

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN FEMALE TEACHER  
GRADUATES OF HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES'  
PERCEPTIONS OF PREPAREDNESS FOR THE FIELD

by

Kimberly Jessica Bryant

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Liberty University

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand and explain the perceptions of African-American female teachers' levels of preparedness for the teaching field after attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Preparedness was generally defined as one's readiness to teach in the classroom. The main theory guiding this study was Dewey's (1938) theory of experience and education. The central question of this study was: What are the perceptions of preparedness for African-American female teacher education graduates at Historically Black Colleges and Universities? The sub-questions focused on the characteristics of Dewey's (1938) theory of experience and education, additional helpful resources, and obstacles experienced. I collected data to answer these questions using questionnaires, blogs, and interviews. I utilized pattern, theme, and content analysis and a series of bracketing, coding, and theme identification to analyze the data. In this study, the participants reported high levels of preparedness for the field. There were a variety of social and emotional components that contributed to feelings of preparedness. Continuity and interaction, constructs of Dewey's (1938) theory of experience and education, were evident in the teacher preparation experiences of the candidates. The participants perceived as helpful the intellectual resources that focused on curriculum and instruction, but could have used some additional assistance in some of the non-teaching areas of the profession. Finally, obstacles that participants faced were departmental, instructional, and individual in nature.

*Keywords:* teacher preparation, teacher readiness, African-American, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, perception, Dewey's theory of experience and education

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### **Dedication**

It is with complete honor that I dedicate this dissertation to my deceased grandparents, Mrs. Aletha Summers, Mr. Harvey Summers, and Mr. Alton Body as they would have loved the opportunity to attend college. Though circumstances did not allow them to complete college, my completion of this task shows that all things are possible and I hope it will encourage the younger generation within my family to continue to push towards the mark of whatever they desire to achieve. Additionally, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my husband Kevin Bryant, who has served as my accountability partner along the way, and to my parents, Ronald and Beverly Body who have always been my support system and encouraged me to follow my dreams. I thank you all for your love and support during this journey.

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### **List of Abbreviations**

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)

End of Grade Assessment (EOG)

End of Quarter Assessment (EOQ)

Higher Education Act (HEA)

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)

Institutional Research Board (IRB)

Predominantly White Institutions (PWI)

Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES)

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **Overview**

With education standards on the rise across the country for students, it is no surprise that teacher education programs are expected to provide proof that the students who graduate from their universities are competent and effective professionals (Dilworth, 2012). Levels of preparedness are often determined by the teachers' performance once they reach their respective classrooms after graduation. It is obvious that teacher preparation is a crucial component that assists prospective teachers with the transfer of learning in the classroom (Dilworth, 2012). However, it is unclear if the university attended, whether a Historically Black College and University (HBCU) or non-Historically Black College and University plays a role in graduates' perceptions regarding their levels of preparedness. Many HBCUs were established in the late 1800s to serve as places for teacher training (Irvine & Fenwick, 2011). Today, HBCUs make up less than 4% of America's universities (Irvine & Fenwick, 2011). They also have fewer resources for finances compared to non-HBCUs since tuition costs about 50% less (Irvine & Fenwick, 2011). However, HBCUs that are in good standing with their accrediting bodies receive annual funding allocations based on three data sets as described in Title III of the Higher Education Act (HEA) (Postsecondary National Policy Institute, 2015). Funding received under provisions of the HEA can be used to support academic and student support services, but a formula is used to calculate whether the offered amount will be substantial or limited. Specifically, the number of Pell grant recipients, the number of graduates, and the number of students who later pursue a graduate degree are taken into account to determine the amount of funding provided under this provision (Postsecondary National Policy Institute, 2015). Knowing this information raises questions about how teachers in the field perceive their teacher

preparation experiences in relation to the environment where they completed their studies. Additionally, there has been much discussion about the retention and recruitment of African-American female teachers (Farinde, Allen, & Lewis, 2016). This information is why, in this study, I will look specifically at their perspectives based on their teacher preparation experiences.

### **Background**

In the late 1800s, many HBCUs initiated sites for teacher training (Irvine & Fenwick, 2011). While they were predominant in the 1800s, today these schools comprise less than 4% of all universities in America (Irvine & Fenwick, 2011). In 2001, HBCUs in America were noted to educate at least 50% of African-American students (Perna, 2001). However, in 2011, HBCUs were observed to educate 16% of African-American students earning undergraduate degrees (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, 2011). The declining number of African-Americans educated at HBCUs may be attributed to factors such as lower endowments, fewer institutional resources, and tuitions that are 50% less than that of their non-HBCU counterparts (Irvine & Fenwick, 2011). These limited financial resources may result in the inability of HBCUs to attract the type of individuals needed to remain abreast of research-based pedagogical strategies and best practices (Cantey, Bland, Mack, & Joy-Davis, 2013; Kim & Conrad, 2006). In addition to the concerns about the lack of resources, there are also concerns about the dwindling number of African-Americans in the teaching profession altogether. In 2012, over 90% of teachers were Caucasian, and only 6% were African-American (Mawhinney, Mulero, & Perez, 2012). More recently, it has been noted that 83% of the teaching population is Caucasian, and 10% is African-American (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). The percentages of African-American teachers accounted for in these statistics verify that a shortage is developing.



There is particularly a shortage of African-American females in the teaching field, as they only account for 7.7% of America's teachers (Toldson & Lewis, 2012).

Studies have been conducted on African-American teacher retention, the preparation of African-Americans for faculty careers, and urban education after pursuing studies at HBCUs (King, 1993; Mawhinney et al., 2012; Perna, 2001). The results from these studies lead researchers to conclude that HBCUs play a valuable role in all areas mentioned. Moreover, there has been much thought given to the topic of the recruitment and retention of African-American female teachers (Chavous & Cogburn, 2007; Farinde, LeBlanc, & Otten, 2015; Farinde et al., 2016). However, there is not much research about how African-American female teacher graduates view their university's role in their preparation. Research supports that teacher preparation is a critical component that benefits pre-service teachers by providing opportunities to experience things they will one day encounter in the classroom (Dilworth, 2012). Therefore, Dewey's (1938) theory of experience and education was used to undergird this study. It suggests that teacher preparation programs should provide more opportunities for experience and more time for reflection on past experiences as part of pre-service preparation (Mawhinney et al., 2012).

Taking into consideration the unique challenges that HBCUs face and the lack of African-American female teachers, the purpose of this study was to understand and explain the perceptions of African-American female teachers' levels of preparedness for their teaching careers after attending HBCUs. The results obtained from this study may provide greater insight into the experiences that African-American female teacher graduates had at this particular type of university.

### **Situation to Self**

The philosophical assumption underlying this study is one that is ontological. Creswell (2013) stated that with this type of assumption, the researcher gains many views of the reality at hand through varying perspectives. In the proceeding chapters, I report different perspectives as themes and develop them into findings all while keeping in mind that there is a likelihood of multiple realities based on the individuals. Additionally, constructivism underlies this study as this theory implies that knowledge is constructed based on experiences. Through undergraduate teacher preparation, some participants report that they have gained knowledge of how to create meaning from their experiences and apply them in their respective classrooms.

I have assumed the role of an advocate for the participants of this study (African-American female teachers) by presenting their perspectives. It is desired that the report of the findings provides a voice for women who received an undergraduate teacher education degree from a HCBU. Consequently, I have examined and summarized the perceptions of the participants of this study. Study findings may add meaning to quantitative statistical data regarding retention, as well as help HBCUs identify both profitable and unprofitable practices.

### **Problem Statement**

African-American female teachers are underrepresented in the field of education (Larinde, Allen, & Lewis, 2016). This fact is evidenced by the statistic that African-Americans only make up from 6% to 10% of the nation's teachers (Mawhinney et al., 2012; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). Some of the African-American female teachers in the profession show evidence of family education legacies or spiritual connections to teaching (Dingus & Dixon, 2008). However, information is missing about how to retain individuals who do not have those connections. Examining the pre-service teacher's journey may fill the gap in this issue. Half the

number of African-American teachers are educated at HBCU teacher preparation programs, so it is important to study how these universities are preparing teachers for their careers (Irvine & Fenwick, 2011). Ultimately, the success of the students that the candidates teach may depend upon this information. Various studies have been conducted that focused on the perceptions of African-American students who attended predominantly White teacher education programs (Frank, 2003; Haddix, 2012; Kornfield, 2010). Additionally, studies have been conducted that focused on specific components within HBCU teacher education programs (Hobson, Harris, Buckner-Marley, & Smith, 2012; Irvine & Fenwick, 2011). However, there is a gap in the research as there are limited research studies focusing specifically on the pre-service teacher education experiences of the gender and university type found in this study. It may be helpful to hone in on HBCU teacher preparation programs as their faculty educates half the number of African-American teachers in America (Irvine & Fenwick, 2011).

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand and explain the perceptions of African-American female teachers' levels of preparedness for their teaching careers after attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Preparedness was defined as one's readiness to teach in the classroom. The central theory guiding this study was Dewey's (1938) theory of experience and education as it postulates that interaction and continuity are imperative in the learning process. Dewey's (1938) theory of experience and education relates to this study by suggesting that ample opportunities for experience through interaction and continuous reflection may alter how individuals perceive their teacher education preparation.

### **Significance of the Study**

According to John Dewey's (1938) theory of experience and education, the two components of experience and education should go hand-in-hand. These two entities should intersect and be continuous actions for optimal learning experiences (Dewey, 1938). A suggestion as such opens the door for more research on individuals' varying experiences on the quality of education to determine if experiences and education are indeed overlapping. This study, in particular, focuses on experiences and educational practices at HBCUs. Half of the number of African-American candidates who chose to go into the teaching field attended HBCUs for training (National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, 2008). Thus, greater emphasis is needed regarding the importance of identifying which experiences are beneficial in the education program and which are not as effective. However, there is a limited amount of information that addresses African-American female perceptions of their preparation for the teaching field. The findings of research focused on mentoring preferences for pre-service teachers at an HBCU revealed that student teachers rated mentors as a very important resource (Hobson et al., 2012). However, that was only one component of their experiences, and other areas of importance to pre-service teacher preparation should be explored.

The result of this study may provide meaningful information as participants shared how effective they feel in their ability to educate children as a result of their teacher preparation. Ultimately, the wider populations of students taught by female graduates of HBCU programs may be affected by the results of this study because learning is first transmitted from the professor to the pre-service candidate. Educator effectiveness is a dominant factor in student academic gain (Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997). Recent studies have shown that there has been a relationship between teacher quality and increased student

achievement in various subjects like biology and basic technology (Akinfe, Olofinniyi, & Fashiku, 2012; Oni, 2014). Noting this information in combination with Dewey's (1938) theory of experience and education suggests that if professors do not provide effective instruction and meaningful experiences, then there may be an adverse effect on the success of the students in the graduates' classrooms. Identifying the strengths and weaknesses indicated by practicing teachers who attended HBCUs may aid in structuring future pre-service experiences. This knowledge, in turn, could be used to accommodate the needs of today's students.

### **Research Questions**

The purpose of the central question of this study is to understand African-American female teachers' perceptions of preparation experiences at HBCUs. The question is:

1. What are the perceptions of preparedness for African-American female teacher education graduates at Historically Black Colleges and Universities?

The starting point for teacher attrition and the decline of African-American female teachers stems back to pre-service education experiences (Hobson et al., 2012; Mawhinney et al., 2012). Some issues that African-American teachers have credited to attrition include feelings of unpreparedness for high stakes testing and the stressors of increasing student performance (Moore, 2012). Thus, achieving teacher quality overall is the critical underlying issue. It is also legally required as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (2008) tasked teacher education programs to produce highly qualified teachers who demonstrate content knowledge within their subject matter. In addition to content knowledge acquisition, another crucial component to address within teacher quality is pedagogical preparation. Pedagogical preparation is strongly related to teacher attrition (Ingersoll, Merrill, & May, 2012). Candidates' preparation background determines the amount of pedagogical knowledge that they possess upon entering

the field (Ingersoll et al., 2012). Hence, the teaching of content knowledge and pedagogy to teacher education candidates is a responsibility of educational programs. The purpose of this question was to gain insight into perceptions of preparedness directly from the population of educators who are dwindling from the field the most, African-Americans (Madkins, 2011). Therefore, I used this question to identify and explain the factors, if any, that the African-American female teacher education graduates perceived to contribute to or affect their preparedness for the field.

The guiding questions to support the central question are as follows:

2. What characteristics of Dewey's theory of combining experience and education do African-American female teacher graduates of HBCU programs feel contributed to their preparedness?

According to Dewey's (1938) theory of experience and education, continuity and interaction are two key components of the educational process (Dewey, 1938). Continuity in the process suggests that the transfer of experiences will allow learning to continue to advance (Dewey, 1938). Learning experiences should be continuous to assist with the ease of catching on, and they should allow participation in various contexts (Dewey, 1938). The combination of education and experience allows individuals to attribute different meanings and values to the same experiences (Schmidt, 2013). Therefore, I used the findings obtained from this research question to uncover the varying components, if any, that contributed to the participants' perspectives of preparedness. Research question two related to the central research question, as the responses that were obtained were helpful in explaining the participants' perceptions of preparedness. Specifically, participants explained their experiences and how the presence or

absence of the tenets of Dewey's (1938) theory of experience and education may have altered how they perceived their preparation.

### 3. What additional resources would African-American female teacher graduates of Historically Black Colleges and Universities perceived to have been helpful?

First, it is important to take into account that there are varying meanings for the term resource. A resource can be social, materialistic, or intellectual in nature (Lampert, Boerst, & Graziani, 2011). Social resources include collaboration with other parties, materialistic resources include physical instructional tools, and intellectual resources include ideas and content knowledge (Lampert et al., 2011). The participants within this study considered resources as people, information, or materials. Historically Black Colleges and Universities' tuition rates are about 50% less than other universities and that may, in turn, limit the resources available (Gasman, 2009). In comparison to HBCUs, Predominantly White Institutions (PWI) have greater resources and superiority in the areas of faculty quality, academic support, and opportunities that are available to their students (Kim & Conrad, 2006). The resources available to the teacher candidates may influence their perceptions of their readiness to teach. While there is limited federal funding availability, the U.S. Department of Education administers a variety of programs authorized by the HEA (Hegji, 2014). Specifically, Title III of the HEA is focused on addressing some financial disparities facing HBCUs. Section 323 of this act describes the process that enables HBCUs to receive grants (Hegji, 2014). The funds are divided based on a formula among all eligible HBCUs considering the percentage of Pell grant recipients, graduates, and the number of graduates that pursue graduate studies in areas where African-Americans are typically underrepresented (Hegji, 2014). Part D of Title III of the HEA covers the capital financing program available to HBCUs that provides insurance bonds to support projects at the

universities, and may include, but are not limited to, repairs, renovations, or construction (Hegji, 2014). Through this program, the universities are advanced funds that cannot extend 1.1 billion dollars. Unfortunately, capital funding has decreased each year for HBCUs (Hegji, 2014). As a result, HBCUs cannot depend solely on these funds to provide resources for their programs.

Revenue is not as free flowing as it is in PWIs in the areas of tuition profits, and the difference is not made up in federal funding. It is a possibility that the lack of resources may have influenced the participants' perceptions of preparedness. Therefore, the rationale for the inclusion of this question was to gain specific information about additional resources that participants would have perceived to be helpful to aid in their readiness for their teaching careers.

4. What obstacles do African-American female teacher graduates of Historically Black Colleges and Universities feel they faced while in their teacher preparation program?

Noting the needs of pre-service teachers can be helpful in planning preparation practices for the future (Hobson et al., 2012). Therefore, gaining insight on the obstacles faced provides an inside account of exactly what needs revamping for the benefit of rising pre-service teacher candidates in their future careers. At PWIs, African-American female teacher education candidates indicated that they frequently experienced cultural differences and sometimes felt silenced due to their race (Kennedy, 2012; Kornfield, 2010). According to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (2011), African-American females made up 62% of HBCU enrollment in the fall of 2011. Consequently, it is unlikely that the same obstacles will surface at HBCUs, as the cultural makeup is different than what it is at PWIs. At HBCUs, African-American females are in an environment in which over half of the population is the same gender and race. The responses obtained from this research question may provide insight on the unique obstacles



present within HBCU teacher education programs that may have affected perceptions of readiness for the teaching field upon graduation.

### **Research Plan**

In this study, I utilized a qualitative inquiry method which allowed for openness of inquiry (Patton, 2015). Through open inquiry, I was able to document the phenomenon experienced by the participants. When engaging in qualitative inquiry, a researcher captures real events occurring in the real world from individuals based on their perceptions and contexts (Patton, 2015). Its use is beneficial because it aids in uncovering stories that help clarify people's experiences and perspectives (Patton, 2015). A specific type of qualitative inquiry, phenomenology, involves exploring how people interpret and perceive previous experiences consciously (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015). Edmund Husserl, a German philosopher who first conducted a phenomenological study in social sciences, studied how people described experiences through their senses (as cited in Patton, 2015). Husserl found that it was important to awaken participants' conscious awareness when describing their experiences (as cited in Patton, 2015). To do so, participants must recollect memories and reflect on experiences that have already occurred to rouse consciousness of the phenomenon (van Manen, 1990).

I utilized a transcendental phenomenological research design in this study. Transcendental phenomenology involves bracketing out one's personal experiences concerning a phenomenon and collecting data from others who have experienced the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2013). All of those involved in this study had experienced the same phenomena, which included completing their teacher education studies at an HBCU. There was not a defined setting for this study as there are HBCUs located all over the United States. Therefore, individuals could have been virtually anywhere provided they met the criteria for participation in

the study: (a) being an African-American female who graduated from a HBCU teacher education program, with (b) at least three years of teaching experience. I utilized purposive sampling which means that I chose participants based on their potential to provide rich information relating to the research questions (Schwandt, 2007). To gain at least 10 participants, I also utilized snowball sampling where others recommended individuals who met the criteria to participate.

After receiving permission to conduct research (Appendix A) from Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) (See Appendix A for IRB Approval Letter), I compiled a list of individuals who I knew met the criteria of being African-American female graduates of HBCUs with at least three years of teaching experience. I contacted the prospective participants through email using a script (See Appendix B for Recruitment Letter) to inquire about their participation in the study. The prospective participants received a letter electronically that included an introduction, purpose of the study, study procedures, information about confidentiality and voluntary participation, risks, and a place to sign if they consented to participate (See Appendix C for Consent Form). If participants agreed to participate digitally, the data collection process began with them first receiving access via email to an online questionnaire (See Appendix D for Questionnaire) that included questions about personal demographics and the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES). In this instrument, participants were asked to indicate how confident they felt in areas of teaching like student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management (See Appendix E for long form subscale questions). I contacted the creators of the TSES to request permission to use and publish the Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale (See Appendix F for Request to Use and Publish). The creators granted permission for me to use their scale within my questionnaire for this research (See Appendix G for Permission).

Following completion of the questionnaire, I emailed a link to grant each individual access to an online password-protected personal blog where they would engage in reflexive photography. Within the blog were two questions that focused on the participants' HBCU experiences. I asked the participants to select pictures of anyone or anything that they considered an asset and hindrance to them while attending their respective HBCUs. Additionally, I asked each participant to write two narratives describing the selected pictures. "Reflexive photography gives participants the opportunity to literally 'zoom in' on these symbols, and is almost guaranteed to elicit rich descriptions of the meanings attached to those symbols" (Kamper & Steyn, 2011, p. 281). Finally, upon completion of the blogs, I contacted the participants via email to schedule an approximate 30-minute interview with me in person or virtually based on location. During the interviews, I asked additional questions about the phenomenon and gave participants an opportunity to expand upon their initial responses from the blogs.

After collecting data from the questionnaire, I placed the demographical data from Part A in a table to show which HBCUs were represented in the study, their location, how many years of experience the participants had, and the timeframe in which participants graduated. Additionally, I took the responses from Part B of the questionnaire that included the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale and tallied a scale score for each subscale. I then divided the scale score by eight, as there were eight questions per subscale to obtain the mean for each area. Participants with higher subscale means indicated a higher level of perceived self-efficacy in the respective areas and greater confidence in their preparation for that area. The content within the subscales focused on efficacy in student engagement, efficacy in instructional strategies, and efficacy in classroom management. Then, I analyzed the participants' responses to each

individual question on the questionnaire as the content provided descriptive data on the specific areas that participants were or were not confident in.

Upon completion of the blogs and interviews, I printed out all of the raw data from the blogs and interview transcripts and placed them side-by-side on several bulletin boards. The act of bracketing involves looking at the commonalities within the responses and separating personal experiences from the topic at hand (Creswell, 2013). After reading all of the responses, I bracketed commonalities within the replies using pushpins of the same color to identify any common patterns and themes. Therefore, the text that represented the same ideas for the first blog post was denoted using pushpins of the same color. I created a code list for the similarities in the first blog. I followed the same process when coding the second blog responses using additional colors. I placed the additional codes on the code list. Next, I analyzed the raw data of the interviews by research question. Again, I bracketed commonalities by using pushpins of the same color to denote the similarities and placed the new codes for each research question on the running code list. Upon completion of open coding for the blogs responses and interviews, I organized the data to conduct two-tiered coding by research question. I extrapolated all of the commonalities within the text that had been bracketed and highlighted from both the blogs and interviews and typed it into a Word document. I placed each of the identified significant statements under the code that I assigned it to. Themes are developed whenever several codes are placed together to form a common idea (Creswell, 2013; Saldaña, 2009). To identify the themes and sub-themes, I looked for repeated words, phrases, and ideas within the bracketed sections. I placed together the codes that formed a common idea. I utilized rich description to describe the essence of the phenomenon using the themes found in the blogs, interviews, and the questionnaire data.

Utilizing multiple sources of data assists with increasing the credibility and evidence of a study (Creswell, 2013). The questionnaire data contained descriptive information with specifics about the perceptions of preparedness in the areas of students' engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. The blog data contained descriptions of the experiences at HBCUs that the participants found as useful and those they considered as hindrances. Finally, the interview data contained detailed information about participants' overall levels of preparedness, education, and experiences.

### **Delimitations and Limitations**

Delimitations are elements within a study that a researcher decides to include or eliminate consciously (Simon & Goes, 2013). The rationale for delimiting items within a study is to bring focus to a topic and define the boundaries (Simon & Goes, 2013). Participants of this study were delimited only to include African-American female educators with at least three years of teaching experience who graduated from HBCUs. I chose to focus on the African-American female subgroup and the HBCU university type because African-American females comprise over half of the population of students at HBCUs and HBCUs graduate over half of the African-American population who pursue teaching (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, 2011; National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, 2008). The purpose for selecting only those with three years of experience was to provide some time between the graduation from college and the actual practice of teaching. After three years of teaching, the participants likely have a more refined viewpoint of what gaps existed in their teacher education preparation programs.

A limitation of this study was the generalizability of the study due to the lack of variation of the HBCUs attended. Considering that I conducted this study in an area with many HBCUs in

close proximity, a great deal of the participants reported that they attended the same universities. Collecting data from the same universities, or from one geographic area limited the generalizability of the study to other areas.

### **Definitions**

1. *Othermother*: Refers to an African-American female educator who possesses a nurturing demeanor much like a mother, when interacting with students (Case, 1997). Her level of support and care extends beyond students' typical academic needs to their personal needs (Case, 1997).
2. *Perception*: One's belief about something (Lee et al., 2012).
3. *Resource*: A source or supply of support that can be social, materialistic, or intellectual in nature (Lampert et al., 2011).
4. *Teacher preparation programs*: Programs provided by higher education institutions to prepare future teachers to be effective in enhancing students' learning experiences and student achievement (Dilworth, 2012).
5. *Teacher readiness*: Preparedness for the teaching field in terms of personal attributes and professional practices (Haigh, Ell, & Mackisack, 2013).

### **Summary**

In this chapter I provided a discussion of the need to understand and explain the perceptions of African-American female teachers' levels of preparedness for their careers after attending HCBUs. I selected transcendental phenomenology as my qualitative inquiry method as this research design is effective to capture the true essence of lived experiences for participants (Creswell, 2013). This study is significant to students all around the world who may be educated by teachers who attend HBCU teacher education programs. Student achievement is on the line

as preparation is the key for the individuals who will provide them with the information they need to graduate successfully from high school. I explained my expectation upon completion of this study, which was to present the voices of African-American female teachers who are diminishing from the profession more and more each year. There were minimal delimitations to the study, which included gender, race, university type, and years of experience of the participants as this study targeted specific populations. Finally, I provided the definitions of terms frequently referred to throughout the study within this chapter as well.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Overview**

Chapter Two contains the theoretical framework underlying this study, related literature, and a summary. This review of literature contains a summary of information that relates to HCBUs, African-American females, and teacher education program components. HCBUs have served as institutions of preparation for quite some time for African-American students. They have a unique story about how they came into existence in the early 1800s. Since their creation, these universities have graduated about half of the population of public education employees who are African-American (National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, 2008). Their commitment to educating African-Americans, affordability, and cultural relevance are the highlights and positive attributes of attending HCBUs (Allen, Jewell, Griffin, & Wolf, 2007; Gasman & Commodore, 2014; Kim & Conrad, 2006). However, as with all universities, there are also many challenges. Due to dwindling financial resources and accreditation demands, the retention and graduation rates fluctuate (Gasman & Commodore, 2014). Adequate finances and credibility are things that students look for prior to attending universities (Irvine & Fenwick, 2011). The lack of credibility and funding may cause students to decide to obtain their degrees elsewhere. The literature addresses methods that could possibly assist HCBUs in overcoming these challenges.

The quality of teacher education programs can also play a role in how educators perceive their preparedness to teach (Evans & Leonard, 2013). The main theoretical premise that this study is based on is Dewey's (1938) theory of experience and education that suggests that intentional and variable experiences can enhance education. The experiences that pre-service teachers encounter can be beneficial as they call for constant reflection (Lupinski, Jenkins,



Beard, & Jones, 2012). Teacher education pedagogies and experiential learning experiences such as field experiences, practicums, or student teaching prepare students and aids in their transition from the role of student to teacher (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007). Through experiential learning, knowledge is transferred from the past to the present (Roberts, 2003). Additionally, the critical race theory in education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) is also an underlying theory as this study focuses on the efforts of marginalized individuals. African-American females make up over half of the population of students at HBCUs, which is why this review focuses on literature closely related to this subgroup and university type (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, 2011). Currently, America is experiencing a shortage of African-American female teachers in the education sector (Madkins, 2011). Chapter Two contains information about HBCUs, as well as some of the possible reasons why there is a shortage in the African-American teacher population (Madkins, 2011).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Many educators graduating from teacher education programs express their thoughts about learning theories for the field and engaging in actual practice. Too often, it is revealed that pre-service teachers value their practicum and student teaching experiences while merely tolerating their academic experiences (Shulman, 1998). There could be different perspectives about learning academic content if students were allowed to couple their education with their experiences. John Dewey's (1938) theory of experience and education, as well as experiential learning, are ideas about how experiences may be incorporated into one's learning process. Due to the incorporation of race and gender into this study, components of the critical race theory in education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) are also evident. These components include challenging dominant social assumptions and engaging in counter-storytelling which involves

listening to the voice of marginalized individuals (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001).

