sessions. CoP sessions will follow a similar structure: agenda, opening question, examining resources/practices, discussion, and setting next steps.</td>
<td>4-10 full or part-time faculty from a range of programs in the Teaching &amp; Learning Dept. who teach and/or do field supervision.</td>
<td>Development of a CoP focused on strengthening practices and deepening of perspectives on preparation for public schools serving under-resourced communities.</td>
<td>Faculty report shifts in conception of their role: Stronger role in developing students’ urban intent.</td>
<td>Increased student self-efficacy for and intent to teach in urban public schools.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space: Physical or digital space to work together that will allow for sharing and exploration of a range of course and fieldwork materials. Digital space for compiling and sharing resources.</td>
<td>Pre-CoP: Sept.: Review goals; collect permissions; provide needs assessment data for review.</td>
<td>Faculty take an inquiry stance to their work and bring practices to share and reflect on with colleagues.</td>
<td>Faculty report increased number of teaching practices they can employ in teaching and field supervision to support students’ urban intent.</td>
<td>More graduates work in urban public schools.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials: Needs assessment findings Readings and findings from lit. review -Faculty materials: syllabi, assignments, readings, and other teaching materials</td>
<td>Oct. CoP: Discuss hopes, norms, &amp; current perspectives; discuss needs assessment data; plan for the next session.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-sessions: Collect artifacts/reflections on practice to bring to the group.</td>
<td>Nov. CoP: Share practices and plan for Dec.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intersession: Choose/or develop one aspect of practice to deepen in anticipation implementing in the spring semester.</td>
<td>Jan. CoP: Share practices. Reflect on work of the semester. Set goals for the spring.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-At least four faculty will choose to engage in this work. -Scheduling during division mtgs. will increase engagement. -Faculty with a range of perspectives and practices (from skilled to novice) will self-select to participate. -One semester is sufficient time for change.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Other initiatives at the college may make it challenging to determine what the effects of this intervention are as separate from other possible activities. -The ongoing effects of COVID-19 may draw on the time, energy, and resources of faculty in ways that interrupt focus on this CoP.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Theory of Change**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Components</th>
<th>Key Mechanisms</th>
<th>Proximal Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly CoP meetings (60-90 minutes), Oct.-Jan. with four to 10 faculty (who self-select); facilitation by department chair.</td>
<td>Situated learning theory suggests CoPs support the development of knowledge &amp; skills through reciprocal engagement around shared interests and practices (Lave &amp; Wenger, 1990).</td>
<td>Faculty report shifts in conception of their role: Stronger role in developing students’ urban intent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess group members’ current conception of roles and beliefs along with current strategy use.</td>
<td>Novices develop mastery through increasingly embedded and sophisticated interaction within the learning community (Lave &amp; Wenger, 1990).</td>
<td>Faculty report increased number of teaching practices they can employ in teaching and field supervision to support students’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions for teaching in public schools serving under-resourced communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review needs assessment findings and key literature.</td>
<td>CoP can help faculty generate shared goals and practices (Gallagher et al., 2011; Golden, 2016; Lave &amp; Wenger, 1990; Wenger, 1998).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator and faculty refine CoP goals and co-construct CoP deliverables.</td>
<td>Transformative paradigm supports engagement of stakeholders in the design and implementation of intervention. Outcomes strengthened when research is “done with” not “done to” (Mertens, 2013).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop, implement, and reflect on new or expanded strategies. By mid-Dec., CoP members will choose one aspect of their practice to extend or deepen (and/or develop a new strategy) to implement in their spring teaching and/or field supervision.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess change in role conception and practice.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix E

### Intervention Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Length of time and format</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Description/Session Outline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td>Short announcement in person or over Zoom followed by an email</td>
<td>Early Sept.</td>
<td>Describe intervention to all faculty at the first college division meeting and invite participation. Follow with an email to all eligible faculty.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Pre-session meeting          | 30-45 minutes in person or over Zoom | End of Sept.   | Describe the purposes and structure of the CoP work; answer questions. Collect written permissions. Administer short pre-survey. Share data from needs assessment for individual participant review. Provide focusing questions for needs assessment review grounded in appreciative inquiry principles (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987):  
  - What strengths emerge from this data?  
  - What themes do you see?  
  - Where are opportunities for growth?  
  - What are your responses to and/or wonders about this data? |
| Pre-session participant work | As needed by participants | End of Sept.-Oct. CoP meeting | Participants review needs assessment data using the focusing questions. There is not an expectation that participants produce anything formal for the first meeting.                                                                                   |
| Session 1                    | 60-90 minutes in person or over Zoom | Oct.            | Define and discover:  
  
  **Establish group norms:** What are your hopes for this group? How do we want this group to function?  
  
  **Opening questions:** What do you think are the strengths of our programs/your practice as you think about the preparation of our students for public |
schools serving under-resourced communities?

- We will also spend some time coming to some shared understandings of what we may be thinking of or mean when we use the language of “urban public school” or “public school serving and under-resourced community”

**Discussion of needs assessment data.** Engage in a group discussion using the focus questions from the pre-session. After the group has discussed the questions, ask: What are some potential implications of this data and what we have just discussed for our work together this semester?

- **Sharing practices.** Begin using principles of appreciative inquiry to surface strengths and acknowledge contextual barriers.
  - What is one practice you currently use in your teaching/field supervision that you feel helps prepare our candidates under-served public schools? What do you value in this practice? Or, if this is a growth area for you, what practices do you appreciate in colleagues or in the wider field?
  - What makes this work challenging at Oakes? In the larger field? Are there ways to reframe these challenges as possibilities?

- **Planning for next month:** Revisit the question: What are your hopes for this group? How should we further refine the larger purpose of this group? What are some processes we could use to share and develop practices? How do we want to use our next session?
Based on the discussion above, group members will decide how to prepare for the next session. For example, group members might decide to bring in some aspect of their practice (a syllabus, assignment, description of their practice with students in the field, etc.) to share with the group for discussion and feedback.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intersession participant work</th>
<th>As needed by participants</th>
<th>Oct.-Nov. CoP meeting</th>
<th>One-on-one meetings with each participant for 15 minutes to reflect on how the prior session connected to their thinking about practice, to support each participant with their own design process, and to elicit feedback to plan future sessions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Participants will collect an artifact or reflection on practice to bring to the group. The exact nature of this will depend on how the group decides to structure their work together.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Session 2                    | 60-90 minutes in person or over Zoom | Nov.                | **Dream and lay groundwork for design:**

**Opening question:** What are your hopes for our time together today?

**Sharing practices.** Depending on the size of the group we may take turns having members share some aspect of their practice or divide into smaller groups of 2 or 3 to share practice. Focusing questions for this share will be established in the prior session, but could look something like:

- What do you value in yourself/in your colleague in this work?
- What do we notice about our stories? What are the themes that are emerging?
- What would it look like if this practice could be extended or deepened?

Between sessions 3 and 4 faculty will work on developing some aspect of their practice. The idea of design will be
introduced here so faculty can begin to think about some aspect of their practice to focus on.

**Planning for next month**

Based on the discussion above, group members will decide what practices to share and how to focus the discussion of the third session. We will reflect on what work well in our first two sessions and if there are any adjustments we want to make to our processes.

In addition, based on the practices members have shared and the questions and themes that emerge, we will explore the question, “What do we need to know to move our work forward?” I will discuss with the group resources from the intervention literature review, and we will decide together on a few studies to read together that examine teacher preparation for urban public schools. Or the group may decide to look at some of the synthesis of studies I have written.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intersession participant work</th>
<th>As needed by participants</th>
<th>Nov.-Dec. CoP meeting</th>
<th>One-on-one meetings with each participant for 15 minutes to reflect on how the prior session connected to their thinking about practice, to support each participant with their own design process, and to elicit feedback to plan future sessions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 3</td>
<td>60-90 minutes in person or over Zoom</td>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td><strong>Dream and design:</strong> <strong>Opening question:</strong> What are your hopes for our time together today? <strong>Reflection on shared reading:</strong> What themes stood out for you in this reading(s)?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants will engage in some reading (see notes in section above).