### **Dewey's Theory of Experience and Education**

John Dewey (1938), an educational theorist, reflected on how learning occurred by observing both traditional and progressive practices. He noted that conventional methods involved the simple memorization of subjects in which students exhibited no interest (Dewey, 1938). He referred to this type of learning as collateral learning and expressed that it was an ineffective strategy. However, many teachers employed this method within their classrooms. Dewey reflected on how the traditional practices did not apply principles for a philosophy of experience. However, he felt that the quality of learning would depend upon the quality of the experiences that students had (Dewey, 1938). After observation and continued reflection on the matter, Dewey went forward with his ideas and proposed a theory that involved utilizing one's surroundings and experiences to engage learners in their educational experiences. Dewey's theory of experience and education suggested that there should be an intimate and necessary relationship between students' actual experiences and education (Dewey, 1938).

Two critical constructs evident in Dewey's (1938) theory of experience and education are continuity and interaction. The principle of continuity suggests that experiences carried over from the past to the future will allow learning to advance (Dewey, 1938). Since each experience shapes future experiences, it is imperative to ensure that they are cumulative. Organizing events as such allow individuals to create meaning from the experience as the principle of continuity suggests (Schmidt, 2013). The principle of interaction suggests that there should be participation in experiences within both educational and social contexts (Dewey, 1938). The construct of interaction involves using the environment that is naturally present to effectively contribute to the content that students are learning.

Schmidt (2013) suggested that when individuals interact within the actual physical and social settings desired, they create meaning from that experience. Valuable insight gained through experiential learning experiences can later be applied to future experiences. The benefit of combining the principles of continuity and interaction is that it can allow students to take away different meanings and attribute different values to the same educational experiences (Schmidt, 2013).

### **Experiential Learning**

Individuals obtain knowledge through experiences from the past and the present. Consequently, information or happenings from the past can be helpful when teaching things within the present (Roberts, 2003). It is best to teach content when presented in context with experiences rather than in a stand-alone format. Incorporation of real-life situations and everyday occurrences can be of great benefit when presenting content because knowledge gained from the experience will still be accessible much after the fact (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Roberts, 2003). Teachers have more of a facilitator role in the experiential learning process. The facilitator is responsible for thinking about how a learning environment, learner's needs, and actual experiences will intersect to get desired results. Consequently, it is important to create an environment that is conducive for learning (Roberts, 2003). Additionally, there must be a solid understanding of the needs of learners. Therefore, the experiences should be mostly within the ability level of the students and connect to prior experiences (Roberts, 2003). Experience itself is beneficial because it is through experience that theories are verified. Through experience learners can examine, test, and integrate ideas that could later turn into knowledge (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). However, all experiences are not beneficial and educative (Roberts, 2003). Some can distort future learning, so it is critical to plan efficiently. Again, real world experiences allow for

a seamless transfer of learning and the knowledge will be accessible whether it is beneficial or not. Brief opportunities for reflection are also imperative as they allow students the opportunity to make connections and take knowledge away from the experience (Roberts, 2003).

### **Critical Race Theory**

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a broad framework used by many in the field of education to understand the nature of race and racism (Brown, 2014; Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). The overall goal of its use is to determine the role that race plays in everyday educational experiences. CRT has several themes, which include the recognition of the centrality of race, racism, and experiential knowledge; the challenge towards dominant social assumptions; and the commitment to social justice (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). Some tenets of CRT involve ideas that individuals in the marginalized population may consider bleak. For example, one tenet is the recognition of Whiteness as a property norm, which means that individuals who are not of color are granted certain privileges due to their race (Brown, 2014; Cooper & Hawkins, 2014). Another tenet involves the nature of interest convergence, which means that the progress of marginalized individuals is only tolerated to the degree that it is of benefit to the dominant group (Brown, 2014; Cooper & Hawkins, 2014; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

A CRT framework in teacher education should be used to examine the impact that race has on structure, process, and discourse within programs (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). In this study I examined the impact that race and gender have on African-American females by utilizing the strategy of counter-storytelling, which involved listening to the voices of marginalized individuals of color and gaining knowledge about racial progress. The information obtained

provided insight on the impact of institutional and structural components unique to those at HBCUs that may have influenced their levels of preparedness for the field.

### **Related Literature**

The content contained in the following section includes details about how HBCUs came into existence as well as their highlights and challenges. Furthermore, I highlight information about the shortage of African-American educators, African-American attendance at HBCUs and non-HBCUs, general teacher education program components, and graduates' overall perceptions of preparedness upon entering the field.

### **Origin, Highlights, and Challenges of Historically Black Colleges and Universities**

After the Civil War, the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment freed all African-Americans from slavery (U.S. Const. amend. XIII). Prior to being emancipated, slaves were forbidden to learn how to read and write (Allen et al., 2007). Therefore, it was no surprise that many African-Americans desired to pursue opportunities to obtain the education that was once withheld from them. The establishment of the first known HCBUs occurred around 1837. These universities served as places for newly freed slaves to pursue educational opportunities and for teachers to receive training (Irvine & Fenwick, 2011). Congress identified HBCUs as higher learning institutions whose principal mission was to educate African-Americans in Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (Postsecondary National Policy Institute, 2015). Soon African-Americans began establishing schools to educate freed African-Americans (Irvine & Fenwick, 2011). Many HBCUs were founded in North Carolina, Alabama, and Georgia. After the Civil War, the need for institutions accepting of African-American students was greater in these areas. Prominent African-Americans like Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois took the lead on the educational efforts of enhancing African-Americans' education (Allen et al., 2007). In the early

1800s, HBCUs focused their curriculum in the areas of social skills, trades, and religion (Allen et al., 2007). Eventually, the curriculum began to expand into two distinct directions, which included either vocational development or liberal arts. Booker T. Washington was a supporter of the vocational curriculum, which encouraged the teaching of practical skills and trades. He felt that in turn it would increase the morality of African-American workers and help them earn capital to become self-sufficient (Allen, et al., 2007). On the other hand, W. E. B. Du Bois did not believe in the restriction of African-American students to a vocational curriculum. He felt that access to a liberal arts curriculum would allow African-Americans the opportunity to obtain an education that was comparable to that of Caucasians (Allen, et al., 2007). His idea of a well-rounded education incorporated courses that focused on various areas such sociology, literature, and philosophy (Cantey et al., 2013). Instructors taught courses that covered the humanistic experiences of African-Americans in America. The introduction of these classes paved the way for what is now known as the African-American history and literature classes that many HBCUs offer to provide a culturally relevant curriculum (Cantey et al., 2013; Williams, Ashley, & Rhea, 2004).

Regardless of educational path chosen, whether liberal or vocational, HBCUs began to expand. A public land grant called the Second Morrill Act of 1890 was conducive to the growth as it provided more space to accommodate students (Allen et al., 2007). HBCUs had open admission policies that welcomed individuals of all nationalities. Additionally, they were some of the first universities who openly accepted and admitted women applicants (Allen et al., 2007). Therefore, there was an influx of enrollment until 1954, which was the year the Supreme Court acted on *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). The implementation of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) made racial segregation unlawful and required the public school sector to

integrate. Changes occurred in the enrollment of HBCUs as African-Americans had additional options on where to attend college due to the newly passed legislation. By 1975 around 75% of African-American students were educated at universities that were not HBCUs (Allen et al., 2007). HBCUs also became diversified. In 2011, non-African-American students comprised 19% of student enrollment at HBCUs (Postsecondary National Policy Institute, 2015).

Desegregation marked the beginning of the shortage of African-American teachers as the numbers began to decline (Madkins, 2011). Before desegregation, many African-Americans served as teachers for their communities. Some African-American female teachers had strong family and cultural influences (Dingus & Dixon, 2008). Those hailing from a generation of teachers upheld their familial influences even more in the profession. They sometimes viewed teaching as the continuance of a legacy started by their “othermothers”, a nurturing art, or a service to the community (Dingus & Dixon, 2008). In the past, many saw teaching as a great profession and were drawn to it. It was a distinguished and secure career. Many African-American women viewed teaching as a public service and felt that it was their role to advocate for African-American students (Dixon, 2003). They too served as othermothers and gained the trust of their students mainly because students felt they were truly cared for (Dixon, 2003). However, integration led to the transportation of African-Americans to schools that were predominantly Caucasian which led to job cuts for African-American teachers (Madkins, 2011). The integration of public schools marked the beginning of the African-American teacher shortage (Madkins, 2011).

Another issue that contributes to the African-American teacher shortage is the lack of adequate educational opportunities due to budget shortcomings (Madkins, 2011). Many states cut funding in K-12 education and higher education as a result of the 2007-09 recession

(Leachman, Albares, Materson, & Wallace, 2016). The lack of funding that is still evident today creates gaps that affect the quality of education that can be provided (Leachman et al., 2016). As a result, many students leave high schools underprepared for higher education resulting in long-term effects on students' later performance in college (Postsecondary National Policy Institute, 2015). The quality of education provided by teacher education programs affects teacher education candidates in the area of standardized testing. Passing scores on standardized tests are typically required to gain admission into teacher preparation programs. The requirement of satisfactory scores has many disadvantages as African-American teacher candidates exhibit low passing rates in comparison to other subgroups (Madkins, 2011). With the financial disparities going on in education, other fields look more promising for African-Americans. Other professionals seem to be more respected and hold higher levels of prestige than teachers (Madkins, 2011). Additionally, other fields offer more opportunities for advancement and seem to be more financially rewarding with higher salaries which explains furthermore, why there is an African-American teacher shortage (Madkins, 2011).

Increasing the importance of African-American teachers within the school system is the fact that these teachers play nurturing roles as “othermothers” or role models to their students. Students need role models, and they need to see that diverse educators do exist (Irvine & Fenwick, 2011). Access to diverse educators is likely to give students hope for tomorrow regarding the pursuit of higher education. However, the number of African-American teachers is constantly dwindling in the United States. Approximately 12 years ago, African-American teachers made up about 8% of the teaching population (Litaker, Washington, Johns, Jackson, & Johnson, 2013). In 2011, African-American teachers made up 6.8% of the teaching population in America (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2011). More recently, in 2015,



there was a slight increase to 10% (U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics, 2015). Over this time span, there was little to no growth in the number of African-American teachers working within the public school system. The numbers that were already low appeared to be on a constant decline. Data from 2008 showed that the percentage of African-Americans obtaining a degree in the field of education at the bachelor's level was 4.3%, 27% at master's level, and 3.6% at the doctorate level (NCES, 2011). The small percentage of graduates may explain why there is a lack of African-American teachers within the education field. The positive upkeep and influence of HBCUs are critical considering that HBCUs graduate 50% of the African-Americans who pursue the education field (National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, 2008). Moreover, with 62% of the population being female, it would be sensible to put forward a solid effort in recruiting and retaining African-American female teachers as they are currently the minority (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, 2011).

Currently, there are more than 100 HBCUs that make up about 3% of all American colleges and universities level across the nation (NCES, 2011). Collectively, HBCUs enroll over 300,000 students (Postsecondary National Policy Institute, 2015). To this day, these universities still play a valuable role in educating and producing educators. Immediately following desegregation, some Caucasian teachers refused to teach African-American students, so as a result, many individuals went to HBCUs founded specifically to train African-American teachers, which would in turn accommodate the needs of their communities (Allen et al., 2007; Cantey et al., 2013). Currently, Schools of Education within HBCUs produce a massive 50% of the African-American teachers who work in public education (National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, 2008). Most of the schools pursue national accreditation, which shows that they are working towards ensuring that the program is developmentally sound

in the areas of pedagogy and content knowledge. In general, HBCUs graduate approximately 16% of African-Americans who earn undergraduate degrees (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, 2011).

HBCUs have been known to help disadvantaged students make strides towards obtaining higher education because these universities are known for their affordability. Affordability is one of the key decision-making factors that many African-Americans take into account prior to attending (Gasman & Commodore, 2014). More than 70% of the students attending HBCUs are awarded Pell Grants as a federal form of financial aid (Postsecondary National Policy Institute, 2015). Federal financial aid is beneficial because college tuition prices are steadily rising across the nation. However, many HBCUs have the autonomy to set their tuition rates, which may be advantageous for the students attending. The downfall is that some people seem to associate the low price with a low quality of education. Kim (2011) challenged this negative connotation with research that suggested that students felt that HBCUs performed similarly to their other university counterparts. Furthermore, Kim (2011) indicated that following HBCU attendance, African-American students perceived self-growth in the areas of graduate school preparation and career-readiness.

Many HBCUs signify in their mission statements their commitment to instilling morals and values within the student body (Gasman & Commodore, 2014). Many universities reinforce their values by requiring students to complete a specific number of service hours within the community (Gasman & McMickens, 2010). Service learning is another component sometimes added to pre-service teacher education programs. The act of service learning is used as a teaching strategy to infuse the idea of social justice and to expose future teachers to the expectations of educators within the community (Coffey, 2010). Coffey (2010) found that pre-

service educators who participated in service-learning projects indicated that they were more knowledgeable of how to interact with students in varying contexts outside of school.

Participation in service learning projects and exposure to diverse learning communities was beneficial, as the opportunity exposed the participants to what they would likely experience in their very own classrooms (Coffey, 2010). Acts of service learning and community engagement are unique components that set HBCUs apart from other universities (Gasman & Commodore, 2014). Another component unique to HBCUs is the Afrocentric focus that the universities display in teaching and learning that relates to African-American culture and history (Gasman & Commodore, 2014). Research has proven that African-American students feel empowered when they are provided opportunities to embrace and learn about their culture and history (Gasman & Commodore, 2014; Gasman, Gerstl-Pepin, Anderson-Thompkins, Rasheed, & Hathaway, 2004).

Though HBCUs have strengths or positive attributes, there are also some challenges that they face on a daily basis. The retention and graduation rates at HBCUs are not extremely high. Graduation rates are determined by tracking the students that enter and complete their degree within six years of their start date at their institution. The rates of graduation among HBCUs fall 21 points behind those at PWIs (Postsecondary National Policy Institute, 2015). It is important to note the many differences in the student population at HBCUs. These universities mostly enroll first-generation students. Research has shown that socioeconomic status and academic preparedness are key indicators of the likelihood of students' attendance for more than one year in college (Postsecondary National Policy Institute, 2015).

The lack of financial resources is another challenge that HBCUs are working to overcome. Many HBCUs are dependent upon the availability of federal funds. Over the years, the federal government has contributed millions of dollars to these universities (Allen et al.,

2007). In 1986, the enactment of Title III of the Higher Education Act provided \$170 million dollars to HBCUs to utilize in the areas of infrastructure and academics (Allen et al., 2007). These funds were authorized for use between 1987 and 1993. Considering that the funding was to be used over a seven-year span and split between over 100 HBCUs all with differing needs, the budget was likely tight. Later, the Clinton administration increased the funding of the Title III enactment to \$215 million between the years of 1992 and 1995 for HBCUs (Allen et al., 2007). More recently, in 2010 the Obama administration pledged to invest at least \$850 million in HBCUs over the next decade (Cantey et al., 2013). However, there have been several budget cuts and deficits within the federal government and as a result, HBCUs experience unique financial challenges as they highly depend upon the funding (Allen et al., 2007; Cantey et al., 2013). Furthermore, federal financial aid such as Pell Grants, federal work-study, and loans are all contingent upon the appropriations set within the annual department of education budget and the financial state of the economy (Evans, Evans, & Evans, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2015). The uncertainty from year to year about the availability of these funds likely presents financial disparities for HBCUs.

The low tuition rates set by many public HBCUs may be seen as helpful as it makes college affordable for those who may not have been able to attend otherwise (Gasman & Commodore, 2014). However, it too may be seen as a disadvantage as there are limited funds available to support growth of the university overall. Brown and Burnette (2014) indicated that over a nine-year research span, PWIs had statistically higher capital spending patterns than HBCUs for six years. The differences are alarming because the use of capital funds can be used to upgrade equipment, facilities, and support education efforts (Brown & Burnette, 2014).

However, when funding is not offered, students realize the challenges and disadvantages of attending HBCUs.

Some HBCUs began receiving accreditation as early as the 1920s (Cantey et al., 2013). Obtaining accreditation is a voluntary process that demonstrates that university programs have met standards of educational quality. It indicates that universities are working towards sustaining a culture of excellence and credibility (Cantey et al., 2013). The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2015) began granting accreditation to universities in 1954. HBCUs have struggled with gaining and maintaining accreditation which is not conducive to attracting students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as they will likely choose programs that have this distinction. The pressing issue is that the accreditation process requires constant reflection and action within individual programs (Lupinski et al., 2012). There must be a substantial amount of attention given to detail so that the programs can maintain their accreditation and elite status. “The new professional teacher graduating from a NCATE accredited institution is able to handle the demands of a classroom on day one- not through on the job training” (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE], 2015). A statement as such would lead one to think that students graduating from HBCU schools of education with NCATE accreditation would exhibit more teacher readiness than those who did not. However, there is no literature or research that proves this point. Nevertheless, accreditation increases the standards for HBCUs, and when it is not present, it likely decreases the number of students who enroll in the program (Cantey et al., 2013).

To address the issue of retaining and recruiting students, HBCUs must tackle the accreditation concerns. One way to do address these concerns is to recruit qualified Ph.D. level faculty (Cantey et al., 2013). Hopefully, increasing the number of skilled professionals can play

a role in assisting with the creation of academic environments that promote challenging and productive programs. Since qualified personnel typically require competitive salaries, the enhancement comes with a price (Cantey et al., 2013). A suggestion is to implement a funding strategic plan that involves key stakeholders like the alumni, community members, and other constituents. Relationships between leaders at universities and public officials are encouraged, as they may likely be future funders of the organizations (Cantey et al., 2013). Networking for endowments and additional funding is imperative for the growth of HBCUs (Cantey et al., 2013). To overcome the challenges facing HBCUs, those in leadership at the universities must be responsive to the changing culture of education. They must be effective planners and thoroughly understand the academic enterprise, which will entail accreditation, financial sustainability, and advancement of their respective universities (Cantey et al., 2013).

### **African-American Attendance at HBCUs and Non-HBCUs**

Data trends show an increase in African-American women's attainment of higher education. Their efforts exceed those of any other women in the remaining racial groups since the 1970s (Chavous & Cogburn, 2007). Even given this data, there are still limited studies on the educational experiences of African-American women. Chavous and Cogburn (2007) suggested that African-American women's efforts are ignored in education and literature in spite of and because of their level of educational accomplishments.

Black girls and women arguably occupy a paradoxical position in the domain of education. Specifically, they may be considered "at risk" because of their history and continued experiences of economic and social oppression in the United States, and at the same time they can be viewed as resilient, given their educational achievement and attainment in the context of the risk. (Chavous & Cogburn, 2007, p. 24)

Recent research uncovered that African-American males struggled with finding African-American male role models within their teacher education programs (Scott & Rodriguez, 2014). Due to disheartening research as such, many choose to research African-American males due to their academic disparities in comparison to African-American females. The literature in which African-American females are included frequently contains both positive and negative misrepresentations. African-American women have long fought for educational equality. From the end of the Civil War until now, many African-American women have persevered in obtaining a higher educational level. In 1921, Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander, Georgiana Simpson, and Eva Beatrice Dykes were the first three African-American women to earn doctoral degrees (Howard-Baptiste & Harris, 2014). Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander graduated from the University of Pennsylvania. She frequently recounted episodes of hostility during her studies that made her feel that she did not belong at an ivy-league institution. Even after obtaining her terminal degree, she felt she had difficulty settling into her career due to her race and sex (Howard-Baptiste & Harris, 2014). Georgiana Simpson experienced similar issues. She graduated from the University of Chicago and obtained a position relevant to her degree after about a decade of receiving it. She was eventually appointed as a professor at Howard University (Howard-Baptiste & Harris, 2014). Eva Beatrice Dykes obtained a Ph.D. in English Literature at Radcliffe University. She served as the chair of the English department at Oakwood College, a historically Black Seventh-day Adventist institution. Though she received an advancement opportunity of being a chairperson, an opportunity not afforded to other women, she still experienced discrimination when denied opportunities for additional promotions due to being a woman (Howard-Baptiste & Harris, 2014). These stories express the feelings of oppression and exclusion that these women had to endure, but their drive to continue shows the

academic resilience often exhibited by African-American women in the higher education sector today.

Many decades later, African-American women are still experiencing transgressions within the field of higher education. Some express resistance from students and colleagues, unfair financial compensation, and consistent differences made due to race and sex (Howard-Baptiste & Harris, 2014). Regardless of these feelings of racism, sexism, and marginalization, many African-American women still continue to pursue works in the field. In 2011, African-American women accounted for 6.31% of the estimated women who earned doctorate degrees in the United States (National Science Foundation, 2011). The substantial number of African-American women who earn doctorate degrees again provides insight as to why there is marginalization of African-American women's efforts. Due to their educational accomplishments and resilience, they appear to be in a better state than African-American males (Chavous & Cogburn, 2007). As a result, more attention in research is given to African-American males. The focus of this study, however, is on African-American females as there is a gap in the literature due to the continued focus on their counterparts.

Enrollment of women at HBCUs peaked in the 1980s. From 1976 to 1980 the enrollment of women increased from 117,944 females to over 140,000 (Allen et al., 2007). The number of women attending HBCUs still seems to eclipse their male counterparts. According to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (2011), African-American females made up 62% of HBCU's enrollment in the Fall of 2011. Having access to higher education is liberating for some women and serves as a meaningful steppingstone for overall advancement (Kennedy, 2012; King, 1993). The large amount of African-American women pursuing education at HBCUs is particularly significant because higher education opportunities were not always



available to people of this gender and race. As mentioned previously, HBCUs were the first universities to offer educational access to African-Americans and women (Allen et al., 2007). Their open acceptance early on may explain why a substantial number of African-American women continue to choose to pursue their education at HBCUs.

While educating and preparing African-American women for their careers at HBCUs, Kennedy (2012) suggested that administrators and faculty should take Collin's Black feminist theory into account. Collin's Black feminist epistemology states that (a) sharing lived experiences constructs meaning; (b) dialogue is used to explain, understand, and build knowledge; (c) emotions and general notion of care should be expressed in conversations; and (d) there should be accountability for ensuring the intersection between lived experiences, dialogue, and general care (Kennedy, 2012). By taking the aforementioned items into account, Kennedy (2012) felt that the cultural silencing of African-American women would be limited, as they would be encouraged to express themselves. Discussion of values and lived experiences are critical aspects of liberation. These actions allow African-American women to openly be themselves and freely transfer their knowledge to others within their respective careers (Kennedy, 2012). However, these discussions have not been widely documented. There are limited studies that focus strictly on African-American female teachers and their preparatory studies for the teaching field.

One of the areas that should be examined within the African-American teacher shortage is the institution of choice. The majority of students served by HBCUs are African-Americans; therefore, these students are not minorities at this university type (Postsecondary National Policy Institute, 2015). However, attendance at PWIs would make them minorities. Kornfield (2010) shared the stories of two African-American women who attended a PWI. The two women

expressed how they were continuously made aware of their racial differences. To avoid racism, the two women revealed that they made friends with other African-American students at their university. Their decision to befriend others outside of their major caused an internal battle as they felt as though they had a divided life. They had one that they must live in the classroom and another amongst their friends (Kornfield, 2010). It is not uncommon for African-American students attending PWIs to be in cultural jeopardy (Meacham, 2000). Cultural jeopardy typically occurs because upon attendance to these universities African-American students feel the pressure to conform to the cultural and linguistic norms already present. Language is indeed a large component of education programs. Standard English is encouraged, but most African-American students have a different linguistic code based on their cultural background (Meacham, 2000). The pressure to conform creates a gap between the culture that one is from and the language code spoken, which is yet another reason why African-American students feel silenced.

Kornfield (2010) expressed that the participants in his study experienced silencing as they felt their language skills were not as advanced as their classmates. Some African-American female pre-service teachers expressed that within their university environment they were very intentional about whom they conversed and what they discussed (Haddix, 2012). The participants were intentional in their relationships and conversations because many times, they felt uncomfortable around other individuals who were not the same race and whom they felt did not understand their realities (Haddix, 2012). Therefore, they limited their professional socialization to whom they saw fit, possibly resulting in a type of cultural silencing as discussed before that can occur whenever there is not effective dialogue among similar individuals.

Creating opportunities for diverse students to speak so they will not feel silenced is important to change the overall feeling of students being in cultural limbo (Kornfield, 2010). In addition to

cultural silencing, the participants expressed that the course materials presented in classes addressed issues that were more relevant to races other than African-Americans (Kornfield, 2010). There appears to be a gap or mismatch as many teacher education programs proclaim to prepare students to teach diverse communities but do not create these environments or model the behaviors. Diversity must be addressed in teacher education programs for future educators to understand the importance of incorporating it in their respective classrooms. The experiences and challenges encountered by the two women in the study assisted them with recognizing the importance of diversity awareness in their very own classrooms (Kornfield, 2010).

African-American students report that they feel alienated in some teacher preparation programs where there is an absence of students of their same race. Sometimes alienation results in a disconnection from the program (Brown, 2014). Experiencing racism in teacher education programs is not uncommon for African-American pre-service teachers (Frank, 2003; Kornfield, 2010). On the contrary, students at HBCUs report more favorable conditions in terms of relationships with their educators. As a result, they are comfortable in their learning environment and able to make great gains in critical and analytic thinking which positively affects their grades (Flowers, Scott, Riley, & Palmer, 2015). The act of othermothering has typically been associated with HBCUs and considered of value (Flowers et al., 2015).