Participants will continue to collect artifacts and/or reflections on practice to bring to the group.
I will give people time to reflect on themes individually and through charting, sticky notes, or pair-shares (depending on the size of the group) we will surface and organize the ideas that are generated.

What are the implications, if any, for the practices we have been discussing?

**Sharing practices.** Depending on the size of the group we may take turns having each member share some aspect of their practice or divide into smaller groups of 2 or 3 to share practice. Focusing questions for this share will be established in the prior session, but could look something like:

- What are the strengths of this work?
- What are the opportunities to deepen and extend this practice?
- Are there new ways to think about this practice (or new practices) that would strengthen our candidates’ preparation for under-served public schools?
- Did what we read provide new ways to think about these practices?

**Planning for next month.** I will ask each group member to choose one aspect of their practice to extend or deepen in anticipation of the spring semester (or to develop something new to try in their teaching or field supervision).

We will discuss together how to prepare for and use the next session.

| Intersession participant work | As needed by participants | Dec.-Jan. CoP meeting | One-on-one meetings with each participant for 15 minutes to reflect on how the prior session connected to their thinking about practice, to support each participant with their own design |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

272
process, and to elicit feedback to plan future sessions.

Each member will choose one aspect of their practice to extend or deepen (or they can develop something new) in anticipation of the spring semester. Participants will bring this work to our final session.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 4</th>
<th>60-90 minutes in person or over Zoom</th>
<th>Jan.</th>
<th><strong>Sharing plans, designs, and reflection</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opening question:</strong> What are your hopes for our time together today?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sharing practice: Plans for the spring.</strong> Depending on the size of the group we may take turns having members share or divide into smaller groups of 2 or 3. Focusing questions for this share will be established in the prior session, but could look something like:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What questions do we have to better understand what is being presented?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What are the strengths of this work?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What critical friends feedback can we provide?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What do we learn from this?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Final reflection on this phase of the work</strong> (the group will continue to meet in the spring semester, but I will not collect data on future sessions).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What have we learned from and with each other?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What was effective about this work?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What were some challenges?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What are some ongoing goals as we look ahead to the spring and to eventually sharing this work with the larger faculty?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-session activities</th>
<th>As needed by participants</th>
<th>Jan.</th>
<th><strong>Administer post-intervention survey</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conduct semi-structured interviews with participants</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F

Process and Outcomes Evaluation Matrices

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process Evaluation Questions</th>
<th>Process Evaluation Constructs</th>
<th>Data Sources</th>
<th>Data Collection Tools</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In what ways did the activities and goals of the CoP adhere to the intended plan?</td>
<td>Adherence</td>
<td>Facilitator</td>
<td>Session plans and session notes arrayed in a matrix for side-by-side comparison</td>
<td>After each CoP meeting, the facilitator compared the session plans with the session notes and record any discrepancies.</td>
<td>Qualitative analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What activities and interactions did faculty engage in as members of the CoP?</td>
<td>Engagement in CoP activities and interactions</td>
<td>Faculty CoP artifacts</td>
<td>Attendance records</td>
<td>Attendance records and audio recordings were collected for each of the CoP sessions.</td>
<td>Qualitative analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do faculty describe their experiences in the CoP?</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Semi-structured interview with each participant</td>
<td>Interviews were conducted after the last session of the CoP.</td>
<td>Qualitative analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2

**Outcomes Evaluation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Evaluation Questions</th>
<th>Outcome Evaluation Constructs</th>
<th>Data Sources</th>
<th>Data Collection Tools</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How did faculty conception of their role in developing students’ intent to teach in urban public schools change over the course of the intervention?</td>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Pre/post survey</td>
<td>Audio recordings collected for each of the CoP sessions.</td>
<td>Qualitative analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Audio recording (with permission) of each session</td>
<td>Intersession meeting notes taken at each meeting.</td>
<td>Descriptive quantitative analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Intersession meeting notes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-structured interview</td>
<td>Interviews conducted after the last session of the CoP.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In what ways did this intervention cultivate the development of a CoP in which members engaged in activities and interactions, generated knowledge, developed practice, and shifted perspectives?</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Pre/post survey</th>
<th>Audio recordings collected for each of the CoP sessions.</th>
<th>Qualitative analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Changes to practice</td>
<td>Audio recording (with permission) of each session</td>
<td>Intersession meeting notes taken at each meeting.</td>
<td>Descriptive quantitative analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Changes in perspectives</td>
<td>Intersession meeting notes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-structured interview</td>
<td>Interviews conducted after the last session of the CoP.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In what ways did faculty in the CoP change and/or develop their practices based on their experience in the CoP?</td>
<td>Changes to practice</td>
<td>Faculty Pre/post survey Audio recording (with permission) of each session Intersession meeting notes Semi-structured interview</td>
<td>Audio recordings collected for each of the CoP sessions. Intersession meeting notes taken at each meeting. Interviews conducted after the last session of the CoP.</td>
<td>Qualitative analysis Descriptive quantitative analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G

Recruitment Email

Dear all,

During this year’s division work, one of the choices will be to join a Community of Practice focused on examining the ways in which we are preparing our graduate students for knowledge, skills, and dispositions they might need to teach in public schools serving under-resourced communities.

**Connection to my dissertation**
This work is a research study and is the focus of my doctoral studies and dissertation. The title of the study is *Strengthening Teacher Preparation for Public Schools Serving Under-Resourced Communities*. In the spring of 2019, I conducted a needs assessment in which I surveyed and interviewed students and recent alumni, as well as faculty to get a fuller picture of our students’ feelings of self-efficacy for teaching in public schools, their sense of preparation, and their intent to seek out public school positions. One key finding was that although a small percentage of our students express a strong commitment to public schools, the majority of our students report feeling low-self efficacy and low intent for working in public schools serving under-resourced communities. The next phase of my study is to investigate with faculty where our practices are strong and to begin to investigate ways in which we might continue to strengthen students’ self-efficacy for teaching in a broader range of schools.

**Focus and timeline of the work**
I am inviting any interested faculty members to join a community of practice that will meet during the division inquiry group time. The specific ways we focus our work together will be co-constructed with the group. The work will offer an opportunity to share current practice, questions, and larger issues and barriers we encounter in the preparation of students for public schools in the city, as well as an opportunity to deepen and extend practice together. The majority work of the group will happen largely in the context of the division meetings, though there will be a small amount of work between sessions for folks to review data, do a few readings, and to select and reflect on practice to share with the group and to develop for future work with students. During the fall semester, I will meet individually with group members for 15 minutes between sessions as a check in and support.

**Data collection timeline and processes**
Although the group will span the fall and spring semesters, I will be collecting data only during the fall semester. Data will largely be qualitative and will include my notes as well as interviews with faculty participants. My hope would also be to audio-record our sessions together. There is a short, 5-minute survey I will ask folks to complete before we begin our work and again in January.

**Who can participate**
I welcome any interested faculty. The more diverse the range of perspectives and experiences regarding the preparation of our students for public schools that is represented in the group the better. We know that there is real tension in much of the public schooling pedagogy that we see around us as compared to the kinds of progressive approaches we are preparing our students to enact. I am interested in grappling directly with this tension and recognize this is a complex issue without easy “answers.” Please do reach out to me as you consider this option with any questions you might have, and I thank you in advance for your consideration of this work.

Best,
Val
Appendix H

Intervention Data Collection Tools

Table 1

Pre- and Post-Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither Agree nor Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. The role of course instructors includes cultivating students’ intent to seek out teaching positions in public schools serving under-resourced communities.

2. The role of fieldwork advisors includes cultivating students’ intent to seek out teaching positions in public schools serving under-resourced communities.