Othermothering, in this case, is simply the act of mentoring and/or nurturing students academically and emotionally throughout their collegiate experiences. Students often associate these acts with those that they would experience from their very own family. Flowers et al. (2015) studied how othermothering fostered the levels of educational attainment at HBCUs. Many participants in the Flowers et al. (2015) qualitative study indicated through open response surveys, that the relationships between the professors at their universities and themselves were

meaningful in the matriculation of their studies. Furthermore, the participants indicated that supportive faculty made a positive impact on their self-esteem as well as their scholastic achievement (Flowers et al., 2015). Many African-American students attending PWIs do not experience the same positive interactions with faculty members. Guiffrida (2005) found that African-American students may struggle in developing relationships with faculty at PWIs because of the cultural differences that may be present. The students may find it hard to relate to faculty members as individuals.

Critical race theory in education is a theoretical lens that can be used to look closer into the nature of racism (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). The overall goal is to provide exposure to the racial biases that currently exist in education by addressing racial inequities. Teacher education programs must strive to increase their awareness of these issues if it is of serious concern to recruit more African-American students into the education field.

### **Teacher Education Preparation Program Components and Graduate's Perceptions of Readiness**

Teacher education programs are tasked with preparing future educators to become experts in a field that is continuously changing. Adequate preparation of pre-service teachers requires constant reflection on the universities' behalf. Research shows that novice teachers are more successful at learning in an environment that has a solid vision of practice (Darling-Hammond, 2006). The overall vision can help future teachers guide their practices and make what they will learn accessible to others, which is truly a teacher's purpose (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007). The teacher education environment should provide access to content knowledge and teach the general learning process to others. Pre-service teachers need an understanding of how people learn and how they do so differently (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

Without this foundation, future teachers will be ill-equipped to address student misunderstandings of content within their classrooms. After laying the foundation of how people learn, it is appropriate to introduce specific instructional practices and tools. A structured learning process will inform novice teachers how to connect knowledge with practice (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007).

Some common features of teacher education programs with candidates who graduated feeling prepared for the teaching profession included:

- a solid vision for teacher's course work and clinical experiences;
- clear standards for practice and performance of student evaluations;
- a core curriculum embedded in the act of practice that included child development, social and cultural context, and exposure to curriculum and assessment;
- lengthier clinical experiences of 30 weeks or more with opportunities to practice foundational learning;
- use of case studies, performance assessments, and portfolios to give access to real teaching issues; strategies to evolve teachers' understanding of learning;
- shared beliefs and knowledge between the universities and partnering schools (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

As indicated above, many components make up a stellar education program. The goal, however, should be to make these items intertwine skillfully so there is not a disconnection for the teacher education candidates. Education programs should give particular attention to enhancing the knowledge, dispositions and skills of pre-service teachers to implement a critical pedagogy that addresses diversity and social concerns. A focus on diversity is important as there are many inequities facing today's classroom, therefore teacher education programs must structure the

curriculum to provide students with exposure to the issue (Morrell, 2010). The attitudes, beliefs, or lived experiences of teacher educators can influence how social justice is taught to candidates (Kelly-Jackson, 2015). Therefore, it is suggested that teacher educators become conscious of their presuppositions so that it does not hinder the level of instruction that should take place (Kelly-Jackson, 2015). Unfortunately, pre-service teachers who are educated at rural universities are trailing behind pre-service teachers who are educated at urban universities in developing a diversity skill set (Han, Madhuri, & Scull, 2015). The difference is likely because students at urban universities are many times required to take multicultural classes prior to their senior year, while many rural students are not (Han et al., 2015).

There are varying pedagogies or strategies of teaching embedded in teacher education programs. Student teaching, practicums, and field experiences are the most common. It is imperative that whatever the clinical experience, it is structured in a way that teacher candidates gain as much insight as possible from the opportunity (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007). High quality teaching experience settings likely include guidance from mentor teachers, multiple opportunities for practice, clear objectives, and much reflection (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007). The expertise of mentors can enhance content knowledge and the performance of skills needed for the profession (Grima-Farrell, 2015; Hobson et al., 2012). However, many mentors need opportunities to build the knowledge that they will share with teacher education candidates, and university supervisor guidance could likely assist with bridging that gap between mentors and pre-service teacher candidates (Ambrosetti, 2014; Hobbs & Stovall, 2015). In addition to actual experiences, teacher education programs have incorporated the use of performance tasks or teaching portfolios. The use of portfolios provides evidence of completed milestones, such as planning lessons, teaching students, and so forth.

Oftentimes, the teacher candidate analyzes items within the portfolio to provide additional experience in reflecting on one's practice (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007).

Research has shown that the use of teacher candidate portfolios can assist students in becoming more accustomed to the practice of reflection, which is an expected disposition once they enter their very own classrooms (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007). Blogs are also tools that are used to facilitate structured reflective thinking opportunities for pre-service educators (Garza & Smith, 2015). The use of blogs has provided opportunities for students to validate their perceptions based on the responses of others and to self-assess their performance by reflecting upon their understanding (Garza & Smith, 2015). The various pedagogies that are utilized by teacher education programs may likely influence how prepared candidates feel for the teaching profession. Ultimately, the enhancement of foundational knowledge should occur regardless of the pedagogy type. By building teacher candidates' beginning knowledge, they will always have information to build upon and carry out within their actual practice (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007).

Teacher preparation programs play a critical role in the development of teachers and their overall success in the profession (Lee et al., 2012). They influence the levels of quality that teacher candidates possess. Many programs require pre-service teachers to complete student teaching before graduating. The experience allows students to gain hands-on experience in the field they are pursuing. Researchers have studied teacher candidates' perspectives to gain insight about how student teaching impacts their overall feelings of readiness for the field. Some feel that individuals' perceptions about practicum experiences depend upon the quality of instruction or feedback, collaboration between the students and cooperating mentors, and overall communication between the placement sites and respective schools of preparation (Hascher,

Cocard, & Moser, 2004). Therefore, this information is important to consider when arranging learning opportunities for practicum candidates.

A study conducted by Farinde et al. (2015) focused on six African-American female in-service teachers and revealed that they saw student teaching as an important learning component offering access to real-world experiences and hands-on application. Conducting student teaching ultimately helped these women decide if they wanted to pursue a career in education as they experienced unforeseen realities of the profession (Farinde et al., 2015). Lee et al. (2012) assessed teacher candidates before and after their student teaching experiences. Surprisingly, teacher candidates expressed that they felt better prepared to address all of the standards expected of early childhood educators as required by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). These standards included (a) planning for instruction; (b) pedagogical content knowledge; (c) family involvement; (d) classroom management; and (e) professionalism (Lee et al., 2012). The student teaching process is social by nature as it involves a gradual release of responsibility from the mentor teacher to the teacher candidate. Bandura's (1986) social cognitive framework suggests that mastery and vicarious experiences are helpful with increasing self-efficacy. On the same note, Farinde et al. (2015) revealed that enhancing the student teaching experiences of teacher candidates can be an effective way to increase the readiness perspectives of future educators entering the field.

The benefits of having experience prior to entering the actual classroom have been studied. Scott, Gentry, and Phillips (2014) studied graduate level pre-service teachers' perspectives about their practicum experiences. Through use of a clinical evaluation continuum they found that their participants expressed growth in the areas of creating positive learning environments, instructional planning, student support and engagement, assessments, and overall



professional development. Participants indicated that they were most confident in creating a positive learning environment and planning for instruction. However, they were least confident in assessing student learning (Scott et al., 2014). The candidates' perceptions suggested that having professional teachers alongside them to guide them and provide sound advice and feedback for instruction was helpful. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) suggested that educators learn by the act of teaching itself. Therefore, many education programs have decided to include practicums and other opportunities for allowing experience in the curriculum.

Field experiences can often open pre-service educators' minds and give them another view of the classroom. Before going into the field, they learn about theories and pedagogy. However, through the field experience itself, pre-service teachers get to implement theories discussed in their courses. The field experience also provides better exposure to the varying dynamics that are actually present within an actual classroom (Tarman, 2012). An individual's beliefs can have an impact on one's perspective about teaching (Coffey, 2010). Pajares (1992) and Richardson (1996) conducted research on prospective teachers' beliefs and learned that prior to entering college, beliefs about teaching are already established and hail from individual experiences, personal schooling experiences, and formal instruction. Farinde et al. (2015) found that the in-service teachers within their study recounted their past experiences with teachers, and those experiences not only impacted their classroom practices but also their overall desire to enter the field of education.

Although beliefs may be pre-established, it is not uncommon for prospective teachers to change their beliefs later in adulthood or after a transition from pupil to teacher (Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996). Therefore, it is not unusual for field experiences to change what pre-service teachers believe about the field. As a result, strategic field placements are necessary because the

experiences that occur may impact a future teacher's decision to enter the profession. Tarman (2012) suggested that at minimum teacher education programs should monitor placement levels, mentor teachers, and student population within districts. Many student teachers are at the survival stage where they are trying to adapt and adjust to their new positions and respective schools. From another point of view, Coffey (2010) suggested that placements in diverse communities is a fairly decent idea as it prepares teacher candidates to work with students of diverse backgrounds, which complements Tarman's (2012) idea of monitoring placement and student population demographics. Field experiences in various settings allow pre-service teachers the opportunity to challenge their beliefs and sometimes become aware of their own biases.

The transition from student to teacher can be compared to the many transitions in human development. The first stage is a survival and discovery phase (Caires, 2003). During this period, teacher education candidates evolve from the role of students and begin to learn with the mindset of a future teacher (Caires, Almeida, & Martins, 2010). During self-discovery, reality shock may occur as students begin to note the differences in the theories taught to them as pupils and the realities that are actually in practice. The realization of an unfamiliar experience brings about many socio-emotional experiences that student teachers may go through. Specifically, it was found that reality shock can manifest in five forms (Veenman, 1984). Student teachers may have subjective viewpoints of their problems, change of routines, change of attitudes, change of personality, and self-concept, and, in the worst case, abandonment of practicum and teaching (Veenman, 1984). Reality shock is a common phenomenon experienced by pre-service teachers (Caires et al., 2010). Therefore, it may likely be something that beginning teachers experience as well. The study conducted by Caires et al. (2010) was geared toward individuals with three or

more years of experience in hopes that they have bypassed the possible manifestations of reality shock. Emotions can influence the beginning of one's practice. Some teachers perceive it to be stressful and even indicate that it affects their self-esteem (Caires et al., 2010). However, many student teachers overcame their initial obstacles and grew confident in their professional choice of becoming educators (Caires et al., 2010). Warm advances provided by supervisors and their overall acceptance promoted socio-emotional adjustments. These results suggest once again that experience and interactions with others can be helpful during the student teaching and practicum experience.

At the beginning of student teaching, each candidate can have subjective interpretations of the learning experience so it relates to how they individually interpret them. Hascher et al. (2004) conducted a study to see how both student teachers and mentors felt about the candidates' learning progress during student teaching. The student teachers and mentors provided insight about their feelings about the practicum through student teacher assessments and daily diary entries. An analysis showed that student teachers' overall emotional well-being and self-esteem increased (Hascher et al., 2004). Their confidence in their abilities to plan and implement lesson plans increased. The mentors also expressed changes in the student teachers, but their ratings were higher than those expressed by the student teachers in all dimensions (Hascher et al., 2004). Many times, student teachers overcome their initial obstacles and become confident in their professional choice of becoming educators (Caires et al., 2010). Their professional growth is all a matter of making socio-emotional adjustments. Overall, acceptance within the field, along with warm advances from mentors and supervisors, aids in this process (Caires et al., 2010).

Teaching efficacy is a theory that can describe an educator's feelings about his or her effectiveness (Lee et al., 2012). The idea of teaching efficacy is an expansion of theorist Albert

Bandura's (1986) idea that efficacy can affect human's actions and interactions with others based on their own beliefs of effectiveness. In previous studies, it was noted that teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy are more effective in areas like time and behavior management, while educators with low self-efficacy are less efficient in the two areas (Chacon, 2005; Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Bandura's (1997) social cognitive framework suggests that self-efficacy can originate and increase through mastery and vicarious experiences. Mastery experiences are experiences where one successfully achieves desired outcomes. Vicarious experiences entail observations of others performing successful practices. Student teaching experiences likely entail mastery and vicarious experiences, which may, in turn, promote self-efficacy and help future teachers feel better about their ability to teach.

Some teacher education preparation programs require students to complete standardized licensure examinations. The underlying rationale for these exams goes back to universities' efforts to meet accreditation standards. NCATE requires that 80% of teacher education programs' candidates must successfully complete the licensure exam required for their state (Litaker et al., 2013). As a result, many HBCUs utilize the passage of licensure exams as a prerequisite to gain admission into teacher education programs (Litaker et al., 2013). Since students must pass their licensure exams in order to matriculate through the program, the completion rate of the licensure exams appear as 100%. Consequently, the gatekeeping method has affected some African-American teacher candidates' ability to continue in education programs. Educational Testing Service is the company that typically administers the certifying licensure examinations. The company's data shows that African-American students make significantly lower scores than other students that take the exams (Litaker et al., 2013). More

specifically, African-American test takers are half as likely as other races to pass the certifying exams on their first attempt (Petchauer, 2014).

This information called for some universities to look closely at how students were preparing for the exams and what exactly the students perceived to have an impact on their ability to perform well. Litaker et al. (2013) found that most students did not think of taking their certifying licensure examinations until well after their freshman year. Earlier exposure to the content likely to be on these exams is a proactive strategy to introduce the students to things they will need to complete later in the program. Additionally, many students did not utilize the resources that the university offered to prepare for state licensure exams. Instead, students utilized materials that they bought or studied with their peers (Litaker et al., 2013). Professional guidance, information, and promotion of preparation sessions from the faculty at their respective universities may be useful in addressing this issue. Other students discussed issues that involved testing conditions that they feel impacted their ability to perform well on their certifying licensure examinations (Petchauer, 2014). For example, some African-American students experienced racial stereotyping within their testing environments and amongst the other test takers. They credited their poor performance to their interactions with test administrators and proctors. These are internal feelings that involve subjective racial factors that these students felt impacted their ability to perform satisfactorily on qualifying examinations (Petchauer, 2014).

In general, certifying licensure exams have the ability to prevent potential African-American teachers from entering teacher education programs. There is standing evidence of the likelihood of failure among African-American licensure examination test-takers, a documented shortage of African-American graduates of education, and a shortage of African-American teachers in general (Litaker et al., 2013; Madkins, 2011; Petchauer, 2014). Perhaps universities

can work towards reversing these things by addressing the first gatekeeper through creation of a strategic plan that focuses on preparing students for the examinations that will be required (Litaker et al., 2013). The need for a strategic plan relates back to Dewey's (1938) theory of experience and education. It states that cumulative experiences as such can possibly shape future experiences (Dewey, 1938).

Some literature revealed that teacher education graduates valued the preparation that their undergraduate institutions provided concerning theories, multicultural issues, research methods, and reflection strategies (Goodwin et al., 2014). There were differences in the findings as other educators expressed that they valued learning about the realities of what generally occurred in the typical classroom (Hassan, Kaabi, & Khaled, 2010). The participants in the Hassan et al. (2010) study seemed to desire to align their educational experiences to what they would experience in the field. They described their preparedness to teach using modern strategies, such as content-based teaching, collaboration, critical thinking, active thinking, and utilizing media and technology (Hassan et al., 2010). In essence, there were variations in the areas that educators considered most useful during their preparation experiences.

### **Summary**

The U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics (2015) produced a report indicating that African-Americans make up 10% of the nation's teachers. The primary basis for the shortage of African-Americans in the field can be traced back to desegregation which led to job cuts for African-American teachers (Madkins, 2011). More recently, African-American teacher attrition has been due to the lack of support available to assist students with passing academic educational requirements (Madkins, 2011). Additionally, many African-Americans are pursuing other

professions as they are financially satisfying and have more opportunities for professional growth (Madkins, 2011).

At least half of the African-Americans who choose to enter the public education sector attend HBCUs, so it is imperative to gain insight into how this particular population perceives its preparation at these specific universities (National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, 2008). These universities have many highlights as they strive to advance the number of African-American graduates and infuse purposeful components like embracing African-American culture and service learning (Gasman & Commodore, 2014; Gasman & McMickens, 2010). They are affordable for most individuals as tuition rates are 50 % less than other universities, but affordability is also a challenge as there are many financial woes within HBCUs due to the lack of available funds (Gasman, 2009; Irvine & Fenwick, 2011). The retention and graduation rates are on a constant decline partially because of accreditation demands that should seem like a positive idea (Cantey et al., 2013). Yet, for some, the accreditation requirements create hardships for students matriculating through the program who cannot pass the qualifying examinations (Litaker et al., 2013).

On the other hand, African-American students have experienced different issues at PWIs that are social and emotional in nature. While attending PWIs some African-Americans felt that they were in cultural jeopardy as they were continuously made aware of their differences from the general population, but they had to conform to their environment (Kornfield, 2010; Meachem, 2000). Other African-Americans felt completely silenced and alienated during their studies at PWIs (Brown, 2014; Kennedy, 2012; Kornfield, 2010). However, some students feel that the HBCU environment is beneficial to their cultural and academic needs (Flowers et al., 2015). The act of othermothering, or mentoring and nurturing students academically and

emotionally, is frequently reported at HBCUs (Flowers et al., 2015). Students have considered the support from their professors as valuable as it has heightened their self-esteem and scholastic achievement (Flowers et al., 2015).

HBCUs are mostly comprised of African-American females as they make up 62% of the population (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, 2011). Additionally, HBCUs graduate 50% of students who obtain education degrees (National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, 2008). African-American females are the focus because there is a shortage of this race and gender within the teaching field (Larinde et al., 2016). Therefore, the information gained from this study may contribute to the field as it focuses on a population that is dwindling from the teaching profession. Additionally, there is not any literature that focuses specifically on perceptions of this population in reference to HBCU teacher education preparation. Researchers have addressed African-American women perceptions and experiences while attending PWIs, the issues they face within the field, and even their rationale for pursuing teaching as a profession altogether (Chavous & Cogburn, 2007; Dingus & Dixson, 2008; Farinde et al., 2015; Frank, 2003; Haddix, 2012; Kornfield, 2010). Others have addressed pedagogy variations within teacher programs at HBCUs in relation to urban education, licensure preparation, and mentoring (Hobson et al., 2012; Litaker et al., 2013; Mawhinney et al., 2012). Although those studies focused on HBCUs, they did not specifically address African-American females. The results of the present study addressed a gap in the literature by providing insight on the perspectives of these individuals who attended teacher education programs at HBCUs.

The information found may be helpful in the practical realm as the real classrooms that students will enter as beginning teachers may be shocking.



At least 25% of students live in poverty and many of them lack basic food, shelter, and health care; from 10% to 20% have identified learning differences; 15% speak a language other than English as their primary language; and about 40% are members of racial/ethnic “minority” groups, many of them recent immigrants from countries with different educational systems and cultural traditions. (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 301)

The reality of these situations even today could be traumatic to beginning teachers who have not been provided a solid teacher preparation experience. A valuable teacher education experience can employ a variety of pedagogies (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007). Student teaching and actual experiences in the field are instructional strategies of focus for this study. Research has shown that many pre-service teachers have indicated that they found experiences within the field helpful (Farinde et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2012; Scott et al., 2014). Research, as such, is meaningful as teacher education faculties continue to structure their programs to meet the needs of future educators. As students transition to the field of education they will quickly see the value of lifelong learning, as that is a general disposition of educators (Darling-Hammond, 2006). The field requires educators to seek answers to issues within the practice and to continually acquire knowledge needed for instruction (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Some educators never transition from the stage of focusing on themselves to focusing on the needs of their students (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007). Therefore, education programs should work to integrate and instill the knowledge of teaching, learning, and subject matter within their students coherently (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Dewey’s (1938) theory of experience and education states that an optimal learning environment is one that incorporates both continuity and interaction. Depending on how the preparation took place, these components may or may not have contributed to individuals’

perceptions. It is my hope that the information provided by the participants of this study will be of practical benefit to others and will aid in closing the gap within educational literature by providing insight into preparation practices of a race that is experiencing an alarming shortage in the teaching field (Madkins, 2011).

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODS**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand the perceptions of African-American female teachers in terms of their readiness for the classroom after completing teacher education programs at HBCUs. Dewey's (1938) theory of experience and education was the theory used to guide this study. I used a transcendental phenomenological research design to capture the essence of the participants' perceptions while employing epoche, which involves setting aside any preconceived thoughts regarding the phenomena at hand (Husserl & Moran, 2012). I collected data through use of a questionnaire, blogs, and individual interviews. Within this chapter I provide further description of the research setting, participants of the study, and procedures in regards to data collection and data analysis. Additionally, I provide information about the trustworthiness of the research methods and the ethical considerations taken into account.

### **Design**

To gain an in depth understanding of the perceptions of African-American female teacher educators about their preparation satisfaction or dissatisfaction, I chose to utilize a qualitative method of inquiry. In qualitative research, the researcher is the key instrument (Creswell, 2013). Through direct communication and interactions with participants, the researcher collects data to answer the research questions. During the data collection process all factors are considered, and complex reasoning is utilized to provide a holistic account of what is being studied.

Phenomenology is a specific qualitative approach that involves describing the essence of individuals' lived experiences (Creswell, 2013). In this type of inquiry, the researcher collects data from individuals who have experienced a phenomenon. Using the data, a description is

developed which describes at minimum “what” the individuals experienced and “how” they experienced the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). I chose phenomenology for this study to allow for a description of the essence of the lived experiences of African-American female teachers who attended HBCUs. The focus was to determine exactly what the participants experienced during their undergraduate studies and how they perceived the experiences after being in the workforce.

Two specific approaches to phenomenology are hermeneutical phenomenology and transcendental phenomenology (Creswell, 2013). Hermeneutical phenomenology involves research that is directed towards interpreting the texts of life and lived experiences (Creswell, 2013; van Manen, 1990). It focuses on much more than description as it involves an interpretive process to reflect on the lived experiences of the individuals studied (van Manen, 1990). Transcendental phenomenology differs from hermeneutical phenomenology as the focus is geared more towards the descriptions of the experiences provided by the participants (Moustakas, 1994). In transcendental phenomenology all judgments are suspended to take on a fresh perspective toward the phenomenon. The act of bracketing viewpoints or suspending them is defined as epoché by the German mathematician Edmund Husserl, who was known for writing about philosophical perspectives in phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994). I utilized transcendental phenomenology, which required me to bracket my personal viewpoints about HBCU teacher education programs and suspend previous experiences toward the phenomenon.

### **Research Questions**

The central question for the study was: What are the perceptions of preparedness for African-American female teacher education graduates at Historically Black Colleges and Universities? The sub questions that supported the central question were (a) What characteristics

of Dewey's theory of combining experience and education do African-American female teacher graduates of HBCU programs feel contributed to their preparedness?; (b) What additional resources would African-American female teacher graduates of Historically Black Colleges and Universities perceived to have been helpful?; and (c) What obstacles do African-American female teacher graduates of Historically Black Colleges and Universities feel they faced while in their teacher preparation program?

### **Setting**

There was not a defined setting for this study because HCBUs are located all across the United States of America. Specifically, there are 100 HBCUs in 19 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands (NCES, 2013). The participants may have attended any of the 100 HBCUs in any of the states and were still invited to participate regardless of geographic location. Individuals completed the questionnaires and blogs in a web-based environment. I selected the site for interviews based on the proximity of participants. Face-to-face interviews that were conducted in-person were held in public locations, such as coffee shops. For virtual interviews, I utilized video technology like Skype™ and FaceTime®. The use of technology allowed participants to be located virtually anywhere; therefore, setting did not limit those who desired to participate.

### **Participants**

I utilized a purposeful sampling strategy for this study. My rationale for utilizing purposeful sampling was to select participants who purposefully informed the understanding of the research questions at hand (Creswell, 2013). First, I selected as many participants already known to me who were (a) African-American female graduates of HBCU teacher preparation programs with, (b) at least three years of teaching experience. I utilized snowball sampling to

gain the remainder of the participants, as a total of 10 individuals were needed. The snowball sampling method allows researchers to gain potential participants through the recommendation of other participants (Creswell, 2013; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Creswell (2013) suggested a sample size of at least 10 participants for phenomenology studies. Therefore, 10 was the target sample size for this study. Normally with small sample sizes as such, sampling is discontinued whenever redundancy or saturation occurs (Patton, 2015). When a study has reached the point of saturation, an analysis reveals the report of common responses among participants and nothing new is being discovered (Patton, 2015). Therefore, data collection and analysis went hand-in-hand to recognize when saturation occurred. A total of 10 participants consented to participate in the study. Eight participants (80%) were elementary school teachers, one participant (10%) was an elementary assistant principal, and one participant (10%) was a middle school teacher. There was representation from five different HBCUs and two different states. Only four of the participants had attended both a HBCU and PWI teacher education program to complete academic coursework (see Table 1).

Table 1

*Participant Information*

| Participant | Years of teaching experience | HBCU attended for teacher education | State   | Degree major                 | PWI attendance |
|-------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|------------------------------|----------------|
| Sonya       | 3                            | Windmont Hill University            | State 1 | Birth-Kindergarten Education | No             |
| Simone      | 4                            | Windmont Hill University            | State 1 | Elementary Education         | Yes            |
| Deanna      | 6                            | Saint Clairview University          | State 1 | Elementary Education         | No             |
| Katrina     | 11                           | Saint Clairview University          | State 1 | Elementary Education         | Yes            |
| Julia       | 3                            | Windmont Hill University            | State 1 | Elementary Education         | No             |

| Participant | Years of teaching experience | HBCU attended for teacher education | State   | Degree major                                       | PWI attendance |
|-------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|--|----------------|
| Takara      | 4                            | West Graham University              | State 1 | Secondary Mathematics                              | No             |
| Angela      | 3                            | Frazelle University                 | State 2 | Interdisciplinary Studies for Elementary Education | No             |
| Lena        | 5                            | West Graham University              | State 1 | Elementary Education                               | No             |
| Tracy       | 12                           | West Graham University              | State 1 | Elementary Education                               | Yes            |
| Courtney    | 10                           | Bliss State University              | State 1 | Elementary Education                               | Yes            |

*Note.* Participants and universities were assigned pseudonyms.