3. There are a range of practices that I draw on in my course instruction that provide students with specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions for teaching in public schools serving under-resourced communities.

4. There are a range of practices that I draw on in my field supervision that provide students with specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions for teaching in public schools serving under-resourced communities.
Table 2

**Semi-Structured Interview Protocol**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process Evaluation Questions/Prompts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What has it been like to participate in this community of practice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Please share positive experiences, as well as any challenges this work raised for you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What are some reflections you have on the process of sharing/constructing practices in this way with colleagues?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To what extent did you feel you had a voice in shaping the goals to the group?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What role did you see yourself playing in the group?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Which structures were effective/less effective? What else might we have done together?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes Evaluation Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. In what ways was (or wasn’t) this community of practice a space where you could share and develop your practice with colleagues? Describe any barriers that may have prevented you or others from fully participating in this space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. In what ways, if any, did your sense of your role in shaping student intent to work in public schools serving under-resourced communities shift over the course of this experience? If there were shifts, what might have contributed to this for you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. In what ways, if any, has your thinking about your practice in course instruction and/or supervised fieldwork evolved based on your experience in this community of practice? If your thinking about your practice did change, can you give some specific examples?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. What if any might the larger implications of this work be? Are there “next steps” we should consider as we work to strengthen our candidates’ preparation?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix I
Ideas Generated by the CoP

Faculty Practice

Developing students’ culturally, linguistically, and developmentally responsive practice:

- Support students with developing the stance that they are responsible for all students in their classrooms.
- Engage students with the connections between social justice, racial equity, language equity, and public education.
- Where do student concerns about classroom “management” in public schools come from? Are there racial assumptions that may underlie students’ concerns? Students need to be equipped with real skills to support children with complex behaviors—how do we talk about this at [Oakes]?
- Have students engage with case studies of practice, children, and contexts that are intersectional and represent a range of perspectives:
  - Help students attend to biases around monolingualism as normative.
  - Provide concrete models of transformative, liberatory practice located in public schools.

Centering public schools and cultivating students’ self-efficacy for teaching in public schools:

- Make more complex narratives about the differences between independent and public settings.
- As faculty, explore our attitudes around public schools. In what ways might our issues with inequities in these systems be understood as a repudiation of these systems by students, for example.
- Provide content/experiences that will help to contextualize and deepen understandings of public schools
  - History of progressivism in public education
  - Deeper understanding of how schools are funded, definitions of categories used to describe school demographics
  - Complexities of policies and laws and their impact on practice
  - Help students to become more knowledgeable about the communities in which they are teaching
  - In SFW, bring working teachers on field trips to public schools
  - Bring public school teachers/educators/leaders (and families) from a range of settings into courses and conference groups
- Support students with seeking certification, even if their immediate intention is to teach in a setting that does not require certification.
- Give students experiences outside of their contexts, particularly if their contexts are largely monolingual, independent, monocultural, etc.
  - Field trips to other settings for students in conference group
  - Observations in other contexts for courses
  - Videos/guests
  - Summer placements
- Supporting students with understanding tenure, salary differentials, etc.
  - Invite a union representative to come talk to conference groups
- Engage with assumptions some may hold that “progressive” practice is associated with independent schools
● Support students in how to take ownership of “boxed” curriculum and existing frameworks like Danielson. Help students engage with material through the lens of flexibility and possibility.
  ○ Provide student models of how teachers in more “restrictive” settings have done this kind of negotiation in their contexts. (guest speakers?)
  ○ Mock conversations about why they have chosen to change curriculum.
● Engage students with more deeply understanding standards and how to apply them to progressive teaching methods.
● Engage students in more nuanced conversations about different approaches to classroom management and organization. Help students analyze and deconstruct “behavior management” practices in the same ways they analyze other practices.
● Support students with developing skills to speak to colleagues, families, and supervisors about their instructional/curricular choices and their philosophy of education:
  ○ Engage in role plays
  ○ Help students prepare for conferences with families
  ○ Helping students to re/interpret standards to show alignment with progressive practices
● Engage students directly in the tensions that they can perceive in trying to enact “Bank Street” practices in their settings (public or independent!). How are these tensions negotiated? (E.g., the need to engage in test prep in some settings). If students don’t raise tensions, introduce them.
● Engage students with the idea of “readiness.” What do students mean when they say they are “not ready” for public school? Help them name their concerns and engage with these in constructive ways. Engage those students who are working at private schools in conversations about the possibility of working at public schools in the future.
● Support students in recognizing the ways in which they already show flexibility, resilience, can embrace struggle, and engage in problem-solving and make more explicit the ways this can support them in being successful in a wide range of environments. Cultivate students’ sense of themselves as change-makers (and an understanding of how this might develop as one becomes more seasoned).
● Support students in developing the skills of how to navigate the micropolitics/culture of schools. Who are your allies? How can relationships with a range of adults in the building support you? What are the administrative aspects of a teacher’s role and how to feel successful with these?

Organizational Practice

Programmatic ideas

Strengthening public school partnerships
● Strengthen relationships with a broader range of public schools
  ○ Deepen connections across Teaching and Learning, and Leadership Departments to help build new school partnerships
● Diversify field placements & strengthen summer placement experiences
● Consider requirements for working teachers in supervised fieldwork
  ○ Require using professional days for visits?
  ○ Consider whether there are schools we might not approve for supervised fieldwork?
● What tensions do our graduate students in public schools face in enacting “Bank Street” practices in their classrooms? How have they negotiated these tensions? What can we learn from this to strengthen programs?
● Collect more data: Where do our graduates teach? What are the demographics of those schools? Why do they choose the schools they choose?

Curriculum mapping
● Engage in program course mapping with an eye towards how we are helping students learn to negotiate tensions in practice (e.g., testing, standards, “box” curricula, teacher assessment) and giving them experiences in public school contexts over time across a program.

Institutional ideas
● Seek more funding for programs that support students who plan to work/lead in public schools:
  o Residency programs
  o Advanced standing/urban education programs
  o Leadership programs for public school leaders, etc.
● Provide better support at the college for certification (especially the edTPA certification exam).
● Create (sustain) an affinity group for Oakes students committed to public schools/connect students to existing groups
● Explore how public school is discussed at all phases of a students’ experience at the college, e.g., marketing, admissions, certification support, career counseling, etc.
  o Are we attracting “freedom fighters”? Are we attracting students who see themselves as having a commitment to public schools? If not, how might we shift this? How do we cultivate this disposition throughout a students’ trajectory?
  o How do students go about looking for a job? Are students looking for schools that will be the “perfect fit”? Or are they looking for spaces of possibility and action?
    ▪ Strengthening our ability to open up pathways to public school teaching positions for our students.

Note. These notes were primarily taken by the facilitator over the course of Sessions 1-4 and shared with the group via email and in a shared Google Folder. The notes were recorded in a shared Google Doc to which group members directly contributed ideas. This list of ideas has been re-organized to reflect the themes that emerged in the coding process.
Appendix J

Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) for Items on the Pre- and Post-Intervention Surveys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Pre-survey responses n=7</th>
<th>Post-survey responses n=6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The role of course instructors includes cultivating students’ intent to seek out teaching positions in public schools serving under-resourced communities.</td>
<td>3.7 1.2</td>
<td>4.2 0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The role of fieldwork advisors includes cultivating students’ intent to seek out teaching positions in public schools serving under-resourced communities.</td>
<td>3.9 0.8</td>
<td>4.2 0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. There are a range of practices that I draw on in my course instruction that provide students with specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions for teaching in public schools serving under-resourced communities.</td>
<td>4.4 0.2</td>
<td>4.3 0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. There are a range of practices that I draw on in my field supervision that provide students with specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions for teaching in public schools serving under-resourced communities.</td>
<td>4.0*) 1.2</td>
<td>3.5*b 2.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\*N=6. There was one NA. \*N=5. There was one non-response.