### **Procedures**

First, I obtained permission to conduct research from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Liberty University (See Appendix A for IRB Approval Letter). After receiving permission to proceed, I made a list containing names of individuals already known to me who met the criteria of being African-American female teacher graduates of HBCUs with three or more years of teaching experience. I contacted those participants via email using a script (see Appendix B for emails) to see if they would be interested in participating in the study. When I had not yet secured 10 participants after my initial email, I reached out to individuals through snowball sampling to gain recommendations for prospective participants by those who were already secured to participate in this study. I contacted additional prospective participants via email using a script (see Appendix B for emails) and asked them to participate. After individuals expressed interest in participating, I provided access to a digital informed consent form through email (see Appendix C for informed consent form). The digital letter included an introduction of myself as the researcher, purpose of the study, study procedures, information about confidentiality and voluntary participation, risks, and a place to sign if giving consent. After

reading the information, if the parties consented to participate they could sign the form digitally and copies of the informed consent form would be sent to their email and mine.

Once an email notification about a participant signing her informed consent form was received, I granted access to an online questionnaire via email. The first data collection tool, the questionnaire, was designed to elicit demographic information and input from the participants on their confidence to address certain areas in the profession. After individuals completed their questionnaires, I contacted them via email and provided access to a blog. The email contained information regarding access to the blog link, participant page, and password information. There were two prompts available for participants to respond to on the blog within a two-week window. While the participants completed the blog responses, I contacted four content experts in the field of education to provide feedback on the content validity of the interview questions that I had devised based on the literature (see Appendix H for interview validity and reliability). After making the suggested revisions from the content experts, I conducted a pilot interview with a non-participant to ensure clarity of the questions (see Appendix I for pilot interview question analysis). I met with the interview pilot participant individually and asked her to respond to each question while thinking aloud. I took notes on everything she said that came to mind for each question, and I also took notes based on what I observed in terms of hesitations or confusing sections. Using what was found during the pilot, I amended the interview questions (see Appendix J for final interview script) and proceeded with contacting my actual study participants for interviews upon completion of their two blogs. I interviewed the participants who were in close proximity to me in public places. However, the participants in other states, or those with meeting conflicts, were interviewed through use of a video web-conferencing tool. I utilized an audio recording device to record each interview. Again, data collection and analysis went hand-



in-hand to recognize when saturation occurred, as I wanted to fully develop and detail the phenomenon. Therefore, I analyzed the data after all ten participants completed each component.

### **The Researcher's Role**

As a researcher, African-American female, and education practitioner, I hold the assumption that teacher education programs are a critical aspect to teacher success. I do not have a bias against HBCUs or non-HBCUs. However, I feel it is imperative to research and identify if teacher education preparation may be a barrier in the area of teacher retention especially considering the low number of African-American teachers in the field. Therefore, I am assuming the role of an advocate for the participants of the study as I address the issues presented in the literature, which include the lack of African-American female educators.

Transcendental phenomenology requires that the researcher bracket out his or her viewpoints (Moustakas, 1994). Bracketing out my experiences was a critical part of my role as the researcher, as I have attended both HBCUs and non-HBCUs. I had to suspend any thoughts in relation to the HBCU that I attended as some of the participants indicated that they had attended the same one. I was required to take on a fresh perspective and accept the information as new data in order to produce an unbiased product that accurately depicted the essence of the participants' experiences. During the interviews, I utilized a note-taking tool that had facts on one side of the paper and my running thoughts on the other side to ensure that I remained aware of all my viewpoints that were not factual. My process for memoing was helpful with bracketing my thoughts and taking on the information as if it were new.

### **Data Collection**

Triangulation is a validation strategy where multiple sources of data are used to increase the credibility and evidence of the study (Creswell, 2013). Whenever evidence is found in multiple sources of data then the information is being triangulated which brings validity to the findings (Creswell, 2013). I used triangulation in this study by collecting data through the use of questionnaires, blogs, and interviews. I used questionnaires as a simple tool to gain insight into the participants' initial thoughts of their confidence in teaching. The participants' completion of the questionnaires prepared them for the kind of conversations that would occur later in the study. I also used blogging as a data collection method in this study. I utilized blogs prior to the face-to-face interviews because the online atmosphere provided an outlet for individuals to reveal their true thoughts and feelings through writing. The last data collection method involved interviewing the participants. I conducted interviews last to allow me to review the previously answered questionnaires and blogs to search for things that I desired the participants to elaborate upon. The use of interviews allowed me to see some of the participants face-to-face and freely ask questions to gain more information about their experiences with the phenomenon.

### **Questionnaire**

My first method of data collection involved the use of a questionnaire. A questionnaire is defined as a data collection strategy that utilizes a series of open-ended and closed questions that relate to the research questions of a study (Rowley, 2014). Questionnaires are used to provide descriptive information about the characteristics of a sample. Sometimes a researcher can develop an idea of the general profile of the sample using the responses obtained (Rowley, 2014).

The first part of the questionnaire utilized in this study consisted of questions that addressed demographic information (see Appendix D for Questionnaire Part A). The second part of the questionnaire (see Appendix D for Questionnaire Part B) consisted of The Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES). The TSES is considered a reliable instrument as the calculated Cronbach's alpha is .94 (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Typically instruments with a Cronbach's alpha of .80 or higher are considered reliable as this number indicates a strong relationship of stability across responses (Colton & Covert, 2007).

The questions on the TSES were written to elicit participants' responses in regard to how much they felt they could do in accomplishing the tasks presented to them. Responses ranged from "Nothing" to "A Great Deal." Each of these categories was assigned a numerical value of one through nine. There were a total of 24 questions with three different subscales and eight questions on each, focusing on efficacy in student engagement, efficacy in instructional strategies, and efficacy in classroom management. The student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management subscales have Cronbach's alpha calculations of .87, .91, and .90 respectively (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Again, these calculations show that the TSES is a reliable and valid instrument. Appendix E contains the specific questions that the participants responded to on the TSES. Items related to instructional strategies provided qualitative insight on how the participants felt in their ability to (a) ask and answer questions; (b) gauge student comprehension; (c) differentiate instruction; (d) conduct assessments; (e) reteach content; and (f) reach students academically who perform at varying levels. Additionally, participants responded to eight items related to classroom management. The qualitative insight from these questions helped me detail the participants' abilities to (a) control disruptive and defiant behaviors; (b) create rules; (c) manage a classroom management system; (d) establish

routines; and (f) set classroom expectations. Finally, eight of the questions were in reference to facilitating student engagement. I was able to find out how participants felt in their abilities to (a) assist students who seem uninterested or unmotivated; (b) foster creativity; (c) enhance student buy-in; and (e) assist families in participating with school related activities. I used this data collection strategy as an introduction to begin to answer the question “What are the perceptions of preparedness for African-American female teacher education graduates at Historically Black Colleges and Universities?”

I administered the questionnaire in an electronic format through a Google Forms document and requested that the participants complete it within a two-week window. It was only expected to take between seven to ten minutes of their time. After one week, I sent a reminder to participants to complete the questionnaire if they had not already done so. I analyzed the questionnaire data after the participants completed the surveys by calculating the means of the three subscales per participant.

## **Blogs**

My second data collection method involved the use of an online blog. After participants completed the web-based questionnaires, I provided access to a password-protected personal blog that I served as administrator of through Word Press©. Weblogs or blogs can be utilized as tools of expression that allow authors to share about what is going on within their lives or minds (Chenail, 2011). Posts made by virtual authors can include personal stories, pictures, or even sound files that respond to a pressing issue (Chenail, 2011; Schmidt, 2007). I asked participants to include pictures with their posts because photos can be beneficial in triggering one’s memory. “Reflexive photography gives participants the opportunity to literally ‘zoom in’ on these symbols, and is almost guaranteed to elicit rich descriptions of the meanings attached to those

symbols” (Kamper & Steyn, 2011, p. 281).

I granted blog access to the participants and asked them to respond to two prompts. In the first prompt, I asked participants to upload pictures of anybody/anything that they regarded as an asset to their learning within the teacher education program at their HBCU. Additionally, I asked participants to write a narrative of 300 words or less explaining the selection of their pictures. In the second prompt, I asked participants to upload pictures of anybody/anything that they regarded as an obstacle or hindrance to their learning within the teacher education program at their HBCU. I requested that the participants include a 300 to 400-word narrative along with this blog post as well, indicating any additional resources that they would have perceived to be helpful. For confidentiality reasons, I asked participants not to upload realistic photos of individuals or items that they considered a hindrance. Instead, clipart or fictitious photos were desired, as inclusion may have been considered negative to some. The true purpose was to gain insight and understanding about how the participants perceived their preparation experiences.

The basis for using a blog was to provide an opportunity for participants to fully disclose their thoughts and feelings prior to having a one-on-one interview with me, the researcher. I used the content from the blogs to structure additional questions for the forthcoming semi-structured interviews. I used data from the blog responses to answer the research questions: “What additional resources would African-American female teacher graduates of Historically Black Colleges and Universities perceived to have been helpful?” and “What obstacles do African-American female teacher graduates of Historically Black Colleges and Universities feel they faced while in their teacher preparation program?”

## Interviews

My final data collection method was semi-structured interviews (see Appendix H for interview questions). Semi-structured interviews are normally organized with a pre-determined set of questions in mind and then other questions emerging from dialogue between the interviewer and participant (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). I developed a pre-determined set of questions for all participants in order to gain insight into their perceptions of preparedness for the field. I developed and grounded the pre-determined set of interview questions in literature. Four content experts in the field of education or teacher education reviewed the questions and provided feedback on the content validity of the questions (see Appendix H for interview validity and reliability). After revisions, I conducted a pilot interview with a non-participant to ensure clarity (see Appendix G for pilot interview questions). I met with the interview pilot participant individually and asked her to respond to each question while thinking aloud. I took notes on everything that was said that came to mind, and I also took notes based on what I observed in terms of hesitations or confusing sections. Using what was found during the pilot, I amended the interview questions and proceeded with contacting my actual study participants for interviews. I scheduled the interviews last in the data collection process so that I could ask clarifying questions if needed about the data that the participants previously provided on their questionnaires and blogs. Therefore, for the unstructured piece of the interviews, I tailored some interview questions for each individual to expand upon their blog responses of things that they considered assets and hindrances at their HBCUs.

I contacted participants through email to schedule a time and to determine a public location that was within close proximity to conduct the semi-structured face-to-face interviews (see Appendix J for interview script). Some individuals selected videophone conference

interviews as they were in different cities or experienced difficulties scheduling an in-person visit. At the beginning of each interview, I informed the participants of my intent to serve as their voice by gaining insight on their perspective of the given phenomenon. I explained the benefit of their responses and notified them that I only intended to take up 30 minutes of their time. I advised them that I would be willing to reconvene on another day if the interview exceeded the allotted amount of time. I used an audio-recording application on an Apple iPad® to record each interview, with the permission of the participant. I also used an audio-recording application on an Apple iPad mini™ as a back-up recording device. Each recording began with the first interview question. I took notes as needed on a t-chart that contained sections for facts and running thoughts to keep my feelings separate from the content being shared. At the conclusion of each interview, I thanked the participants for their time and explained that I would send a transcript of their interview, as well as the themes that emerged after data collection. I asked that they respond to confirm if the transcription information was accurate and if they were in agreement with the themes.

### **Data Analysis**

The participants within this study completed the questionnaires, blogs, and interviews at different times as they consented to participation in the study on varying days. They received access to the questionnaire on the day they consented to participate. Following the completion of the questionnaire, participants received access to their blogs and were asked to complete them within a two-week window. Finally, I scheduled interviews shortly after completion of the blogs, but they were solely based on convenience and availability of the participants. Consequently, I received the data at varying times as the two-week completion window was different for many of the participants. However, I analyzed data between the various types of

collections after all 10 of the participants completed each task. For example, whenever all 10 participants completed the questionnaire I began my analysis of the data. I followed the same procedure in regards to completion before analyzing the blogs and interviews as well. Before analyzing any of the data, I used epoche to bracket any thoughts or biases toward the content. The sections below contain details regarding the specific strategies that I utilized to analyze the questionnaires, blogs, and interviews.

### **Epoche/Bracketing before Data Analysis**

Epoche involves setting aside any preconceived thoughts regarding a specific phenomenon (Husserl & Moran, 2012). The act of bracketing is also used while analyzing data as it requires individuals to suspend personal experiences to eliminate biases (Creswell, 2013). Since I actually attended a HBCU during my undergraduate studies, I consciously made an effort to accept all of the information provided to me by the participants as new information. Before analyzing any of the data, I bracketed out personal experiences in my mind that related to the phenomenon. I wanted to bring a fresh perspective to the research questions at hand. Prior to analyzing the interview data, I read over the notes that I took that had facts on one side and running thoughts on the other. Reading back over my notes helped me to ensure that I was consciously aware of only factual information during analysis of interview information.

### **Questionnaire Analysis**

First, I organized the demographical information provided by participants in part A of the questionnaire by charting the HBCUs that were represented in the study, their location, how many years of experience the participants had, and the timeframe in which participants graduated. Next, I analyzed the content from the TSES (see Appendix E for long subscale questions). After reading each question on part B of the questionnaire (see Appendix D), the participants were asked to indicate how much they felt they could do in accomplishing the task



presented to them. The category response choices were “Nothing”, “Very Little”, “Some Influence”, “Quite a Bit” and “A Great Deal.” I assigned a numerical value of one through nine to each of the categories. There were three different subscales with eight questions each for a total of 24 questions focusing on efficacy in student engagement, efficacy in instructional strategies, and efficacy in classroom management. I calculated each individual’s three subscale means. For each questionnaire, I began by adding together the value that each participant assigned to the eight questions that focused on efficacy in student engagement. After obtaining a total, I divided it by eight, the number of questions, to obtain the mean of that particular subscale. I followed the same process to obtain the subscale means of each participant’s perceived efficacy in instructional strategies and efficacy in classroom management. Upon completion, I compiled a list of each participant’s subscale mean of their perceived efficacy in student achievement, instructional strategies, and classroom management and placed the information on a table. Individuals with higher subscale means indicated a higher level of self-efficacy in the respective areas and greater confidence in their preparation for that area. Next, I looked at the descriptive content within each of the eight questions for each subscale (see Appendix E) and the values that the participants assigned to each to note the specific areas that participants felt the most and least confident. I used data from the questionnaire to aid in answering, “What are the perceptions of preparedness for African-American female teacher education graduates at Historically Black Colleges and Universities?”

### **Blog Analysis**

Each participant completed two blogs where they were asked to provide pictures and narratives to describe someone or something that they perceived contributed to their teacher preparation and someone or something that they considered a hindrance or obstacle. Upon all

participants' completion of the blogs, I printed all of the raw data and posted the text and pictures side-by-side on a bulletin board. I then read through all of the responses to the first blog prompt in their entirety. The act of bracketing is also used to identify commonalities across responses to assist with theme identification (Creswell, 2013) (see Appendix K for bracketing of text from blogs and interviews). After reading each blog posting entirely, I began to bracket commonalities within the text using color-coded thumbtacks. I used bracketing and coding simultaneously. The process of coding involves aggregating the data into smaller categories of information (Creswell, 2013). I assigned a code or category to each color pushpin and created a code list for the first blog. Looking at the bracketed items of commonalities in the first blog post, I highlighted the text that represented the same ideas among participants that were considered assets to their experiences, using the same color for each statement. I followed the same process for the text provided for the second blog post as I had on the first blog post responses. I bracketed commonalities within the text using color-coded thumbtacks. I assigned a code or category to each color pushpin and created a code list for the second blog. Finally, I highlighted the text that represented the same ideas among the participants about obstacles and hindrances using the same color for each statement.

Themes are developed whenever several codes are placed together to form a common idea (Creswell, 2013; Saldaña, 2009). To identify the themes, I looked for repeated words, phrases, and ideas within the bracketed sections. Themes are short, abstract statements that ultimately pull together recurring ideas (Saldaña, 2009). The completed theme list for the first blog post was used to answer the research question "What are the perceptions of preparedness for African-American female teacher education graduates at Historically Black Colleges and Universities?" Finally, the completed theme list for the second blog post was used to answer the

research questions: “What additional resources would African-American female teacher graduates of Historically Black Colleges and Universities perceived to have been helpful?” and “What obstacles do African-American female teacher graduates of Historically Black Colleges and Universities feel they faced while in their teacher preparation program?” After completion of the codes from the interviews, I combined the open codes for the blogs and interview together and conducted two-tiered coding (see Appendix L for two-tiered coding).

### **Interview Analysis**

Upon completion of all the interviews, I printed the typed transcriptions and notes that I had taken with facts and my running thoughts throughout the interviews. First, I read through all of the interviews and notes in their entirety. I assigned the interview questions to research questions prior to content expert review and included it within my IRB approval (see Appendix A for IRB Approval Documentation). Therefore, I posted the responses to the interview questions on a bulletin board underneath the research questions to which they aligned. Organizing the data in this manner helped me prepare for structural coding which involves segmenting data as it relates to specific topics or research question (Saldaña, 2009). After organizing the data, I bracketed the commonalities that were evident within the text by research question using color-coded pushpins (see Appendix K for bracketing of text from blogs and interviews). I assigned a code to each color pushpin and created a code list for each research question. Looking at the bracketed items of commonalities from the interview responses, I highlighted the text that represented shared ideas about the experiences of the participants using the same color for each statement.

As mentioned before, I conducted two-tiered coding by combining the open codes from both the blogs and interviews. I extrapolated the bracketed and highlighted text from both data

sources and typed it into a Word document. Then I looked for themes for each research question by reviewing the bracketed and coded content for repeated words, phrases, and ideas (see Appendix L for two-tiered coding). The completed theme list was used to answer all of the research questions for this study.

### **Linking all of the Data**

After identifying the themes from both the blogs and interviews, I combined the information with the data from the questionnaire to describe the overall essence of the experienced phenomenon and to answer the research questions. I reviewed the responses from all three data sources to ensure that I was not discovering anything new and that saturation of findings had taken place. My review of the content data from the questionnaire was helpful in gaining insight on the participants' perceptions of preparedness in specific areas of student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. Additionally, individuals with higher subscale means on the questionnaire indicated a higher level of self-efficacy in the respective areas and greater confidence in their preparation for that area which helped me to gauge perceptions of preparedness. The interview data contained specific responses about feelings of preparedness as well as information about perceptions and the combination of education and experience. Finally, the blog data contained the elements of experiences at HBCUs that participants found useful, and the elements that participants considered hindrances. I utilized a variety of sources to aid in triangulation. Triangulation is often used as a validation strategy. Multiple sources of data can assist with increasing the credibility and evidence of the study (Creswell, 2013).

### **Trustworthiness**

Lincoln & Guba (1985) asserted that to establish trustworthiness within a study, the data collection and analysis process must be credible, dependable, transferable, and confirmable. Trustworthiness is used to evaluate a study's worth (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Ultimately, producing research that is trustworthy is the goal so that the content may contribute to the body of knowledge of the subject at hand (Collier-Reed, Ingerman, & Berglund, 2009). To ensure trustworthiness in this study, I utilized triangulation, member checks, thick descriptions, memoing, and an audit trail.

### **Credibility**

To establish credibility, researchers must accurately describe the thoughts, actions, and feelings of those participating in the study. Credibility is comparable to internal validity as it is used to ensure that there is truth within findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton 2015). Triangulation involves using multiple sources of data to assist with increasing the credibility and evidence of the study (Creswell, 2013). I utilized the validation strategy of triangulation as I compared three sources of data for commonalities to establish credibility. The three data sources consisted of participant responses to questionnaires, blogs, and interviews.

### **Dependability**

Dependability is comparable to reliability as it is used to show that the findings are consistent and the process can be replicated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2015). Member checking entails contacting the participants of a study to review the findings and interpretations for accuracy (Creswell, 2013). I utilized member checks after completing interview transcriptions and after analyzing all of the data. Participants were emailed their interview transcripts for member checking and were given the option to amend the transcripts in order to

match their true perceptions. Additionally, after data analysis, I emailed the themes for each research question to the participants and asked them to send a response back specifying whether or not they agreed with the findings. The member checking process enhanced the trustworthiness of the study because participants were able to judge the accuracy and reliability of the content (Creswell, 2013).

### **Transferability**

Transferability is comparable to external validity as it is used to show that the findings are transferable to other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2015). A rich and thick description of the participants and settings allows readers to determine the transferability of the information to other situations (Creswell, 2013). Through rich and thick descriptions, I provided elaborate details by using direct quotations from the participants while describing the phenomenon. Using the details provided, individuals will be able to determine if this study has shared characteristics and if it can be transferred to their unique situation.

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability is comparable to objectivity as it is used to ensure that the findings are not biased and are completely linked to data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2015). Memoing is also referred to as note taking. I used memoing during the interview process by keeping notes on a t-chart with a list of facts in one section, and running thoughts in the other section. The memoing process that I used during the interviews was useful, as it enhanced trustworthiness and eliminated bias by keeping facts and opinions separate. Again, triangulation involves corroborating data from multiple sources to prove validity of the findings. Therefore, triangulation was used as a confirmability measure to ensure that findings were completely linked to data. Member checks were also a confirmability strategy as participants verified the

accuracy of their transcripts from the interviews and voiced their opinion on the accuracy of the themes, which eliminated bias. Additionally, I maintained an audit trail (see Appendix M for audit trail), which includes a log of actions conducted during the research investigation (Creswell, 2013). I noted my actions within an Excel spreadsheet to use as a confirmability measure and record of what was done during the research investigation.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Participation in this study was voluntary and was indicated in the informed consent form that participants signed (see Appendix C for informed consent form). Throughout the study I notified the participants of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. A statement that reminded participants of their right to withdraw was denoted on both the electronic questionnaire and blog site. For confidentiality purposes, I assigned pseudonyms to all of the individuals involved in the study and the university that they attended. I created password-protected individual blog sites for each participant that were only accessible to the participant and myself. Therefore, individuals who did not have the password were unable to view what the participants posted. Privacy was critical, as the participants may have posted pictures of individuals whom they did not want disclosed. I deleted the blog sites upon retrieval and printing of the content for data analysis. I typed the transcription documents from the interviews and saved them on my personal password-protected laptop. In summary, I made every effort to protect the privacy of the participants and to remain ethical within this study.

### **Summary**

I used a transcendental phenomenological approach to qualitative inquiry, as it was conducive for learning about the lived preparation experiences and perceptions of African-American female teachers within the education field. This study did not have a defined setting

as the use of technology allowed participants to be located virtually anywhere. The undefined setting was intentional, as I did not want the location to limit the individuals who could participate. I recruited participants using a purposive sampling method because I wanted the selection of participants to purposefully inform the understanding of the research questions at hand (Creswell, 2013). I recruited some participants through snowball sampling, which means that I asked some of the participants for contact information of additional individuals who they knew met the criteria for the study. Ten individuals consented to participate in the study.

I used four research questions to guide this study and I collected data through questionnaires, blogs, and interviews. For each participant, I first granted access to an online questionnaire, which contained questions about participants' demographics and their perceptions of their confidence in certain areas of teaching. Next, I granted access to a password-protected blog where participants were expected to respond to two blog posts by posting an image and a 300-word narrative in response to the questions. Finally, I interviewed the participants to gain more information about the phenomenon experienced.

Upon completion of each of the data collection method, I analyzed the data. I charted the information from the first part of the questionnaire to gain demographical insight about the participants. Next, I calculated the subscale means for each of the participants in the areas of student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. Finally, I analyzed the content for each subscale individually to note specific details on how the participants perceived their abilities in each of the areas. For the blogs and interview transcripts, I bracketed commonalities of responses within the texts and created a code list using the bracketed data. To discover the themes, I conducted an analysis of significant statements from the participants and noted the recurring words, phrases, and sentences. The information gained from the participants



aided me in my ability to describe the essence of what they experienced. To establish trustworthiness, I used triangulation, member checks, thick description, memoing, and an audit trail. I made every attempt to remain ethical by protecting the documents and confidentiality of the participants and university attended through the assignment of pseudonyms, administering access to password-protected blogs, and maintaining a password-protected laptop.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand and explain the perceptions of African-American female teachers' levels of preparedness for their careers after attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Transcendental phenomenology focuses on identifying the meanings of individual experiences (Patton, 2015). Something, however, that is common to all phenomenological approaches is the focus of how individuals perceive experiences and consciously speak about them (Patton, 2015). The essence of the study consisted of a core meaning mutually understood by those who experienced a phenomenon. Therefore, my role as the researcher was to adequately describe what the participants experienced and how they experienced it to encompass the true essence.

In this chapter, I began by describing the profiles of the participants within the study. Next, I reviewed the findings of the data analysis conducted through questionnaire content analysis, coding, and identification of themes from the blog responses and interviews. Specifically, I reported the data from part A and part B of the questionnaire, which included demographical data and responses to the questions on the TSES. Next, I provided the codes and themes derived from the blogs and interviews using data from participants. Finally, I answered each of the research questions by triangulating all of the information from the three sources of data. I shared verbatim responses from the collective voices of my participants.

### **Participants**

The 10 individuals who participated in this study were: (a) African-American female graduates of HBCU teacher preparation programs, with (b) at least three years of teaching experience. I contacted each participant individually via email and explained the rationale and

different components of the study. I offered to answer any questions they had related to the study before consenting to participate. I asked the participants to read the email and reply in the same manner, if they were willing to participate. A total of 10 participants completed informed consent forms agreeing to participate. Eight participants (80%) were elementary school teachers, one participant (10%) was an elementary assistant principal, and one participant (10%) was a middle school teacher. There was representation from five HBCUs and two different states. For reporting purposes, I assigned to each participant and university a pseudonym in an effort to maintain confidentiality.

### **Sonya**

Sonya was a kindergarten teacher with three years of experience in education. She graduated from Windmont Hill University with a degree in birth to kindergarten education. Sonya described her experiences at Windmont Hill University as helpful. Sonya's bubbly and sociable personality showed throughout her interview and blog responses. She reported that the relationships that she made with her peers, instructors, and previous attendees of the university were the most memorable from her HBCU attendance. Following a photograph of two of her closest friends from school Sonya wrote:

These two young ladies were also students in the School of Education and Human Performance. We met in the gospel choir and it was really a blessing to have best friends who shared the same beliefs and goals as myself. We pushed each other! (blog response, December 20, 2015)

Additionally, Sonya valued having African-American females as her professors at the HBCU that she attended.

. . . we had to do what was required and what the professors already knew because our professors looked like us. They already knew what we were going to have to deal with going into the profession as an African-American as being young, as being the new teacher on the block, all of those different things that could set somebody back or make them change their career from being a teacher. (interview, January 12, 2016)

She displayed strong self-advocacy skills as she spoke on her ability to ask for what she needed in any instance. She credited the strength in her ability to advocate for herself now even outside of college from one of her professors. “I had a professor who told us on the first day of my freshman seminar to ask for what you want. The worst answer you can get is no and that stuck with me ever since then” (interview, January 12, 2016).

### **Simone**

Simone was a second and third grade combination teacher with four years of teaching experience. She graduated from Windmont Hill University with a degree in elementary education. Recently, she completed a master’s degree in executive administration at a PWI. Simone seemed very proud to have experienced attending a HBCU as she openly expressed her feelings about the differences between attending the different university types. She said:

Yes. Overall it was amazing and I wouldn't trade it, I would not trade it for anything.

Um especially after getting my master’s degree in education um from a predominately White institute. Um I mean I was there for business you know and it was very, it was just like we’re here to do this not that. (interview, January 17, 2016)

Simone described the HBCU experience as something that others should partake in. She seemed to advocate for the universities and encouraged others’ attendance when she said “I would uh encourage well anybody, not just a Black person, but anybody to go because it's just soulful and

it's just rich . . .” (Simone, interview, January 17, 2016). Simone seemed very well rounded as some of the experiences she described included studying abroad. Simone expressed how she valued her relationships with the education faculty so much that she would have greatly appreciated them reaching out to her even after graduation. She said “I think I would have benefited more if I had been contacted by my, a professor I had, you know? It was hard when I first graduated . . . (Simone, interview, January 17, 2016). Her biggest challenge that she expressed was the unpredictability associated with the yearly course scheduling that ultimately affected her graduation timeline. Simone said “The major issue that I had while a student at Windmont Hill University was the course planning” (blog response, January 4, 2016).

### **Deanna**

Deanna was a first grade teacher with six years of teaching experience. She graduated from Saint Clairview University with a degree in elementary education. At the time of the study, she was pursuing her National Board certification. Deanna really valued the intimacy that she experienced at her HBCU. She said “I would recommend attending because, just for the hands-on experience. The kind of intimate you know? You get to know your professors and they know you and um building that relationship” (Deanna, interview, January 12, 2016). Deanna attributed much of her preparedness for the field to her student teaching experience. During her interview she was asked about her readiness for teaching the content and classroom management among other things and she asked, “Can I equate this to a lot of student teaching? Because I feel like that’s when it came” (Deanna, interview, January 12, 2016). She seemed most concerned about her inability to access resources or content that addressed diverse learners during her undergraduate experience. A picture that Deanna posted on her blog site displayed statistics of the diversity in children’s books. Underneath that picture she wrote, “I’d say the hindrance

experience was the lack of resources and knowledge needed to be a culturally aware teacher” (Deanna, blog response, January 3, 2016). At the end of her interview, Deanna expressed with a smile that she felt her teaching preparation experience was commendable and others should attend HBCUs for teacher preparation.

### **Katrina**

Katrina was an elementary special education teacher with 11 years of teaching experience. She graduated from Saint Clairview University and obtained a degree in elementary education. She had recently spent two years teaching overseas, and she partially credits her ability to work with different cultures of students to some of her experiences at her HBCU as she was privileged to study abroad in Belize, Central America. Additionally, Katrina attended a PWI where she obtained her Master of Education degree with a specialization in special education. Katrina seemed to be especially appreciative of the opportunities that were provided to her as they allowed her to strengthen the dispositions she felt were needed for the profession. She said:

And so they had us to get to know each other, they took us on a tour of the city, um that we had several workshops on proper etiquette of um classroom etiquette as far as sitting in the front of the classroom, making sure you came prepared, um having all of your utensils, that you needed um just to make sure that we were um the model students. And so I thought that was very helpful. (Katrina, interview, January 12, 2016)

Katrina was very candid about her experiences as she provided information openly on what she considered to be positive and negative. She credited the professors who she felt were very hands-on and influential in her success as an educator, but she also mentioned the academic disconnect she experienced during her student teaching in her blog responses.

The other problem I had with my student teaching was my university supervisor. She did not consistently keep track of me because she felt like I was okay. Although, I passed with great feedback the few times she came, I would have liked to have had the proper amount of observations with feedback. That would have better prepared me for transitioning into my own classroom. (Katrina, blog response, January 6, 2016)

### **Julia**

Julia was a third grade teacher with three years of experience. She graduated from Windmont Hill University with a degree in elementary education. Julia displayed a strong love for and commitment to her HBCU. She expressed that she valued how committed HBCUs were to fulfilling the mission of providing services to others. She also loved the camaraderie though sometimes desiring to be overly involved caused Julia stress.

Being at an HBCU, it is expected to be involved with different extracurricular activities. You feel a sense of obligation to not just be a student but to also active participant in different organizations, clubs, and groups. However, for individuals like me, being a part of different groups, and not having a set schedule or plan for getting things done was very frustrating. (Julia, blog response, January 17, 2016)

However, she learned how to manage balancing many different activities and compared her ability to do so with balancing her duties as an educator. Julia said:

And those things I carried with me and I was able to do a lot of those things that you mentioned. I am the SIT [School Improvement Team] chair at school. I was grade level chair. I've done the um presenting at professional developments and what not and a lot of that came from being able to practice those things on smaller level while I was in school. (interview, January 17, 2016)

Julia spoke highly of the African-American female educators who instructed her along her journey and attributed much of her readiness and success to their efforts. She said, “Positive aspects were role models. I always felt like, even though I’ve never visited other teacher education programs, that we had enough women um in our program to show us what we wanted to be when we grew up” (Julia, interview, January 17, 2016). She spoke of a professor specifically when she said, “She [professor] was very instrumental in making sure that we finished the program, finished the process but then felt comfortable at the same time” (Julia, interview, January 17, 2016).

### **Takara**

Takara was a middle school teacher with four years of experience. She graduated from West Graham University and specialized in secondary mathematics. Takara attributed her completion of her secondary mathematics degree to her son.

I got pregnant with my son while attending an HBCU. I am a single African American woman who had to make something of herself as a single mom. My son was the biggest asset to me while working on my Bachelor’s degree. I knew after having him I needed to finish school. I became an educator to help my child be successful in the education world. (Takara, blog response, January 16, 2016)

Takara was adamant about her dislike for the staff within the teacher education program at the HBCU that she attended. She expressed her feelings in her blog post when she said, “The HBCU that I attended I would like to say that the faculty was a hindrance too while I attended school. I received no guidance from the education department staff members. They were actually mean, rude and disrespectful” (Takara, blog response, January 16, 2016). However, Takara did not feel that a negative experience would take place within all teacher education



programs at HBCUs, because when asked would she advise others to attend teacher education programs at HBCUs she said:

Yes, just not where I went. Yes, but just not where I went because teaching is not a bad thing . . . I would advise them [people] to go to the HBCUs that way you get a different, um it's a different demographic and background. It's a different bringing versus the Caucasian school. (Takara, interview, January 16, 2016)

Regardless of her preparation experience, Takara's love for education and passion for teaching students of all calibers was evident in her interview when she said, "You have to love to teach. People need to love to teach. If you don't love to teach, if you don't love children, if you don't love being around humans teaching is not for you" (interview, January 16, 2016) and in her blog post when she said "I also had a passion to help other children be successful in education" (blog response, January 16, 2016).

### **Angela**

Angela was an elementary teacher with three years of experience. She graduated from Frazelle University and specialized in elementary education. Angela valued the unique closeness that she experienced during the time at her HBCU. She said

Frazelle University is a small school and I think the atmosphere that it creates is very nurturing and specific to the school. I was around professors and students who look like me and who genuinely wanted to see me succeed. (Angela, blog response, January 3, 2016).

Angela attended predominantly White schools until her HBCU experience. As a result, she expressed the value in the experience of being around mostly African-Americans at an HBCU and being immersed with people of her same culture. Although Angela valued the HBCU

experience and her education classes, she was not fond of her student teaching experience, as she did not feel that it prepared her for what was to come after graduation.

One thing I regarded as a hindrance or an obstacle [to] my learning was during my student teaching period. I was assigned to a school that was predominately White with a pretty well off population. When I graduated from Frazelle I worked at [a] school that was in low-income area with low-income families. (Angela, blog response, January 3, 2016)

In addition to the school demographics, Angela did not like the amount of time that was allotted for student teaching.

Maybe like one week you are kind of shadowing the teacher, and then I think maybe the second week you kind of start taking over and then maybe three weeks because the third week it's all you. So that wasn't really long enough to get your feet wet because once like you have your own classroom like student teaching was like a joke. (Angela, interview, January 15, 2016).

Though she expressed her concerns about student teaching, Angela felt that she had a great experience. She said, "Um overall I had a great experience. I would do it all over again. I would still go to Frazelle" (Angela, interview, January 15, 2016).

### **Lena**

Lena was a third grade teacher with five years of experience who attended West Graham University. At the time of the study, she was working to obtain her master's degree in reading education at a PWI. During her interview, Lena asked for time to write out her thoughts in response to a question that focused on detailing the areas that HBCUs should focus on to ensure that upcoming teachers were prepared for the profession. Other times Lena asked for additional

time to think as she desired to be very thorough in her responses. Lena was very articulate and expressed what contributed to her fondness of the HBCU that she attended for her teacher education preparation. She said:

The biggest asset of attending West Graham University was that it was founded as the Tilley School in 1867 with a purpose of training teachers. This rich legacy fuels the education program at West Graham University today. Because it comes from such a rich and devoted history the education department at West Graham continues to honor the commitment it has to its students and community. (Lena, blog response, January 19, 2016)

She was appreciative to receive her instruction from African-Americans as she felt that they were knowledgeable in teaching varying cultures. Lena said:

And because my professors were minority themselves they were able to speak from a different experience and they were able to say when you're dealing with this culture in this way these are some helpful tips and when dealing with this culture in this way these are helpful tips. (interview, January 27, 2016).

### **Tracy**

Tracy was an assistant principal at an elementary school with 12 years of experience. She was a graduate of West Graham University who specialized in elementary education. Tracy expressed her continued focus of being a facilitator of learning as it was something she took away from her experience at her university. She said,

My instructors were not lecturers but “facilitators of learning.” The time I spent in class was engaging and I learned skills that I could transfer into my student teaching. The

phrase that I took away from the program was “facilitators of learning.” (Tracy, blog response, January 6, 2016).

Tracy appreciated the fact that her instructors were always readily available to assist students and that they were actual practitioners in the field. She said, “If I needed anything from my professors they were always there to help. They were always there to advise and being that we had the interns who worked right there in the school in the area” (Tracy, interview, January 17, 2016). The only thing that seemed to be a hindrance to her was the scheduling of courses, which were only offered during certain semesters. She expressed how poor scheduling affected her during her interview. She said:

So the one year that I got sick, so I missed out on some classes in the fall, so I had to wait a whole another year just taking elective classes because I couldn't get into it and I couldn't do my student teaching until the following year. So I graduated a year later because the courses just weren't offered. (Tracy, interview, January 17, 2016)

### **Courtney**

Courtney, a fourth grade teacher with 10 years of experience, attended Bliss State University. At the time of the study, she was working toward obtaining an additional area of licensure at a PWI. Courtney was a very active student during her time at her HBCU. She served as a Junior Cadet member, Model United Nations member, played basketball, and pledged a sorority. When she was asked to detail the positive and negative aspects of her teacher education program Courtney said, “Oh my gosh. I would say everything was positive” (interview, January 13, 2016). Courtney’s comments and expressions during her interview referenced how attending a PWI felt overrated after being admitted to attend for an additional area of teacher license. She said:

It [experience at a HBCU] was awesome. I would go to Bliss State again. Even like going to a PWI now, it's just like you know how in your mind you've always wanted to go to a PWI but then you get there and it's like, I'm at a PWI. (Courtney, interview, January 13, 2016)

Courtney appreciated the experiences she had that turned into tangible artifacts that she completed while matriculating through the teacher education program. She said:

I would recommend to go to a HBCU because after I graduated, my junior year they had us go out and do our interviews and all that stuff so we'd practice at school doing our interview. Like we had so much stuff portfolios, videos, we had the website where we had in like Google Docs all this stuff. It was like so much stuff that we had to offer. (Courtney, interview, January 13, 2016)

## **Results**

Within this section, I present the findings of the study using data triangulated from the questionnaires, blog responses, and interviews. Using the collective voices of the participants, I responded to the research questions individually.

### **Questionnaires**

Part A of the questionnaire contained questions to determine (a) the HBCU that the participants attended; (b) the HBCU locations; (c) the participants' graduation year; and (d) how many years of teaching experience they possessed as shown in Table 2. Using the responses from Part A of the questionnaire, I determined that the years of teaching experience among the participants ranged between 3-12 years. All of the participants graduated from their respective HBCUs between the years of 2003 and 2012. Two geographical locations were represented in

this study, as there were HBCU graduates from two neighboring states. There was representation from five different HBCUs.

Table 2

*Participant Demographics Obtained from Questionnaire*

| Participant | Years<br>of experience | Graduation<br>year | HBCU                       | Location |
|-------------|------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|----------|
| Sonya       | 3                      | 2012               | Windmont Hill University   | State 1  |
| Simone      | 4                      | 2011               | Windmont Hill University   | State 1  |
| Deanna      | 6                      | 2010               | Saint Clairview University | State 1  |
| Katrina     | 11                     | 2004               | Saint Clairview University | State 1  |
| Julia       | 3                      | 2011               | Windmont Hill University   | State 1  |
| Takara      | 4                      | 2012               | West Graham University     | State 1  |
| Angela      | 3                      | 2012               | Frazelle University        | State 2  |
| Lena        | 5                      | 2010               | West Graham University     | State 1  |
| Tracy       | 12                     | 2003               | West Graham University     | State 1  |
| Courtney    | 10                     | 2006               | Bliss State University     | State 1  |

Part B of the questionnaire consisted of the TSES. The TSES is comprised of 24 questions with three different subscales focusing on efficacy in student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. There were eight questions for each of the three subscales. I utilized the questions to determine how much the participants felt they could do in each situation presented to them. I utilized a Likert scale for this part of the questionnaire with values from 1-9, with one being assigned a value of “Nothing” and nine the value of “A Great Deal.” I computed a scale score for each of the subscale areas by adding the scores together for the eight specific questions. Then, I calculated a subscale mean for each area by dividing the scale score totals by eight as shown in Table 3.

After looking at the subscale means for student engagement, and rounding them to the nearest whole number, I determined that two participants felt that they could do a great deal in this area, five participants felt they could do quite a bit, and three participants felt they had some influence in this area. After analyzing the subscale means in the area of instructional strategies

when rounded to the nearest whole number, I determined that one participant felt she could do a great deal in this area, eight participants felt they could do quite a bit, and one participant felt she had some influence in the area. Finally, my analysis of subscale means in the area of classroom management led me to determine that three participants felt they could do a great deal in this area, five felt they could do quite a bit, and two felt they had some influence.

Table 3

*Participant Subscale Means on the Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale*

| Participant | Student engagement | Instructional strategies | Classroom management |
|-------------|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Sonya       | 7.25               | 7.00                     | 8.13                 |
| Simone      | 6.88               | 7.00                     | 8.38                 |
| Deanna      | 8.75               | 8.25                     | 8.50                 |
| Katrina     | 8.25               | 8.75                     | 8.63                 |
| Julia       | 5.50               | 6.63                     | 6.38                 |
| Takara      | 6.13               | 6.00                     | 6.00                 |
| Angela      | 7.00               | 7.75                     | 7.50                 |
| Lena        | 7.63               | 8.00                     | 8.38                 |
| Tracy       | 6.38               | 8.00                     | 8.38                 |
| Courtney    | 8.63               | 8.25                     | 8.75                 |

*Note.* Values ranged from one to nine, with one being assigned a value of “Nothing”, three being assigned a value of “Very Little”, five being assigned a value of “Some Influence”, seven being assigned a value of “Quite a Bit”, and nine the value of “A Great Deal.”

In addition to analyzing the subscale means to describe how the participants felt holistically about their abilities to perform as a teacher in the areas of classroom management, instructional strategies, and classroom management, I analyzed the descriptive data from each of the eight questions per subscale as shown in Table 3. I used the descriptive data to note the specific areas that the participants felt the most and least confident in their ability to perform and their perceptions in terms of readiness for the field. None of the participants felt they could do “Nothing” or “Very Little” in any of the situations presented to them on the questionnaire. They all indicated that they at least had “Some Influence.” In reference to student engagement, over half of the participants felt that they could do quite a bit or more to (a) help students think

critically; (b) motivate students with low interest in their work; (c) get students to believe they could do well in school work; (d) foster student creativity; (e) help students value learning; (f) assist families in helping their children do well in school; and (g) improve the understanding of a student who is failing, as shown in Table 4. In the area of classroom management over half of the participants felt that they could do quite a bit or more to (a) control disruptive behavior; (b) make expectations clear about student behavior; (c) establish routines to keep activities running smoothly; (d) get children to follow classroom rules; (e) calm a student who is disruptive or noisy; (f) establish a classroom management system with each group of students; (g) keep a few students from ruining an entire lesson; and (h) respond to defiant students, as shown in Table 4. Last, over half of the participants indicated that they felt they could do quite a bit or more employing instructional strategies to (a) respond to difficult questions from students; (b) gauge student comprehension of what was taught; (c) craft good questions; (d) adjust lessons to the proper level; (e) use a variety of assessment strategies; (f) implement alternative classroom strategies; (g) provide appropriate challenges for very capable students; and (h) provide alternate explanations when students feel confused, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4

*Participant Ratings on the Descriptors within the Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale*

| Specific subscale  | Descriptor  | Some influence <sup>a</sup> | Quite a bit <sup>b</sup> | A great deal <sup>c</sup> |
|--------------------|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Student Engagement | Get through to most difficult students                  | 4                           | 2                        | 3                         |
|                    | Help students think critically                          | 4                           | 3                        | 3                         |
|                    | Motivate students with low interest in work             | 4                           | 4                        | 2                         |
|                    | Get students to believe they can do well in school work | 1                           | 5                        | 4                         |
|                    | Help students value learning                            | 2                           | 7                        | 1                         |



| Specific subscale        | Descriptor  | Some influence <sup>a</sup> | Quite a bit <sup>b</sup> | A great deal <sup>c</sup> |
|--------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Student Engagement       | Foster student creativity   | 4                           | 4                        | 2                         |
|                          | Assist families in helping their children do well in school         | 3                           | 5                        | 2                         |
|                          | Improve understanding of a student who is failing                   | 2                           | 5                        | 3                         |
| Classroom Management     | Control disruptive behavior   | 1                           | 5                        | 4                         |
|                          | Make expectations clear about student behavior                      | 2                           | 1                        | 7                         |
|                          | Establish routines to keep activities running smoothly              | 0                           | 6                        | 4                         |
|                          | Get children to follow classroom rules                              | 1                           | 3                        | 6                         |
|                          | Calm a student who is disruptive or noisy                           | 2                           | 6                        | 2                         |
|                          | Establish a classroom management system with each group of students | 1                           | 2                        | 7                         |
|                          | Keep a few students from ruining an entire lesson                   | 1                           | 5                        | 4                         |
| Instructional Strategies | Respond to defiant students   | 3                           | 6                        | 2                         |
|                          | Respond to difficult questions from students                        | 2                           | 7                        | 1                         |
|                          | Gauge student comprehension of what was taught                      | 1                           | 8                        | 1                         |
|                          | Craft good questions for students                                   | 3                           | 4                        | 4                         |
|                          | Adjust lessons to the proper level for individual students          | 3                           | 3                        | 4                         |
|                          | Use a variety of assessment strategies                              | 2                           | 4                        | 4                         |
|                          | Implement alternative strategies in classroom                       | 3                           | 5                        | 7                         |

| Specific subscale        | Descriptor   | Some influence <sup>a</sup> | Quite a bit <sup>b</sup> | A great deal <sup>c</sup> |
|--------------------------|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Instructional Strategies | Provide appropriate challenges for very capable students                 | 1                           | 6                        | 3                         |
|                          | Provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused | 2                           | 5                        | 3                         |

*Note.* Scale descriptors from Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001). Reproduced with permission.

<sup>a</sup>Number of participants who selected “Some Influence.” <sup>b</sup>Number of participants who selected “Quite a Bit.”

<sup>c</sup>Number of participants who selected “A Great Deal.”

## Blogs and Interviews

I used content from the blogs and interviews to hear the voices of the participants and gain specific details about what exactly occurred during their teacher education programs at their HBCUs and how it occurred. I used these data collection methods to compile the textural and structural descriptions of the phenomenon. The individualized interviews, which ranged from 11 to 45 minutes allowed me to have rich discussions with the participants to gain information that proved to be useful in describing the overall essence of the phenomenon.

After thoroughly reading the raw text of the blogs and bracketing commonalities (see Appendix K for bracketed text from blogs and interviews), I derived a list of codes and code definitions for each blog question as shown in Table 5. Similarly, for interviews, I read the content and bracketed commonalities found within the text (see Appendix K for bracketed text from blogs and interviews). I derived a list of codes for each research question as I placed the raw text from the interviews under the research question that it aligned to. I placed these additions on my code list as well as shown in Table 5.

Table 5

*Code List for Blogs and Interviews*

| Method of data collection | Codes  | Code definitions  |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| Blog 1                    | Positive professor impact  | Recollection by participant of a professor who made a positive impact on their readiness for the field.   |
|                           | Professional development opportunities                               | Continuing education experiences outside of typical coursework provided to students during their matriculation of their teacher education programs. |
|                           | Outside/extracurricular influences                                   | Social interactions outside of the teacher education program and their impact on the participant.   |
|                           | Legacy of teacher colleges   | Any mention of the history of a HBCU as a teacher college.  |
| Blog 2                    | Lack of exposure to diverse populations                              | Any mention of perceived lack of experience with students of diverse backgrounds while in their teacher education program.                          |
|                           | Negative student teaching experience                                 | Participant's recollections of negative experiences during student teaching.  |
|                           | Issues with course availability                                      | Any mention of difficulty registering for courses based on them not being offered by the university.  |
|                           | Issues with staff helpfulness in school of education                 | Participant reports of difficulties directly caused by staff employed within their respective schools of education.                                 |
|                           | Effects of campus involvement  | Actions that participants reported occurred as a result of their involvement of campus extracurricular activities.                                  |
|                           | Financial hardships due to course availability and scheduling errors | Recollection of a participant of additional unexpected expenses due to courses not being offered or incorrect paradigms.                            |
| Interviews-RQ1            | HBCUs are good schools for   | Participants report that others   |

| Method of data collection | Codes  | Code definitions   |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| Interviews-RQ2            | teacher education                              | should attend HBCUs as they are good places for teacher preparation.   |
|                           | HBCU teachers look like the students           | Participants mention that their professors were African-American females.  |
|                           | How HBCUs compare to non-HBCUs                 | Any mention or comparison of things that occurred at non-HBCUs.  |
|                           | HBCU feel and purpose                          | References about how it felt to attend a HBCU, the unique components, culture, and/or mission.                       |
|                           | Professor contributions                        | Recollection by participant about how their professors contributed to readiness for the field.                       |
|                           | Overall levels of preparedness                 | Participant expressions of how prepared they felt overall to become a teacher upon graduation.                       |
|                           | Organizational/extracurricular activities      | References about how extracurricular activities and extracurricular activities contributed to preparedness to teach. |
|                           | Carrying dispositions over into the profession | Specific experiences that fostered dispositions that were carried over into the field upon graduation.               |
|                           | Field experiences                              | References to field experiences offered during teacher education preparation.  |
|                           | Professor influences                           | Specific experiences with professors that influenced readiness for the teaching field.                               |
| Interviews-RQ2            | Things experienced after graduation            | Any mention of areas that participants felt they learned after graduation.   |
|                           | Standards alignment                            | Specific experiences offered that focused on aligning content with standards.  |
|                           | Coursework                                     | Participant reports of specific  |

| Method of data collection | Codes                                      | Code definitions  |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| Interviews-RQ3            | Experiential learning                      | courses or coursework that influenced readiness during their teacher education preparation.<br>Participant reports of engaging in experiential learning during their teacher education courses. |
|                           | Balance of education and experiences       | Participant responses in reference to whether there was an equal amount of education and experiences.   |
|                           | Areas where more is needed                 | Any mention of areas that participants indicated they could have used more practice in prior to graduation.   |
|                           | Diverse learner dynamics                   | Any expression of the need for HBCUs to focus on teaching differentiated instruction or how to teach different academic or racial demographics of students.                                     |
|                           | Classroom management                       | Any expression of the need for HBCUs to focus on how to carry out classroom management.   |
|                           | Technology                                 | Any expression of the need for HBCUs to teach how to incorporate technology meaningfully into instruction.  |
|                           | Standards, curriculum, and lesson planning | Any references to the need for teaching students how to plan lessons according to the curriculum and standards.   |
|                           | Parent relations and communication         | Any reference to continued teaching of social skills and parent/community relations.  |
| Interviews-RQ4            | Assessments                                | Any references to teaching how to manage the collection of student data and/or analyze the results.   |
|                           | Course availability/planning               | Any mention of difficulty registering for courses based on them not being offered by the university.  |

| Method of data collection | Codes                       | Code definitions  |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Interviews-RQ4            | Student teaching complaints | Participant's recollections of experiences that they felt were lacking during their student teaching. |

After coding the data from the blogs and interviews, I combined the open codes from the blogs and interviews together by research question and conducted two-tiered coding by copying and pasting all of the bracketed color-coded content into separate Word documents. I identified sub-themes and themes for each research question as shown in Table 6 by reviewing the bracketed and coded content for repeated words, phrases, and ideas.

Table 6

*Emerging Themes and Sub-Themes*

| Open codes for<br>blogs and interviews         | Sub-themes   | Themes  |
|--|--|---|
| HBCUs are good schools for teacher education   | Thorough preparation                               | Confidence in HBCU preparation                                |
| HBCU teachers look like the students           | Legacy continuance                                 |   |
| How HBCUs compare to non-HBCUs                 |  |   |
| HBCU feel and purpose                          | Racial dynamics                                    | Social/emotional factors surround feelings of preparedness    |
| Professor contributions                        |  |   |
| Overall levels of preparedness                 | Unique sense of belonging                          |   |
|  | Relationship-building                              |   |
| Organizational/extracurricular activities      | Intersection of coursework and experiences at HBCU | Evidence of continuity  |
| Carrying dispositions over into the profession |  |   |
| Field experiences                              | Some skills obtained upon graduation               | Many embedded experiences (interaction)                       |
| Professor influences                           |  |   |
| Things experienced after graduation            | High expectations for teacher colleges             | Still lacking in some areas to fully address teaching demands |
| Standards alignment                            |  |   |
| Coursework                                     |  |   |
| Experiential learning                          |  |   |
| Balance of education and experiences           |  |   |
| Areas where more is needed                     |  |   |
| Positive professor impact                      |  |   |
| Professional development opportunities         |  |   |
| Outside/extracurricular influences             |  |   |

| Open codes for<br>blogs and interviews                               | Sub-themes                               | Themes   |
|--|--|--|
| Legacy of teacher colleges   |  |  |
| Diverse learner dynamics   | Differentiation procedures and awareness | Additional resources were mostly related to curriculum and instruction |
| Classroom management   |  |  |
| Technology   |  |  |
| Standards, curriculum, and lesson planning                           | Instructional need-to-knows              |  |
| Parent relations and communication                                   | Management of multiple stakeholders      | Some related to non-teaching duties                                    |
| Assessments  |  |  |
| Course availability/planning   | External and internal obstacles          | Departmental challenges  |
| Student teaching complaints  |  |  |
| Lack of exposure to diverse populations                              |  | Instructional challenges   |
| Negative student teaching experience                                 |  |  |
| Issues with course availability                                      |  |  |
| Issues with staff helpfulness in school of education                 |  | Personal challenges  |
| Effects of campus involvement  |  |  |
| Financial hardships due to course availability and scheduling errors |  |  |

### Themes

I analyzed the data from the questionnaires, blogs, and interviews, to identify codes, sub-themes, and themes. The subsequent section includes the themes found for each research question.

#### Research Question One

Research question one, “What are the perceptions of preparedness for African-American female teacher education graduates at Historically Black Colleges and Universities?” was designed to identify the factors, if any that the African-American teacher graduates perceived to contribute to, or affect their preparedness for the field. Responses centered around two themes:

- Confidence in HBCUs’ ability to prepare future teachers
- Social and emotional factors influenced preparedness

Confidence in HBCUs' ability to prepare future teachers. During their interviews, I asked participants to express how prepared they felt for the teaching field after attending their HBCU teacher education programs. Simone expressed her mixed feelings about how prepared she felt since she accepted a teaching assignment in the middle of the school year. However, as she concluded her comment, she indicated that she felt that her HBCU prepared and trained her on what to do even at times when she was unsure. In her interview, she said:

Right after I graduated in December 2011, in March 2012 I took over a class. Um a teacher had left and I was, I felt like I was not prepared because the class was crazy. I was just kind of thrown in there but you know again a lot of the teaching aspect of, of it is just getting in there and doing it and sometimes what you were taught you don't even think about it. You just kind of end up just doing it. You know what I mean? It just gets engraved and you just end up doing it. So a lot of it has come along the way but I was prepared enough to know what I had to do so my HBCU prepared me. I knew what I was going there to do and I knew how to, I knew the steps. Ask questions if you don't know, you know? So they prepared me. (Simone, interview, January 17, 2016)

Julia also seemed to learn how to manage certain elements of teaching after getting into the field. However, she credits her transferable skills to some of the things she was taught at her HBCU.

In her interview, she said:

You can show and you can experience working within the community but until you have your own classroom, that teacher parent relationship, you can't teach it. So other than that I was pretty prepared. They taught me a lot of social skills, a lot of things, a lot of conversation tips to make that relationship but only you can put it into practice. (Julia, interview, January 18, 2016)



Julia also expressed her confidence in her HBCU's teacher education program to teach how to value the differences in children. She communicated her contentment with her HBCU experience in her interview, when she said:

Um I was very, very pleased with my teacher preparation experience. Um being at a HBCU taught me how to work with different types of kids but how to appreciate every child um just the same way that our professors appreciated us. (Julia, interview, January 18, 2016).

In a blog response, Lena said:

Having education week and the Excellence in Teaching conference on your college campus sets the standard for academic achievement and professional achievement. It makes you empowered knowing teachers across the district are on the campus of your HBCU to learn more about perfecting their craft. (blog response, January 19, 2016)

When expressing of levels of preparedness on a scale from 1-5, with five being the highest level, Lena felt that she was prepared at the highest level. She further expressed her confidence in HBCUs' ability to prepare teacher candidates when she said in her interview:

I might have come out and behaved at a four but not because they didn't tell me, they didn't teach me. And I would say I might have performed at a four due to the paperwork. But we were definitely told about the paperwork in um, in school and with the documentation, documentation, documentation. Like I remember my college professor saying that. Now it took me a while to find my own system of implementing that but as far as them preparing me that was at a five. And of course as you go from school to school you find your own way. So I might have come out working at a four but they left me at a five. (Lena, interview, January 27, 2016)

Sonya reiterated her confidence in HBCU teacher preparation of candidates in her interview when she said “I really feel like Windmont Hill University prepared me for the real world of teaching, not the sugarcoated part, but the real world of teaching” (interview, January 12, 2016).

Every participant recommended that other individuals should attend HBCUs for teacher preparation. Takara was not fond of her HBCU teacher education experiences with faculty, but she still recommended that others attend. When asked during her interview whether she would recommend attending a HBCU teacher education program, she said, “Yes, just not where I went. . . I would advise them to go to the HBCUs that way you get a different, um it’s a different demographic and background. It’s a different bringing versus the Caucasian school” (Takara, interview, January 16, 2016). Deanna also recommended attending a HBCU for teacher preparation she said, “I would recommend attending because, just for the hands-on experience. The kind of intimate you know? You get to know your professors and they know you and um building that relationship” (interview, January 12, 2016).

Other participants recommended HBCU attendance for teacher education candidates due to their levels of preparedness. However, there was some underlying racial ethos as in their interviews, Katrina, Julia, and Angela recommended it more so for those of African-American descent. Katrina spoke from personal experience by saying, “Um for an African-American I would recommend it um because I know I didn’t get lost at the university” (interview, January 12, 2016). Julia expressed her love for HBCUs in general by saying, “Um I would but I am pro-HBCU period though, teacher education program or not. Um especially if you’re a person of color, any type of color” (interview, January, 18, 2016). Finally, Angela spoke on the positive aspects of being an African-American obtaining higher education in the presence of others that look like them by saying,

So I definitely do recommend if you are Black, it's just good to be around like people doing the same thing you are doing that's positive. Especially like a lot of times on the news we are portrayed to do negative things so it's great to just be in that atmosphere where everyone's like about their business. (interview, January 15, 2016)

The responses from Katrina, Angela, and Julia all suggested that being an African-American at a university that mostly prepares individuals of this race, may have contributed to how prepared they felt. The idea resurfaced again as many participants expressed worry about how teacher education preparation feels at non-HBCUs. Once again Takara stated, "It's a different bringing versus the Caucasian school" (interview, January 16, 2016). Katrina, Simone, and Courtney have all attended PWIs and expressed some of the things that they heard or experienced in comparison to HBCUs. Not wanting others to get lost, Katrina shared, "And I've heard um at some of the non-HBCUs you're easily um overlooked and so for that reason I would recommend it" (interview, January 12, 2016). In her blog, she said "The university did really well with preparing me for the education profession" (blog response, January 6, 2016). Courtney talked about being less engaged at the non-HBCU versus the HBCU she attended. She stated:

When I didn't pass the Praxis they were like, some still little classes that I may take at (specific non-HBCU), so I did take those classes. It was horrible. There was somebody just standing up there talking about nothing. I mean things where I feel like if I would have just went to (specific non-HBCU) I would have died. Like I would have not felt confident to do anything. (Courtney, interview, January 13, 2016)

Simone felt similar to Courtney as she expressed how business was run during her experience at a PWI. She spoke about how she would not trade her HBCU experience.

Yes, overall it was amazing and I wouldn't trade it, I would not trade it for anything. Um especially after getting my master's degree in education um from a Predominately White Institute. Um I mean I was there for business you know and it was very, it was just like we're here to do this not that. (Simone, interview, January 17, 2016)

Julia indicated that she needed more than just business as normal in her teacher education program as she expressed her individual professor experiences.

They taught us how to motivate the same way that our professors motivated us and I'm not sure that you would get that at a larger or more diversified program. Um it felt like there was a need, like I wasn't just going through the programs so I may be another teacher. (Julia, interview, January 18, 2016)

Angela and Courtney assured me that they had superb experiences at their HBCUs and that they would attend them again if the same opportunity presented itself (Angela, interview, January 15, 2016; Courtney interview, January 17, 2016). Specifically, in her blog, Angela said, "They always say there is no experience like an HBCU experience. After graduating from Frazelle University and stepping out in the real world, and interacting with people from different walks of life, I believed this to be true" (blog response, January 3, 2016).

I noticed that saturation occurred when I coupled repeated phrases together that had underlying meanings from the blogs and interviews. In the blogs I found phrases related to topics such as "transitioning into my own classroom" and coupled it with repeated phrases in the interviews that had similar underlying meanings like, "a lot of it had to come along the way," "until you have your own classroom," "you can't teach it," or "you find your own way." Additionally, I noted words and phrases in the interviews like "pleased," "awesome," "really well," "would advise," "would recommend," and "great experience." There were similar

statements in the blogs as there were words and phrases like “fond memories,” “did really well,” “really well,” “wonderful,” and “no experience like an HBCU experience.” Overall, a majority of the participants indicated that they were prepared for the teaching field upon graduation, and they were confident in HBCUs’ abilities to educate other teacher education candidates. Their endorsements of HBCU attendance for teacher education preparation verified their levels of contentment with their personal preparation. Some of the participants reflected about what attendance would be like, or was like at non-HBCUs, and revisited the fact that they felt satisfied with their preparation at their HBCUs.

Factors that influenced preparedness. There were many factors that influenced the feelings of preparation within the participants. One of the first factors to be addressed dates back to the history and legacy of HBCUs. Lena expressed her knowledge of her university’s history of being a teacher’s college. She articulated in her blog response how the program had influenced her preparedness by honoring their commitment.

The biggest asset of attending West Graham University was that it was founded as the Jubilee School in 1867 with a purpose of training teachers. This rich legacy fuels the education program at West Graham University today. Because it comes from such a rich and devoted history, the education department at West Graham continues to honor the commitment it has to its students and community. (Lena, blog response, January 19, 2016)

Sonya met many alumni of Windmont Hill University who had attended the school while it was a teacher’s college. In her blog, she spoke about their contributions to her preparation when she said, “I met a lot of older females and males in my home state . . .that attended Windmont Hill University when it was the Teacher’s College. They shared their personal stories and how they

had been teaching” (Sonya, blog response, December 20, 2015). Simone also discussed the history of HBCUs while encouraging all races to attend when she said in her interview, “I would encourage, well anybody, not just a Black person, but anybody to go because it’s just soulful and it’s just rich, the history is rich and I just think we really need to keep that alive and going” (interview, January 17, 2016). In addition to the history, Julia, Angela, and Simone discussed how the social environment of the HBCU seemed to play a role in preparedness. A social obligation to be involved was noted in Julia’s interview as she stated:

I think you just get that camaraderie, that feeling from a HBCU that you’re not going to find anywhere else . . . you had an obligation to be involved and I’m not quite sure it’s like that everywhere, but at a HBCU you can’t just come and be a student. You can’t just come and go to class. You have to do something, you have to be somewhere because this was built for you so you have to give back some way, shape, or form. (interview, January 18, 2016).

Angela and Simone touched on the social experiences in their interviews much like Julia and what she mentioned about the camaraderie that is evident at HBCUs. Simone mentioned, “I just as an undergrad I had a lot fun being at an HBCU with the culture and just, it was just so fun. I really enjoyed my experience” (interview, January 17, 2016). Angela said,

Like you know we have fun of course and its college and you have fun, but it’s just nice to know that everyone is there for a reason to better themselves and I think that it helps me even with dealing with my kids now. (interview, January 15, 2016)

The next factor that seemed to be a huge contributor to preparation was the professors in general. Tracy stated in her interview, “I think that I was well prepared when I became a teacher

um mainly from the help of the professors” (interview, January 17, 2016). Additionally, on her blog Tracy said:

Everything that was an asset to my learning took place in the education building. The professors that I had took the information from the textbooks and made it relevant to the current teaching practices. My professors instructed us using strategies that we could use in the classroom while we were student teaching. My instructors were not lecturers but “facilitators of learning.” (blog response, January 6, 2016).

Tracy’s preparedness to implement instructional strategies through her professors’ help was also evident on her TSES. On her questionnaire, she indicated that she could do quite a bit, to a great deal to respond to difficult questions from students, gauge student comprehension of what she had taught, craft good questions for her students, adjust her lessons to the proper level for individual students, and provide appropriate challenges for very capable students (questionnaire, December 31, 2015).

Instances of othermothering were evident in some of the participants’ responses. Othermothering was another factor that influenced participants’ levels of preparedness for the teaching field. For instance, while speaking about her professors and experiences during her interview, Deanna showed that she valued her nurturing relationships with her professors or othermothers by saying:

I had older African-American ladies who I considered, like they reminded me of a great aunt or a grandmother that I may really talk to and kind of get all the way down to the nitty gritty about stuff. So I really appreciated that. (interview, January 12, 2016)

Julia spoke about a situation where it was hard to stay the course for her entire cohort and they had a professor or othermother who encouraged them to stay on track. Julia said,

She was very instrumental in making sure that we finished the program, finished the process but then felt comfortable at the same time. And we were all getting to the point closer to graduation where we were just tired and then if we were tired finishing school, like how would we feel once we started teaching for real? And she was very, very supportive and understanding and she eased a lot of fears. Her teaching style even though we knew that she was superior we knew that she was teaching us to be what we wanted to be, at the same time she spoke to us and treated as equally and really had us feeling like we were already teachers, we were already a part of this profession even though we hadn't quite yet met all of the qualifications. Um we all left there with a sense of responsibility like we're leaving here, we're doing this to make sure that we reach someone the same way that she reached us. So uh she was very, very instrumental um for me but I feel like I'm probably speaking for the majority of us that came out at the same time. Um very instrumental in us just being where we are now. (interview, January 18, 2016)

Julia also spoke about how her professors taught her a lot of the social skills that were necessary as an educator. Angela talked about her professor's helpfulness too as she said:

Definitely, like there were little tips that my professor would say . . . he would say don't eat in the teacher's lounge. Don't . . . you know teachers gossip and women you know we gossip. So I think there were little tidbits like to this day I don't eat in the teacher's lounge . . . I kind of took that. (interview, January 15, 2016)

The participants felt like most professors were caring and very helpful, which again falls in line with the acts of othermothering. Julia indicated that she felt appreciated and as a result, carries her appreciation for others into the classroom with this statement:



Um I was very, very pleased with my teacher preparation experience. Um being at a HBCU taught me how to work with different types of kids but how to appreciate every child um just the same way that our professors appreciated us. (interview, January 18, 2016)

Katrina talked about how the professors were caring and willing to assist in any way needed in her interview by saying:

Um, positive I would go back to the professors being caring um wanting the best of, of us; wanting us all to succeed. If they felt like there was something you didn't understand they actually would pull you after class and work with you. (interview, January 12, 2016)

Sonya reiterated that concept within her interview by stating:

They were all very supportive and they uh asked was there something you need, was there something I may help you with, do you have questions about anything. So they were always concerned with how we were feeling as students in the education department because they knew that at any time you may give up. It may become too much and I know people personally who had some stories where they had to stop and leave and come back and finish um and those professors were right there every step of the way to make sure that they didn't give up and to make sure that they returned. (interview, January 12, 2016)

Finally, Angela expressed during her interview how the lasting relationships continue to be meaningful to her by saying, "But like my professors I know I can call them now . . . So it's great to know that you have those long like great lasting relationships with people" (interview, January 15, 2016).

The professors contributed to preparedness not only through othermothering but also through their instructional supports. In their interviews, Deanna, Angela, and Lena spoke on their professors' contributions in that aspect. Deanna said,

So positive aspects were, I would have to go back to my professors. They made it a really great experience as far as taking us out on field experiences, showing us the different classrooms, what to do, what not to do. So really hands-on in that aspect.

(interview, January 12, 2016)

Angela said,

Um I think the positives um were like the professors. I think like because we were such a small classroom setting we were able to do more. Like they may spend more time going over material or working with us or making sure that we got things. (interview, January 15, 2016)

Finally, Lena discussed how the professors clearly articulated their purpose for being there from the very start by saying, "The positive aspects were the professors who were just set on making sure I understood what it was I was doing and they let that be known at the beginning of the year" (interview, January 27, 2016).

Another factor that surrounded the participants' levels of preparedness for the field after attending HBCUs included being able to relate to those who taught the classes in terms of race and sometimes gender. In some cases, it prepared them for who they would teach. Lena said,

And because my professors were minorities themselves they were able to speak from a different experience and they were able to say when you're dealing with this culture in this way these are some helpful tips and when dealing with this culture in this way these are some helpful tips. Because they are coming from the side of the oppressed, of the

neglected as far as curriculum and so they were very conscious of teaching their teachers or future teachers to be aware of what's missing. And I'm not sure if somebody who finds themselves as the majority in America would have thought to even teach their teachers about the minorities they are going to encounter. (interview, January 27, 2016)

Julia also valued being able to relate to the African-American professors who essentially taught her about the profession. She said,

Positive aspects were role models. I always felt like, even though I've never visited other teacher education programs that we had enough women um in our program to show us what we wanted to be when we grew up. Um the, the people that we were surrounded with were definitely assets. (interview, January 18, 2016)

Sonya expressed how she felt emotionally whenever individuals told her that her course of study was considered easy since she completed her studies at a HBCU. She also expressed how having professors who looked like her helped with uneasy feelings that beginning teachers may have.

Sonya said,

No, it's really not [easy] because we had to do what was required and what the professors already knew because our professors looked like us. They already knew what we were going to have to deal with going into the profession as an African-American as being young, as being the new teacher on the block, all of those different things that may set somebody back or make them change their career from being a teacher. So we got the best of both worlds and um I think that is what really prepared me. (interview, January 12, 2016)

Wholly, the participants were confident in the ability of HBCUs to educate future teachers. Some of the contributing factors included the HBCU environment and the racial

dynamics present. In the interviews, participants repeated phrases that referenced the unique components of HBCUs that contributed to preparedness like “rich history,” “culture,” and “camaraderie.” Additional words and phrases used by participants in the blogs like “no experience like an HBCU experience,” “rich and devoted history,” and “set the standard for academic and professional achievement” were evidences of saturated data as they were reoccurrences in multiple participants’ responses. However, one of the most resounding findings or factors that contributed to levels of preparedness was the professors’ contributions that were emotional, social, and academic. There were repeated words and phrases in the interviews that participants used to describe professors and their actions like, “caring,” “supportive,” “understanding,” “instrumental,” “role models,” “lasting relationships,” “showed us,” “instructed us,” “would pull you after class,” “spend more time,” “make sure that I didn’t give up,” and “making sure that I understood.” Furthermore, in the blogs, the participants described professors by using words and phrases like, “driving force,” “excellent educator,” “played a big role,” “genuinely wanted to see me succeed,” “high expectations,” and “biggest impact on my experience.” Multiple occurrences of the same ideas amongst previous sources of data were evidences of saturation.

### **Research Question Two**

Research question two, “What characteristics of Dewey’s (1938) theory of combining experience and education do African-American female teacher graduates of HBCU programs feel contributed to their preparedness?” was designed to discover the underlying characteristics of Dewey’s theory of experience and education that were present in HBCU teacher education programs. I identified two themes in regard to this question. These themes were:

- Participants experienced continuity

- Participants experienced interaction

Continuity. Lena expressed how her university addressed continuity in teaching skills and actual application as she stated:

Any course that you took under the school even before you entered the school of education there was a real live observation or practicum piece to it. So I think it was very balanced and that was important because I was able to immediately apply what I was learning. It wasn't four years later . . . I go to class and oh we were just learning about this! So the next day when I'm sitting in one of my assigned high schools listening to that teacher, I can relate. And so they did a very good job balancing it out. (interview, January 27, 2016)

Sonya, Deanna, and Courtney discussed that there was an even balance of coursework and experiences within their program and that the two intersected. Sonya spoke of what she recalled in terms of the balance of education and experiences in this statement:

I think it was pretty balanced if I recall. Um, I know every semester up until my practicum I did field experience and we had to have at least 40 hours in the classroom I believe . . . like I said earlier we were able to visit different types of classrooms, different grade levels. Um, I think it was pretty balanced. (interview, January 12, 2016)

Deanna also felt that there was a good balance between the coursework and experiences that her HBCU provided. She remarked,

I think it did provide a good amount of balance between the two. The coursework I think it prepared me as far as getting a portfolio. Making sure that I had all of the different components, knowing how to do a resume, you know everything that they required us to

do. And the experience, we had tons of hours of field experience to adhere to and make sure that we covered. (Deanna, interview, January 12, 2016)

Finally, Courtney expressed her opinion on the combination of coursework and experiences. She stated,

Coursework and experiences, definitely so. It was like never a time that we were just in the class all the time. Like we would walk over to the library and sit there and do different things or go to . . . different schools. (Courtney, interview, January 13, 2016)

Julia and Tracy felt that there was a good balance of coursework and experience. However, they indicated that at times the amount of coursework was hefty for them. Julia showed that she realized the value by stating, “I do think they gave us a balance of coursework and experience. At one point, I felt like they were just giving us too much coursework. But looking back it was to better prepare us” (interview, January 18, 2016). Tracy said,

I think if they gave us anymore course work then I wouldn’t want to do it. But I think they divided it up equally enough to give us that, the one semester we did student teaching was completely free of actually going to class. (interview, January 17, 2016)

All other participants, with the exception of one, felt there was continuity in the experiences and educational components at their HBCUs. There was one notable exception as Takara felt the coursework was there, but a majority of her experiences had to come after graduation. She stated,

Coursework, yeah, because they give you the work and the work you do and you make sure you get it done because it’s more of an endurance test . . . as far as experiences no. I did not get those until I got out. (Takara, interview, January 16, 2016)

Another element present within the HBCU teacher education programs were skills that some of the participants learned through their experiences within their coursework. Sonya and Julia both discussed how some of their classroom experiences assisted them with their communication and public speaking skills today. Therefore, these things carried over from the past to the future and allowed their learning to advance. Julia said,

Another thing that sticks out is . . . Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ celebrations. Um it was one way all of us got a chance to speak and there was no being shy you had to speak . . . so that really promoted those skills and um let us be more personable with one another so we may do that amongst colleagues and it definitely carried over to the profession. (interview, January 18, 2016)

Sonya discussed the experience that assisted her with becoming a leader and sound communicator. She remarked,

Another experience, uh that kind of made . . . me to be the leader but secured me in in knowing that it's okay to ask questions when you don't understand. I had a professor who told us on the first day of my freshman seminar to ask for what you want. The worst answer you can get is no and that stuck with me ever since then. Um and that's what I do now. When I don't understand or I need something to be done I am going to ask and if you tell me no I may wait maybe a week or two and ask you again so . . . knowing how to talk to people or how to communicate what you need from people or what you need as an individual. (Sonya, interview, January 12, 2016)

The tenet of continuity suggests that each experience will influence an individual's perceptions for better or worse, as was noted by the participants. Takara was possibly negatively influenced as she did not feel that she had enough experience prior to going into the field. Some of the

other participants may have been influenced in a different way because they had experiences they may carry over into their future classrooms. Reoccurrences were evident in words and phrases like “balanced,” “good amount of balance between the two,” “divided it up equally enough,” “carried it over into the profession,” and “stuck with me ever since then.” Overall, continuity was present as each participant took different things away from their experiences.

**Interaction.** The tenet of interaction builds upon continuity, but the primary focus is on how previous experiences merge with present situations. The participants were asked about their experiences that contributed to their ability to teach the content, be leaders, manage their classrooms, facilitate learning, and accommodate diverse learners. Participants’ responses indicated a variety of intentional experiences embedded within their education that aided in preparation in various areas of teacher education graduates. These intentional experiences included involvement in extracurricular activities, experiential learning experiences, coursework, field experiences, and additional workshops.

Katrina, Sonya, Simone, Julia, Angela, and Courtney discussed some experiences, such as being involved in organizations and extracurricular activities. Much of their involvement in these areas contributed to preparedness and assisted them with making connections to being a future leader of teaching. Simone and Julia were both in a student organization of educators for their state. Simone said:

Well, I got to be a part of the student organization of educators there . . . and that helped me you know get the foot in the door of learning a lot about the politics of being a teacher in my state um and how important that organization is. (interview, January 17, 2016)

Julia, also involved in the student organization of educators, spoke of a specific experience she had at that time that carried over to the present.



We went to an educator organization conference in \_\_\_\_\_ um and I remember the president right then and there said “Well ya’ll are getting ready to graduate, you need to join.” And one of the girls that . . . accompanied us on the conference she wasn’t a member of the educator organization. He reached in his pocket he pulled out the \$25 and she registered right then and there because he was adamant about people getting in and getting to work. So I remember him and I remember thinking okay when he said he needs something done he’s one of those people he’s not playing so I took that back to work. (Julia, interview, January 18, 2016)

Angela spoke about how she demonstrated leadership at her university by being a member of an educational honor society called Kappa Delta Pi which fostered her understanding of the importance of professional development. Additionally, she exhibited leadership by tutoring students at a local church. She said,

We had . . . Kappa Delta Pi and I mean . . . we had like little seminars and events and that was like education related and I think that definitely helped us. There was a church that was nearby so we were partnered with the church and we would like take the kids to like a Frazelle game or we did like little study sessions to help them with their homework. So I think that definitely helped because it was like . . . I’ve always known that I wanted to help kids. (Angela, interview, January 15, 2016)

Other notable participant involvement that contributed to the carryover of leadership skills as an educator to the field included Sonya’s involvement within a future educator organization, Katrina’s mentorship to the next round of scholarship recipients, and Courtney’s leadership over her universities’ Model United Nations chapter. Simone and Katrina were also afforded the

opportunities to study abroad, which effectively assisted them with carrying those experiences into the present.

Simone explained,

I also was able to study abroad. Um I went to Ghana and went to Benin and I was able to learn about the education system there and apply that to what I was learning, for you know America, or in my state. So I was able to um get more of a broader experience instead of just you know education right here that um opportunity allowed me to study education um basically transcontinental you know more than just in America um and I was the only education major that went on that trip. (interview, January 17, 2016)

Katrina shared her teaching abroad experience. She remarked, “We went to Belize, Central America and we taught there for um about three weeks in the summer. So that helped with um working with various levels and the different cultures of students” (interview, January 12, 2016).

Engaging in Dewey’s (1938) theory of experience and education includes incorporating cumulative educational experiences that allow individuals to create meaning as each experience shapes future experiences (Schmidt, 2013). Many participants talked about their experiential learning opportunities within their teacher education programs at their HBCUs. Courtney, Sonya, Deanna, Katrina, Julia, and Angela discussed how their experiential learning experiences assisted them with carrying over the skill of facilitating learning and accommodating diverse learners. Courtney discussed how she learned teaching strategies and her content. She said:

It was like once a week I would say, we had to present our lesson plans to our classmates. So I remember that for math for sure. And then he would just like randomly bring us some manipulatives which when else would you have known that you are supposed to

introduce these things to your real kids if somebody didn't teach you that. So that to me helped us learn the content. (Courtney, interview, January 13, 2016)

Sonya also spoke about teaching a lesson to her classmates much like Courtney. She shared,

So being able to actually teach the lesson and my classmates respond as kindergarteners was very interesting because you go in with the mindset, oh these are you know, young 20 year olds in my class but they are actually acting like kindergarteners, not paying attention, and calling out, and having attitudes. So it was really good that we kind of got to do that trial lesson to see this is how it's going to really work. (interview, January 12, 2016)

Katrina talked about how the professors set the stage for how teaching should occur and how those experiences carried over into her classroom. She remarked,

So they literally mimicked . . . how to teach once we came into the schools with how they taught the classroom. Um and that went down to the cooperative learning groups, the group projects that we had um. Sometimes we didn't necessarily have to take a test but we might have had a project with our peers instead or we had to do a portfolio instead. And so those were things that I was able to bring into my classroom. (interview, January 12, 2016)

Deanna, Angela, and Julia talked about how they were afforded opportunities to be hands-on in the classroom and created hands-on activities for their students to make activities more student-centered. In her blog, Deanna said, "She [professor] played a big role in teaching me a different way of viewing the classroom through creativity. I learned how to make sure my instruction was engaging" (blog response, January 3, 2016). Additionally, Deanna said,

We did courses in project based learning um where students had to you know, we learned about how to make, how to make it student-centered. Um, and that creativity and hands-on experience they really taught us about . . . hands-on things like building things, like the engineering part was a big deal in most of my classes. (interview, January 12, 2016)

Angela mentioned,

We got to do things where we would do like skits or like put on little scenarios and like have people volunteer to come up and do things or even just doing presentations but just more hands-on things. So that was fun too like creating lessons and then like doing the hands-on things you know that kids would like. (interview, January 15, 2016)

Finally, Julia said,

I remember a couple of assignments . . . we were in charge of creating games or and then one time we had to make a book. Um it was an easier way for me to teach the content and then turn it back over to the students let them have a student-led conversation and put what I was teaching into practice for reading and math. (interview, January 18, 2016)

In addition to the experiential learning experiences, the coursework carried over to the future and aided in preparation for some participants. On her blog, Katrina said, “The professors were very knowledgeable of the current trends. Most teachers taught things in a hands-on approach” (blog response, January 6, 2016). Simone discussed how her coursework experiences and conversations with professors assisted with how prepared she felt to address content and diversity in the future. Simone said,

Well we had a class in every content area. Um so we had social studies, sciences, math, and reading were the main um four. Uh so just having classes that were specific to how to teach these you know subjects was extremely helpful and important. And I remember

specifically having conversations about . . . teaching African-American kids that did not grow up the way that I grew up so that's diversity. (interview, January 17, 2016)

Tracy was similar to Simone in her recall of the content classes that she took. She said,

It was helpful that we had our content classes the semester before we actually student taught . . . we had our methods of math, methods of English language arts and that was the semester right before they sent us into the classroom. (interview, January 17, 2016)

Finally, Sonya discussed the components of the coursework that helped her address diversity and classroom management in her classroom in the future. She shared:

In one of my classes we had to address um the differences of gender, how boys learn versus girls, um ethnicities . . . so being able to take a lesson and teach it and reflect on okay how did this subgroup perform? Um we took . . . classroom management I believe . . . we had to come up with a whole binder resource of like our class motto if we're going to have one, or a class mascot, and our rules and our consequences. And just we had to really think about those pieces and thinking about them kind of early on even though we had never had a class of our own really helped, just put that in the forefront of how important it is to have this classroom management. Um so I think just having a class about that in itself is so important and I'm glad that my HBCU had that. (interview, January 12, 2016)

Meaningful field experiences and workshops supported interaction as participants took and applied information. Deanna and Sonya talked about how their universities provided workshops specifically on classroom management reinforcing their understanding of the need to remain consistent. Sonya said,

I know we did a couple different uh classroom management professional uh professional developments with principals from um different counties um and they would come in and let us know from the principal's perspective what they would like to see going on in the classroom as far as classroom management. So um I think that is what really helped a whole lot having those professional development sessions prior to getting to the classroom and going to district uh given professional development. These were set up and arranged by the school of education. (interview, January 12, 2016)

Deanna said,

Now we did have workshops on classroom management um we had people come in and explain you know the breakdown you know of the consistency and all that kind of stuff. So I would say that we attended a lot of workshops we visited a lot of schools um and they really honed in on that classroom management. That was a big piece. (interview, January 12, 2016)

On the TSES, Deanna and Sonya indicated that they could do quite a bit to establish routines to keep activities running smoothly which relates to consistency (Deanna, questionnaire, December 18, 2015; Sonya, questionnaire, December 19, 2015). Moreover, in terms of establishing a holistic classroom management system they both indicated that they could do a great deal (Deanna, questionnaire, December 18, 2015; Sonya, questionnaire, December 19, 2015). Katrina and Lena also recalled the unique professional development sessions that were offered at their respective universities. "We had many workshops to teach us how to efficiently navigate the university and proper university/classroom etiquette" (Katrina, blog response, January 6, 2016). Lena said,

Education Week was a weeklong session of various professional development and networking opportunities. West Graham University would host the Excellence in Teaching Conference providing professional development for teachers in our county and students of West Graham. Each session would leave attendees with classroom manipulatives, books signed by the authors, and multiple take-aways from always an affluent keynote speaker (blog response, January 19, 2016).

Katrina and Julia talked about how their field experiences benefited them in their future experiences. Katrina said,

I would say the university required us to go in to volunteer in the schools. And that was every year that I was, that I was there. We had so many um contact hours that we had to go into the schools and I guess getting that experience of being in different classrooms um helped me with my classroom management and different grade levels. (interview, January 12, 2016)

Julia shared,

I think that I was well prepared when I became a teacher um mainly . . . because my student teaching was in a school similar to what I actually got hired in. So the population of the kids, the economic background of the kids it was very similar to what I student taught actually where I did my teaching. (interview, January 18, 2016)

The final component of interaction that was present in participants' responses was that of professors' influences. Many of the professors' actions in the past shaped some of what participants carried over into the present. When referencing her professor's influence, Courtney said,

So our teachers did not play any foolishness so that was an automatic. Oh, I had one really strict social studies teacher . . . she would always have us build into our lesson how you were going to manage everything. (interview, January 13, 2016)

Courtney indicated on the TSES that she could do a great deal to manage her classroom in terms of controlling disruptive behavior, making student expectations clear, getting children to follow classroom rules, establishing a classroom management system with each group of students, and keeping a few problem students from ruining an entire lesson (questionnaire, January 6, 2016).

Tracy talked about a focus of one her professors when she said,

Classroom management was a big thing with . . . her name was Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ at the time.

She was coming from the classroom straight . . . to teaching to help us that year when we were student interning. (interview, January 17, 2016)

Julia had two professors who influenced how she addressed future situations for better or for worse. Julia said,

Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ always had a story to tell and she never mentioned names of any students.

Everybody was named Denzel. So we heard all about how Denzel would cut up, or how about Denzel's mama wouldn't sign these papers, or about how Denzel struggled in school but we always knew that in the end she was going to find some type of way to help Denzel. It wasn't so much about class management but it was more so of . . . you're going to have a Denzel, what are you going to do about it? And it got us to thinking ahead of time what can I do um as a teacher with students who have limited resources.

And I will never forget Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ taught, I think she probably taught every math course I ever took . . . and I remember she had me scared to death because she preached you need to know your content or your kids are not going to know math and that was just



the bottom line. . . It was just either you do it so your kids can succeed or you won't.

Even though I didn't quite agree with her approach it did work. Like it scared me enough to be a better math teacher, to learn my content more and to put into practice so my kids will be efficient on the test. (interview, January 18, 2016)

On the TSES, Julia indicated that she felt she had some influence on assisting families with helping their children do well in school. However, she felt she could do a great deal to adjust her lessons to the proper level for individual students (Julia, questionnaire, January 3, 2016).

Finally, Katrina talked about how the professors were always abreast of the content that was needed to be successful educators and how she carried that skill over to her classroom. She said,

Going back to the professors actually um staying abreast of the current trends of education and making sure that we were aware of the content that we . . . were expected to teach once we got into the classroom (interview, January 12, 2016).

On the TSES, Katrina indicated that she felt she could do a great deal in implementing instructional strategies. She was confident in her abilities to gauge student comprehension of what she taught, craft good questions for her students, adjust her lessons to the proper level for individual students, use a variety of assessment strategies, implement alternative strategies in her classroom, and provide appropriate challenges for very capable students (questionnaire, January 6, 2016).

There were repeated phrases in the interviews with similar meanings, such as “helped me get you know the foot in the door of learning,” “I took that back to work,” “able to apply that to what I was learning,” “that helped with working with various levels and cultures of students,” “helped us learn content,” “really good that we got to do that,” “trial lesson to see this is how it’s going to really work,” “those were things I was able to bring into my classroom,” “put into

practice,” “that is what really helped,” “that was a big piece,” and “very similar.” Repetition of these ideas in the blog responses through phrases like “learned skills that I could transfer into teaching,” “do this now as a teacher,” and “this was the foundation of good teaching” were evidences of saturated data as they were reoccurrences in multiple participants’ responses about how the tenet of interaction within their programs influenced preparedness. Experiential learning, coursework, field experiences, workshops, and professor influences were all past experiences that helped to shape future teaching experiences suggested that the tenet of interaction was present within the teacher education programs at these HBCUs.

### **Research Question Three**

Research question three, “What additional resources would African-American female teacher graduates of HBCUs perceived to have been helpful?” was designed to acknowledge what participants perceived to be, or what would have been, helpful during their studies. A resource is a source or supply of support that can be social, materialistic, or intellectual in nature (Lampert et al., 2011). I identified two themes in regard to this question. These themes were:

- Participants indicated multiple intellectual resources that were related to curriculum and instruction
- Participants discussed social resources that involved communication and collaboration with various stakeholders

Intellectual resources. An intellectual resource is a source of supply or support that focuses on ideas and content knowledge (Lampert et al., 2011). Many participants felt that beginning teachers needed additional content knowledge on how to use the standards to plan curriculum. Lena, Angela, and Simone discussed how the curriculum frequently changes, so they talked about the strategies that they perceived as helpful in staying abreast of their content. Lena

identified what she perceived as helpful when learning the standards and made some suggestions about what may be helpful to future teachers. She said,

They really need to understand their curriculum. Um we had to print out our curriculum at the time of course it was standard course of study. So I do understand colleges might have a harder time with that because it is constantly changing. But um just letting your teachers know that you have to know what you are going to be teaching and letting them know that that might mean you might be studying before some of your lessons but it's necessary so that you know what you're talking about. And that curriculums change but they stay the same. They're certain basic and truths that people just have to learn and those they should make sure their students understand. (interview, January 27, 2016)

Angela also reflected on the importance of knowing the curriculum. She reflected on a situation that happened to her and made a suggestion that may be helpful to other teacher candidates.

Angela said,

And then know the curriculum. I know my first year there was like a math lesson and I was like oh my gosh and I thought that I may just like print out the pacing guide and just like be fine and like I was like oh gosh hold on guys Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ needs to like take a second. You know I teach second grade . . . but even then that minute that you slip that's when behavior slips, they get rowdy. So then it's like you have to be prepared. And that's another thing you always need to be prepared and over planned. (interview, January 15, 2016)

Simone discussed the importance of knowing the standards and gaining a holistic understanding of various grade levels. She felt it would be helpful for teacher education candidates to possess this knowledge. Simone said,

My third one would have to be continued practice in breaking down standards and breaking these common core standards down. Any standards that teachers are going to go off and be teaching need practice looking at that, um especially in the being in a situation where like me you go to a different grade level every year you know? You have to be able to know how to adapt to each standard. (interview, January 17, 2016)

Takara and Katrina discussed to the importance of being flexible when dealing with curriculum and instruction. Takara said, “Lesson planning I think would be number two. Just making sure that they are prepared for lessons and they had backup plans and they are flexible and able to change” (interview, January 16, 2016). Katrina felt that it would be helpful to assist with “realizing that the curriculum changes from day to day, week to week, year to year, and being flexible” (interview, January 12, 2016).

Participants shared that it would have been helpful to have additional training on differentiation of instruction and working with students of all demographics. In regards to differentiation, the participants were asked on the TSES to indicate how much they felt they could do to provide appropriate challenges for very capable students. One participant indicated that she had some influence, six felt that they could do quite a bit, and three participants felt that they could do a great deal. Additionally, participants were asked how much they felt that they could do to adjust their lessons to the proper level for individual students. Three participants felt that they had some influence, three felt that they could do quite a bit, and four felt that they could do a great deal. Takara said HBCU teacher education programs should focus on “children of poverty, different demographics of kids, different learning abilities, and different learning styles” (interview, January 16, 2016). Sonya said that one of the main areas that new teacher education candidates should receive training in is diverse learning communities. In a blog post, Deanna

said, “I would have loved to be introduced to certain customs and given insight on reaching children in that culture” (blog response, January 3, 2016). Julia said that differentiation was “probably one of the hardest things to do” (interview, January 18, 2016). Lena had a lengthier description about why extensive instruction on differentiation and diversity, in general, would be helpful. She said,

I think they should focus on the different learning methods. Um a lot of times we teach the way we remember having been taught simply because it's easiest or we just tend to teach in the way that we learn the best. So you might find some people always using manipulatives but then we don't necessarily know how to bring it back to paper or maybe were always dancing and singing but then we have a silent test. So just getting them exposed to all the different types of methods and then giving them situations in which they can actually use it. Uh another thing I would say is that we need to speak on diversity again. America is ever-changing in our population and what we look like as a whole on and there's a lot going on between the races in America and with the poverty line and the middle class. There's a lot going on and our teachers need to be aware that this affects their students. We have to be aware of that in the classroom because again you don't learn from people you don't like. So we have to make sure that our classrooms are diverse as well as our learning methods. (Lena, interview, January 27, 2016)

Aside from differentiation and diversity, the participants indicated that additional content knowledge on technology integration would have been a helpful practice. Specifically, they expressed that they would have benefited from learning how to meaningfully use technology within their classrooms. Sonya, Simone, Deanna, Takara, and Courtney expressed how it would

be valuable to teach this skill to upcoming teacher education candidates. Sonya discussed how using technology is much more than simply loading a PowerPoint. She said,

The use of technology in the classroom um . . . but technology is changing so much and so much faster these days that I think it's, it's going to be hard to stay the course with technology, but if student teachers learn how to use it in the classroom meaning instead of just loading in their flash drive to show the PowerPoint that they have to present for the day. (interview, January 12, 2016)

Simone followed Sonya's lead when she discussed the importance of ensuring that technology use benefits students' learning. She said,

Another one would have to be technology . . . learning, knowing when to use it, when is it appropriate for student learning and when is it not appropriate. Technology doesn't have to be used all the time you know, or if it is it definitely needs to be very structured. (Simone, interview, January 17, 2016)

Takara also thought that incorporating technology was important. She said, "Now with the new Common Core, it would just be 21st-century learning and knowing how to incorporate technology into the classroom" (interview, January 16, 2016). Deanna also touched on having access to these tools within the teacher education program when she said, "Incorporating technology . . . making sure that you know, they have access to SMART Boards® and BrightLinks™ as it would be in the classroom" (interview, January 12, 2016). Finally, Courtney summarized her opinion of the importance of technology use for the future when she stated, "Technology is a must and with technology that does not mean you just have it in your room, but you need to use it" (interview, January 13, 2016).

Another topic that surfaced that may be helpful for teacher education candidates to experience prior to becoming a teacher was conducting assessments and utilizing them for instruction. Over half of the participants indicated that they felt that they could do quite a bit to a great deal to implement a variety of assessment strategies on the TSES. However, two participants felt they only had some influence. Katrina said that teachers needed “time management and being able to use assessments to do assessments and use them for um instruction, to guide instruction” (interview, January 12, 2016). Courtney also said,

So one thing you have to have is to be able to look at data and be able to decide where to place kids with your data. You have to know how to collect the data too that’s going to be important, and to maintain it. (interview, January 13, 2016)

Finally, Sonya expressed her strong desire for support from teacher education programs with administering assessments due to the work load that beginning teachers have. In her blog she talked about the missing link involving assessments.

There was a missing link between what the school system was doing at the time (assessment wise) and what we were doing in the program. A lot cooperating teachers may not allow (due to state laws) student teachers to administer assessments. This lack of knowledge (timing and how to administer) can cause frustration during the first year of teaching. (Sonya, blog response, December 20, 2015)

Later in her interview, she provided suggestions on how to provide access to this intellectual resource. Sonya said,

I think student teachers . . . need the support when it comes to the assessment piece um because as I stated earlier when you get in your first year of teaching you have so much that you are learning. And EOGs and EOQs, DIBELS®, and K-2 assessments, and all

those different things are so important. They carry so much weight during your first year of teaching or every year for that matter, but especially your first year if you may just learn a little bit about it, or just be a little bit familiar with it, outside of you being the student or recalling from when you were in school or you were taking them. It's different when you're on the other side of the fence. So I feel that if the district and the education department come together to do a professional development on those types of things that would eliminate a lot of the stress that first year teachers have when it comes down to the things that they have to do. (interview, January 12, 2016)

The intellectual resources that participants perceived to have been helpful mostly revolved around curriculum and instruction. Participants indicated that content knowledge and ideas for implementation in the aforementioned areas were critical for future teacher education candidates to have a thorough understanding of curriculum planning, differentiation, assessments, and integration of technology.

Social resources. A social resource is a source of supply or support that requires collaboration or communication with others (Lampert et al., 2011). Classroom management and parent communication were two ideas that surfaced in participants' responses when noting the top areas that should be important focus points for HBCUs. Both of these areas are indicative of social resources as they require collaboration or communication with others. References to classroom management appeared in seven of the participants' responses about the top things that should be an important point of focus for HBCUs. My analysis of the subscale means on the TSES in the area of classroom management led me to determine that three participants felt they could do a great deal in this area, five felt they could do quite a bit, and two felt they had some influence. Overall, the participants had the highest levels of efficacy in the subscale of



classroom management. However, some participants still suggested that future teachers could utilize social resources in the area of classroom management. Takara and Lena expressed that without an orderly classroom, you have nothing. Lena said, “Classroom management [is important], because if they love coming in your classroom and you teach them in all kind of ways, but they don’t know when to sit down or when you turn it off then it’s pointless and it’s purposeless.” (interview, January 27, 2016). Takara’s subscale mean on the TSES indicated that she felt she had some influence on classroom management. In her interview, Takara remarked, “Classroom management because that’s the main key . . . because if you don’t have that, you don’t have order. You don’t have anything going on” (interview, January 16, 2016). Angela gave insight by sharing her personal experiences with classroom management in the field when she said,

Classroom management is definitely important. My first year I struggled with that so much because I think I’m just nice and I think I came in too nice and like you don’t realize that they’re little people so they know what they are doing and they can eat you alive if you let them. So I think like classroom management and just like that fine line between um like being their friend and being their teacher. (interview, January 15, 2016)

Deanna said it would be helpful to show teacher education candidates how to manage their classroom by coming up with a system of organization. She said, “I guess I would say classroom management . . . organization, that would be a main thing. Just showing them how to stay organized and how to come up with a system of organization” (interview, January 12, 2016).

The participants also revealed that it would be helpful for teacher education candidates to learn how to connect and communicate with parents in an appropriate and timely manner. The communication concern also involved interacting with individuals who spoke different

languages. Simone discussed how there must be forward planning to address the communication needs of all families when she said,

Continued learning in communication with parents. Um diverse parents at that especially parents who don't speak English having and knowing how to use your resources when it comes to that and how important it is that you pre-plan homework and pre-plan letters so that you can get them translated so that your parents can, all your parents have the same amount of access to help their, to help their child. (interview, January 17, 2016)

Deanna said that future teacher education graduates need to learn about “parents, how to communicate with parents, how to ‘deal with parents’. That’s a huge thing” (interview, January 12, 2016). Julia also spoke about fostering the relationships when she said, “Parent-teacher relations, even though like I said you can’t teach it there are some plain old manners that people can use to help foster those relationships” (interview, January 18, 2016). Angela expressed that she felt detachment whenever she first became a classroom teacher when trying to assist her students outside of school. She said,

When I graduated from Frazelle I was in low-income area with low-income families. A lot of my students had needs outside and inside of the classroom that I felt like I could not help them with. My experience with such a diverse group was very low and it was night and day compared to my student teaching experience. (Angela, blog response, January 3, 2016)

Finally, Lena discussed the importance of teaching parent and community relations and how we should try to relate to parents as people. She said,

Also, parent and community communications, just how to be a leader in your school with your parents and your community. Reinforcing that the contact is important. Just simply

talking to the parents is important. Um tips on how to not because we are dealing with diversity we might not be dealing with somebody who has as much education as us. So how do we speak to people who might not be understanding the words that were used and how do we come across as relatable and as a leader? (interview, January 27, 2016)

There were repeated occurrences of phrases referencing classroom management and parent communication. The participants stated phrases within the interviews, such as “that’s the main key,” “definitely important,” “a main thing,” “a huge thing,” and “is important.” The occurrences continued within the blogs with phrases such as “in charge of classroom management” and “responsible now as a teacher.” These phrases, allowed me to identify the social resources that the participants considered imperative. One question on the TSES referenced parent relations and was utilized to elicit how much the participants felt they could do with assisting families in helping their children do well in school. Three participants felt that they had some influence, five felt that they could do quite a bit, and two felt that they could do a great deal.

The responses within the blogs, interviews, and questionnaires are indicative that access to continued support in the areas of classroom management and parent community relations would have been helpful within the teacher education programs at HBCUs. The participants who are now practitioners within the field, expressed that access to social resources focusing on these areas should be a continued focus within the teacher education programs at HBCUs.

#### **Research Question Four**

Research question four, “What obstacles do African-American female teacher graduates of Historically Black Colleges and Universities feel they faced while in their teacher preparation

program?” focused on some of the obstacles that the participants faced. Responses centered around the following themes:

- Departmental concerns
- Instructional concerns
- Personal hindrances

Departmental concerns. The schedules of courses were not predictable, as many classes were not offered as often as students needed. The unavailability of courses, in turn, created financial challenges for some. Simone expressed her frustration of graduating later than expected and never really told why. She remarked,

I was told that I was able to take an extra like elective class. So I chose to take a sign language class um and you know thinking that I was on the right track but come to find out that summer I missed the class or something with the schedule. Like I’m not even really sure because it really wasn’t explained to me. So I had to take a computer class in the summer um and then there was still another class that I missed along the way and I had to make up for it that following fall so that put me a semester behind. So I didn’t graduate until December 2012 instead of 2011 um because of a computer class. (Simone, interview, January 17, 2016)

Simone also spoke about the extra expenses she acquired by saying, “Looking back, I would not have chosen to take those two elective classes and maybe I wouldn’t have had to take out the only loan I have for one more semester” (blog response, January 4, 2016). Lena experienced a similar situation. She talked about the stress that she often felt while registering for courses as a student athlete and scholarship recipient. She said,

As a student athlete, my classes always needed to be scheduled around my practice schedule. Unfortunately, following the recommended order of classes and pre-requisites did not always fall in line with my practice schedule for the semester. Often times, I found myself having to add more classes to my load or wait an extra semester before taking a class all based upon the availability of the class. Class availability would either slow down my momentum or speed it up but it was never the steady 4 classes a semester. . . . Taking a full load because you have to is not the same as taking a full load because you want to take a full load, especially when you are a student athlete. Unnecessary stress was endured during the 18 credit hour semesters that could have been avoided if classes were offered year round during all semesters at various times. (blog response, January 19, 2016).

She further expressed how the department's course scheduling affected her in her interview by saying:

It hindered my learning because everybody has their four year plan in their head and then this class says psych you can't take me until two semesters from now which means you can't take this other class until three semesters from now. So it just threw me off. My scholarship wasn't for summer school and some of the classes were only offered during summer session which means I had to find a way to pay through summer school. So that was, it was just a hindrance monetary wise and um it kind of messed up my bigger vision. (Lena, interview, January 27, 2016)

Finally, Tracy shared that spring was the only semester designated for student teaching. She said,

For course scheduling um back then, for teaching for your methods classes, if you didn't get them in the Fall you couldn't take them in the spring because spring was um designated for student teaching. So the one year that I got sick so I missed out on some classes in the Fall so I had to wait a whole another year just taking elective classes because I couldn't get into it and I didn't do my student teaching until the following year. So I graduated a year later because the courses just weren't offered. (interview, January 17, 2016)

Additionally, some participants shared their concerns about the helpfulness of departmental staff members. Some participants felt left to their own devices and had to find their own way. Takara said, "I couldn't get any help in finding the right courses. I was technically on my own. This was a difficult obstacle not knowing how to get on the right path" (blog response, January 16, 2016). Takara had experiences with some individuals that she considered rude in the education department at her HBCU. Her mother is a long time educator who is highly respected in her community. She mentioned that she felt some staff treated her badly because they knew of her mother. Takara said,

Um, actually they were real rude. A lot of them were really rude, if I must say. They really were. Um they were really acting as if I . . . just, "Oh go do something different, go find you a different major." Like, they were really bad off. It's sad to say I think some of them knew my mom, and when people know who she is and they figure out who I am, they treat me a little differently. (interview, January 16, 2016)

Courtney may have used more support from the department in preparing for required assessments for entry into the teacher education program. She recalled her experiences and her feelings of abandonment during our interview when she said,

So I think what messed me up the first time with the Praxis was when we took Praxis I. It was like mostly computer based. So our computer teacher was like, oh you guys love the computer you can do, oh you can do all this stuff already, it's really no big deal. So for some reason I heard 'no big deal' and just ran with it. Um, so I guess they may have gotten some more people together or even made it mandatory or something to get you to make sure that you would pass, because like, when they said here's some books that we have in this room, um you can go pick from those. And I was just like, 'but where do I go?' (Courtney, interview, January 13, 2016)

Katrina also felt alone during her student teaching as her university supervisor was inconsistent with supervisory duties during her term. Katrina said,

My student teaching, my university supervisor did not follow through with the amount of observations and um time that she was supposed to spend with me. She felt like that I had it and that I was good, and I felt like it didn't hinder my student teaching but there's always room for growth. And so, um, I just felt like I was kind of left high and dry like 'Oh you're good'. And which I was fine, but um she may have given me more ideas. (interview, January 12, 2016)

Instructional concerns. Some of the participants felt that they were not granted enough experience during student teaching while others felt that instruction in the area of diversity was limited, which turned out to be a hindrance for them. Katrina felt that her student teaching experience was not long enough. In her blog, Katrina said, "I felt that it was a little difficult, yet not impossible, to get to know the students and be an efficient and effective student teacher starting mid-year." (blog response, January 6, 2016)

Additionally, she said,

The only thing I may think of that may be a possible obstacle in my teacher education program is my student teaching. At Saint Clairview, student teaching is only one semester. I have talked to colleagues who attended other schools, HBCUs, and non-HBCUs . . . they did their student teaching in for a full year. (Katrina, interview, January 12, 2016)

Angela's student teaching experience was much shorter than Katrina's as she can only recall about three weeks' worth of student teaching. She explained how the limited amount of time was an obstacle,

So . . . the only thing that I would take away from Frazelle is that the student teaching experience isn't realistic. But that may be anywhere too, but for that, like it was only two weeks I believe . . . maybe three weeks. Maybe like one week you are kind of shadowing the teacher and then I think maybe the second week you kind of start taking over and then . . . the third week it's all you. So that wasn't really long enough to get your feet wet because once like you have your own classroom like student teaching was like a joke. (Angela, interview, January 15, 2016)

In addition to lack of experience, some participants expressed that they did not have much instruction on dealing with diversity. Angela said that whenever she became a teacher her lack of experience with diverse students presented a challenge for her. Within her blog post, she said,

One thing I regarded as a hindrance or an obstacle my learning was during my student teaching period. I was assigned to a school that was predominately white with a pretty well off population. When I graduated from Frazelle I worked at school that was in low-income area with low-income families . . . My experience with such a diverse group was



very low and it was night and day compared to my student teaching experience. I feel like if I was able to student teach at a school with similar demographics then the transition in my first few months of teaching may of been smoother. (Angela, blog response, January 3, 2016).

In her interview, she said,

I just wasn't prepared because it was the opposite of what I grew up with and it was opposite of what I student taught with. And it was like they had issues that I just never thought or even fathomed. (Angela, interview, January 15, 2016)

Deanna expressed how she would have valued more instruction on diversity when she stated, “. . . the diversity part, just um knowing the different cultures, how to identify with different cultures and how to reach them like their holidays, and you know, just all the different cultures” (interview, January 12, 2016). On her blog, she said “I'd say the hindrance experience was the lack of resources and knowledge needed to be a culturally aware teacher. I would have loved to be introduced to certain customs and given insight on reaching children in that culture” (blog response, January 3, 2016).

Individual hindrances. The desire to be involved with school clubs, extracurricular activities, sports, and service learning, while sometimes adhering to scholarship requirements, involved much time management that was left to the participants. Julia shared how she felt having to learn time management as an individual. She said,

Being at an HBCU, it is expected to be involved with different extracurricular activities. You feel a sense of obligation to not just be a student but to also be an active participant in different organizations, clubs, and groups. However, for individuals like me, being a part of different groups, and not having a set schedule or plan for getting things done was

very frustrating. I had to learn how to prioritize my assignments, my personal life, and my other obligations. (Julia, blog response, January 17, 2016)

She discussed the importance of having time management further in her interview when she said,

And then being at a HBCU you always want to be on the scene, you always want to be on the go, you wanted to be everywhere and I tried to do all of that. At the same time, it was at the expense of my education. Um it didn't kick in until probably sophomore year that okay I mean this is fun however this is temporary, and I'm trying to prepare myself for what's going to happen after college. (Julia, interview, January 18, 2016)

Lena discussed how she had to figure out how to accommodate her classes around her sports schedule as an athlete. She was on a scholarship so there were guidelines that she had to adhere to in terms of her grade point average, which affected how she scheduled her courses. Lena said,

As a student athlete, my classes always needed to be scheduled around my practice schedule. Unfortunately, following the recommended order of classes and pre-requisites did not always fall in line with my practice schedule for the semester. Um I was on academic scholarship, full-ride, so I had to keep a certain GPA um and so I always want to have my classes in line. So I want this hard class with this easier class with this medium class because I need to have this GPA. (interview, January 27, 2016)

Takara noted that time management was an obstacle not necessarily for her, but for those in the teacher education program, and those who are already in the field. She noted that it was important to teach time management to candidates. She said,

[It is important] being able to divide time and not spend all of your time on teaching but to have a cutoff time. Not to spend 24 hours on teaching. Just knowing that there are

some things that you have to stop and come back to on the next day. So time management for themselves. (Takara, interview, January 16, 2016)

In conclusion, the obstacles that African-American female teacher graduates faced varied in nature. The hindrances included course scheduling, helpfulness of the staff, student teaching experiences, diversity exposure, and personal time management. These hindrances were departmental, instructional, or individual concerns.

### **Research Questions Answered through Linking of the Data**

Research question one was “What are the perceptions of preparedness for African-American female teacher education graduates at Historically Black Colleges and Universities?” The responses on the TSES were indicative that over half of the participants felt that they could do quite a bit to a great deal in their implementation of classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement. Specifically, in the area of classroom management three participants felt that they could do a great deal in this area, five felt that they could do quite a bit, and two felt that they had some influence. One participant felt that she could do a great deal in implementing instructional strategies, eight participants felt that they could do quite a bit, and one participant felt that she had some influence in the area. Finally, in the area of student engagement two participants felt that they could do a great deal in this area, five participants felt that they could do quite a bit, and three participants felt that they had some influence in this area.

Data from the blogs and interviews were helpful in revealing the confidence that participants exuded in their HBCUs’ ability to educate other teacher education candidates. Various social and emotional factors contributed to the participant’s feelings of preparedness. Many expressed that they felt they were thoroughly prepared for the demands of teaching and credited these feelings to their professors’ contributions and their relationships. The unique

learning environment at HBCUs undergirded feelings of preparedness as some participants mentioned their feelings of belonging due to the racial dynamics and experiences. All of the participants indicated that they would recommend others to attend HBCU teacher education programs. Therefore, when answering research question one through data obtained from three sources, a majority of the participants indicated that they were satisfied overall in their preparation for the field as graduates of HBCU teacher education programs.

The qualitative data provided much insight into answering research question two: “What characteristics of Dewey’s theory of combining experiences and education do African-American female teacher graduates of HBCU programs feel contributed to their preparedness?” The subscale areas on the questionnaire were instructional strategies, student engagement, and classroom management. Though numerical data were obtained to indicate how well participants felt that they did in these areas, there was no room on the questionnaire for participants to share specific details of the characteristics of their programs that aided in obtaining these levels of preparedness. Therefore, the qualitative data provided much insight in answering this question. Through the blog and interview responses, continuity and interaction were identified as contributors to the participant’s levels of preparedness. Continuity and interaction are tenets within Dewey’s (1938) theory of experience and education. Additionally, Dewey’s (1938) theory of experience and education suggests an equal balance between the two. A majority of the participants indicated during their interviews that there was an equal balance of coursework and experiences within their programs.

Looking at the TSES responses holistically to address research question three: “What additional resources would African-American female teacher graduates of HBCUs perceived to have been helpful?”, the subscale means of all of the participants’ responses in classroom

management, instructional strategies, and student engagement were 7.90, 7.56, and 7.24 respectively. Therefore, participants exhibited the most efficacies in the area of classroom management. However, when participants were asked to provide input about the areas that they would have perceived to be helpful for themselves or future teacher education graduates at HBCUs, their responses centered on classroom management and parent community relations. These responses were suggestive of social resources. In blog and interview responses, the participants indicated that they would have perceived intellectual resources that focused on ideas and content knowledge in the areas of understanding curriculum and instruction, assessments, technology integration, and differentiation to be helpful.

The answer to research question four: “What obstacles do African-American female teacher graduates of Historically Black Colleges and Universities feel they faced while in their teacher preparation program?” was obtained through the blog and interview responses. On the departmental level, the participants experienced hindrances with course scheduling and inconsistency in departmental dynamics. Some of the obstacles were instructional as student teaching experiences were not as strong as they could have been due to time constraints or lack of faculty support. Some participants did not have as much exposure to diversity within their educational experiences, which they felt was a hindrance. Finally, some hindrances were simply personal and involved areas of development, such as learning how to manage one’s time to be an effective student.

### **Summary**

The results from 10 participants, who were African-American female teacher education graduates from HBCUs, with at least three years of experience were reported in this chapter. Each participant completed a questionnaire investigating their efficacy in the areas of student

engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. The subscale mean of all of the participants' responses in classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement were 7.90, 7.56, and 7.24 respectively. Upon completion of the questionnaires, participants completed blogs and individual interviews. The raw text obtained from these data sources was bracketed, coded, and searched for themes. I identified two themes that described participants' levels of perceived preparedness for the field after attending teacher education programs at HBCUs in reference to Research Question One. Overall, the participants exhibited confidence in teacher education programs at HBCUs' ability to educate teacher candidates. The data revealed that most of the factors that contributed to the participants' overall feelings of preparedness were social and emotional in nature, involving the learning environment, professor contributions, and racial relationships.

Through the data analysis, I identified two themes regarding the characteristics evident from Dewey's (1938) theory of experience and education that contributed to preparedness in reference to Research Question Two. The two main constructs of Dewey's theory of experience and education involve continuity and interaction. The data revealed that participants felt continuity in their teacher education programs at their HBCUs, as there was a balance and intersection of coursework and experiences. Some were able to carry experiences into their careers such as public speaking skills, favorable learning dispositions, and content knowledge. Additionally, the participants indicated that the construct of interaction was present, as there were a variety of intentional experiences embedded within their education that facilitated preparation in various areas for the teacher education graduates. Some of these experiences included experiential learning, coursework, field experiences, and professional development

sessions. The participants expressed that including continuity and interaction within the teacher education experiences at the HBCU assisted with their preparedness for the field.

I identified two themes related to additional resources participants perceived would have been helpful knowing what they know now as educators in reference to Research Question Three. The participants would have perceived intellectual resources that centered on curriculum and instruction to be helpful. The participants felt that it was imperative to be knowledgeable of the curriculum, differentiation, how to deal with diverse learners, and meaningful incorporation of technology into instruction. There were, however, some areas that were not directly involved with teaching that the participants felt would have been helpful to address. These areas included social resources to address classroom management and parent community relations. The participants stressed the importance of consistency in both of these non-teaching duties.

In reference to Research Question Four, I identified three themes about the obstacles that the participants faced while in their teacher education programs at their respective HBCUs. The participants encountered obstacles that were departmental, instructional, and personal in nature. The departmental issues included ineffective course scheduling and not having the support of all educational staff members. Factors included in the instructional hindrances were not having enough experience or support during student teaching and not being adequately prepared to address diversity within today's classrooms. Finally, participants identified personal obstacles that included time management and having to learn how to deal with the many demands college students encounter on a daily basis. By triangulating the data during analysis, I found common responses among participants where nothing new was being discovered. The repeated occurrences of words, ideas, and phrases were an indication that saturation of information had taken place.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Overview**

According to statistics, African-Americans make up only 10% of those employed within the teaching field across the nation (U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics, 2015). There has been much concern and speculation about the cause of the disproportionate number of African-American females within education (Farinde et al., 2016). According to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (2011), in the Fall of 2011, African-American females made up 62% of HBCUs' enrollment. Therefore, my rationale for selecting African-American females was to attempt to uncover issues that may be contributing to their shortage in the education field. My justification for selecting HBCUs was the dominance of enrollment at this university type for this particular gender and race. Finally, I chose teacher education as a focus because it is one of the foundational stepping-stones where many teacher candidates are taught some of their first components of information needed to become an educator.

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenology study was to understand and explain the perceptions of African-American female teachers' levels of preparedness for their careers after attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Theoretically, in this study, I took a closer look at Dewey's (1938) theory of experience and education by suggesting that many opportunities for experience through interaction and continuity may alter how individuals perceived their teacher education preparation. Additionally, I gained valuable insight from the participants in terms of areas that they perceived as assets and areas that they considered obstacles or hindrances. I felt that information as such may be helpful for teacher education programs when planning for candidates who are currently within their respective programs.



I used four specific research questions to guide this study and I collected data from 10 participants through the use of a questionnaire, blogging, and interviews. Through completion of the questionnaire, participants provided demographical information and described how well they felt that they performed in various areas using the Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale (see Appendix D for Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale). With the utilization of blogs, the participants were able to briefly discuss the things that they considered assets and obstacles at their HBCUs. I bracketed, coded, and analyzed for themes using the raw text data from the blogs and the interviews (see Appendix K). I then linked this information with the data from the questionnaires to answer the research questions.

In this chapter, I provided a brief summary of the findings along with discussions related to each theme. Next, I presented the theoretical and empirical research connections to this study. Finally, I discussed the implications for HBCU teacher education programs and school or district personnel, the limitations of this study, and made recommendations for future research.

### **Summary of Findings**

In Chapter Four, I detailed the findings for each of the four research questions including specific statements directly from the participants. After bracketing common words and phrases, color coding similarities, and putting the content into tiers of themes by research questions, I identified two themes for Research Question One that described how participants perceived their preparedness after graduating from teacher education programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The themes were (a) participants have confidence in HBCUs' abilities to prepare teacher education candidates as they exhibited readiness for the field upon graduating from teacher education programs at these universities; and (b) relationships, racial dynamics, and school environment were some of the social and emotional factors contributing to the

participants' levels of preparedness. Over half of the participants felt that they could do quite a bit to a great deal to successfully implement classroom management, instructional strategies, and engage students. Responses on the TSES measured the perceptions of efficacy in each of the aforementioned areas. In each area, over half of the participants felt that they could perform at the highest level or do quite a bit to address students' needs. Furthermore, the participants verbally expressed that they felt prepared for their own classrooms after attending HBCU teacher education programs. Notably, however, one participant expressed that she was not prepared to teach upon graduation; otherwise everyone else indicated that, overall, they were ready to address the demands of their own classrooms upon graduating from HBCU teacher education programs. A resounding factor that contributed to feelings of readiness included the positive relationships that the participants had with their professors. The participants commended their professors for their instructional strategies and personal guidance. Many experienced othermothering as their professors took on maternal roles and nurtured students through the process of completing their education programs. In addition to the helpfulness of professors, the uniqueness of the HBCU environment contributed to feelings of preparedness. The participants expressed that they experienced camaraderie due to the racial dynamics and felt obligated to be involved in campus activities. Moreover, as the participants reflected upon the rich history and legacy of HBCUs, it left them feeling that they had an unparalleled collegiate experience. In general, the participants within this study felt as though they were prepared to address the demands of being educators upon graduating from HBCU teacher education programs.

For Research Question Two, I identified two themes supported by the underlying characteristics of Dewey's (1938) theory of experience and education that contributed to preparation, and were present in the participants' teacher education programs. Those themes

were, (a) the tenet of continuity was present in the teacher education programs at the HBCUs as there was an equal balance and intersection of coursework and experiences; and (b) the tenet of interaction was present in the teacher education programs at the HBCUs as there were a variety of intentional experiences embedded within the education programs. Through the blog and interview responses, I identified continuity and interaction as contributors to the participants' levels of preparedness. Many participants specified that their HBCU teacher education programs structured their learning in a way that first provided coursework on subject matter and then allowed them to practice the content in the field. Participants implied that they obtained content knowledge primarily through modeled strategies and experiential learning opportunities embedded within their courses. A clear indication of intersection and balance existed between experience and education as the participants completed fieldwork alongside their schoolwork. Additionally, experiences outside of fieldwork fostered within the participants the dispositions normally expected of teachers. Participants expressed that their involvement in various education-related extracurricular activities and workshops helped them learn leadership skills that later aided in teaching. Their involvement in workshops also facilitated growth in the areas of classroom management and content knowledge. Overall, continuity and interaction were the elements within Dewey's (1938) theory of experience and education that participants experienced. Consequently, the participants expressed that the balance of education and experiences contributed to their feelings of preparedness for the teaching field.

In response to Research Question Three, I identified two themes that illustrated what the participants perceived to be helpful, or would have been helpful within their programs. These were, (a) most of the intellectual resources that the participants perceived to have been helpful centered around curriculum and instruction, and (b) some additional resources that participants

would have perceived to be helpful were social in nature and focused on non-teaching duties. The participants stressed the importance of having stellar classroom management and consistent parent community relations. These two points reflected non-teaching duties of the teaching profession. As a result, they indicated that they could have benefited from social resources, or collaboration and communication, with their professors in regards to these topics. To provide the social resource of collaboration, the professors could have worked alongside students in the field to address the concerns of classroom management and parent community relations. Finally, communication as a social resource could have taken on many forms, such as follow-up performance notes, mentoring, or coaching cycles. In addition to social resources, the participants indicated that they could have used supplementary intellectual resources to facilitate ideas and content knowledge such as workshops or special designed courses. The specific topics that the participants identified as necessities included additional intellectual resources focusing on ideas and content knowledge in the areas of understanding curriculum and instruction, assessments, technology integration, and differentiation. After reviewing data from the TSES, the subscales mean of all of the participant's responses in classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement were 7.90, 7.56, and 7.24 respectively. The magnitude of these means indicate that the participants felt that they could do quite a bit to address these areas. Uniquely, many of the areas that the participants expressed that they could have used additional social and intellectual resources could fit into one of the general three categories on the TSES. However, the eight descriptors for each of the subscales within the TSES did not address the concerns of the participants that would warrant the additional resources relevant to that area. Therefore, the intellectual and social resources presented above were things that participants indicated would have been helpful in regards to their specific concerns.

Finally, for Research Question Four, I identified three themes that summarized the obstacles that the participants faced while in their teacher education programs at their HBCUs. The themes were, (a) participants experienced departmental obstacles; (b) participants experienced instructional obstacles with faculty; and (c) participants experienced personal hindrances. The departmental obstacles consisted of scheduling concerns and inconsistency in departmental dynamics. Untimely changes in educational staff was a departmental obstacle that participants expressed, as some indicated there was turnover during critical times of their studies such as field placement windows. Another departmental obstacle included the miscommunication of scheduling information. Some participants expressed that they had scheduling errors due to discrepancies in the content of information shared by their department, while others expressed that the courses they needed were simply not available. The instructional obstacles centered on faculty support in varying situations such as student teaching and the lack of going in depth with instructional content like diversity. An instructional gap felt by several participants included how to address diverse learners and populations. They felt that the lack of direct instruction with diversity was an obstacle, as they needed this information to address the needs of learners they encountered within their classrooms. Furthermore, the timing, placements, and guidance of student teaching were obstacles. Participants who expressed concerns about the timing of student teaching noted that the experience ranged from three weeks to a semester. The short amount of time allotted for student teaching was an obstacle to some of the participants, as they would have preferred to engage in student teaching a full year. Additionally, student teaching placements were obstacles as some participants felt that they needed experiences in varying environments to work with students from all socio-economic backgrounds. Consistency of faculty guidance was also a concern for some during student

teaching. A couple of the participants indicated that their faculty supervisor did not support them as much as they expected them to during student teaching. The lack of instructional support was an obstacle during their student teaching experience. Finally, some participants experienced personal hindrances. Time management was an obstacle that three participants experienced due to immersing themselves in activities available on campus. They implied that time management was important because it was a transferrable skill that impacted them, not only as students, but also within their current profession as teachers.

### **Discussion**

Dewey's (1938) theory of experience and education proposed that there should be an intimate and necessary relationship between students' actual experiences and education. Therefore, when considering this study, the report of intersection between coursework and practical experiences from all of the participants but one would suggest that there was an enhanced educational experience for the group overall. In this study, Lena, Sonya, Deanna, and Courtney felt that there was an equal balance of coursework, and they spoke specifically about how their field experiences connected to their coursework. Tracy and Julia felt that there was indeed an intersection between coursework and actual experiences but at times, they felt there was too much coursework. However, Takara felt the opposite; she did not think there was a balance between experiences and education. She felt that there were multiple opportunities to gain the knowledge needed to be a successful educator, but there were not enough experiences. The principle of continuity within Dewey's (1938) theory of experience and education suggested that experiences carried over from the past to the future would allow learning to advance. The basis of the principle of continuity (Dewey, 1938) and the lack of experiences in Takara's teacher preparation program aid in understanding why she did not feel she benefited much. She

indicated multiple times that she did not have examples from experiences to carry over into her future classroom. Takara's feelings about her readiness for the field due to her experiences is consistent with the findings that every practice by teacher education programs can negatively or positively influence an individual's future experiences (Farinde et al., 2015). Other participants expressed additional practices that the HBCUs could have implemented that would have been helpful in their future experiences. For example, Angela wished that she had field experience in a Title I school and a non-Title I school, and both she and Katrina wished they had longer student teaching experiences. Again, the lack of implementation of these practices negatively influenced future experiences (Farinde et al., 2015).

On the other hand, practices implemented by the teacher education programs can positively impact teacher candidates' experiences as well (Farinde et al., 2015). Participants like Julia, Sonya, and Courtney were confident in their preparedness for the field due to their experiences. They discussed how they had many transferable skills from their HBCU teacher education programs in the areas of pedagogy, communication, and leadership. Most of the participants applied the information they had learned during their preparation experiences in their respective classrooms. Naturally, individuals create meaning from previous experiences and apply the information to future situations (Schmidt, 2013). Therefore, education-related professional development sessions sponsored by the HBCUs were valuable to Julia, Sonya, and Deanna as they were able to apply the information in their personal classrooms.

The second principle within Dewey's (1938) theory of experience and education, interaction, suggested that experiences should occur within both educational and social contexts. Participants in this study indicated that their educational experiences occurred in social environments. Intentional use of the environment naturally around the participants contributed

to the content that they learned as students (Dewey, 1938). Several participants' professors modeled instruction in their very own classrooms. Katrina and Courtney spoke of how their professors modeled how to teach the content by treating them as elementary students. Sonya and Julia expressed how they created meaning from experiences where they participated in modeled lessons by their professors. In experiential learning, real-world experiences allow for a seamless transfer of learning because the knowledge is accessible and applicable in many situations after the fact (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Roberts, 2003). It is a best practice to present content in context with experiences rather than in a standalone format (Roberts, 2003). Many of the participants indicated that due to their recollections of modeled experiences in class, their content knowledge was accessible, and they were able to apply it in their classrooms in a real-world context.

Several participants in this study gave vivid visuals simply through their stories about how their professors served as facilitators of learning, by allowing them to approach learning the content in different formats. Synergetic transactions between learners and their environment provided opportunities to examine, test, and integrate ideas that ultimately contributed to knowledge (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Julia and Sonya said that their professors would turn the content completely over to them and have them teach it to their classmates the way they would teach to the grade level that they were planning to educate. During experiential learning experiences as such, hands-on and varied instructional methods were important practices that also covered the content (Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

In addition to access to meaningful experiences, there should also be opportunities for reflection as it allows students the opportunity to make connections and take knowledge away from their experiences (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Roberts, 2003). Reflecting upon instruction is an important practice for educators (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007). Blogging, or



electronic journaling, provides a platform for pre-service teachers to engage in structured reflective thinking (Garza & Smith, 2015). In this study, I provided access to blogs for in-service teachers to reflect on their readiness for the teaching field after attending HBCU teacher education programs. Blogging is an effective strategy to allow pre-service educators to self-assess their performance by reflecting upon their understanding (Garza & Smith, 2015). Though the participants in this study did not reflect upon their understanding of a general concept, they did analyze their performance in relation to the perceived assets and hindrances that were present within their teacher education programs. The assets or hindrances could have influenced their understanding of various concepts and thus, would indicate why they deemed them as beneficial or obstacles. The rich quality of the feedback provided in the blogs of the participants extends the idea that blogs are useful reflection tools (Garza & Smith, 2015).

Professor dispositions and instructional methods are possible catapults or deterrents to graduates advancing to the education field (Farinde et al., 2015). A majority of the participants within this study indicated that their professors were invaluable assets to them. Ninety percent of the participants spoke positively about particular professors' contributions and efforts in ensuring that they were ready for the field. Furthermore, the participants revealed that the professors provided support, motivation, modeled best teaching practices, and made the learning experience feel personalized. Courtney, Tracy, Julia, Deanna, and Lena all commended components of their professor's teaching styles. Sonya spoke highly of how her professors ensured that the students in her teacher education cohort stayed the course in the program. Angela and Simone were thankful for the relationships that they built with their professors, which assisted with getting the support needed at the time. A majority of the participants mentioned their interactions with effective teachers and as a result proceeded to pursue their teaching careers, consistent with the

findings of Farinde et al. (2015). Some participants like Sonya and Lena were grateful that they had individuals teaching them that “looked like them.” They valued the input from other African-American females who served as their professors. Julia said, “We had enough women in our program to show us what we wanted to be when we grew up” (interview, January 18, 2016). The perceptions of the participants corroborate with what Dingus and Dixon (2008) found as they aspired to be like other African-American women teachers and looked to them as inspiration for pursuing the teaching field. Dingus and Dixon (2008) found that many African-American women credited their teaching legacies to other influential African-American women and noted their influence as inspiration for becoming teachers. Unfortunately, their counterparts, African-American males, struggled with finding African-American males to look to as role models in their teacher education programs (Scott & Rodriguez, 2014). Many of the participants from this study spoke about how many of their African-American female professors spent time with them to foster and nurture skills and dispositions that would take them beyond the teaching field, a result consistent with Flowers et al.’s (2015) finding that othermothering or faculty support aids in enhancing students’ academic success and self-worth. Angela talked about how her professor would spend time with her after class hours to ensure that she mastered content. Deanna emphasized that her African-American female professors reminded her of family members, and they were honest in expressing things to her. Courtney reiterated this point as she told stories about how her professors exhibited mother-like qualities by calling her on her personal cell phone to inquire about why she did not attend class. The various evidences of othermothering indicated by the participants in many different forms are consistent with the finding that African-American female teachers manifest the act in their pedagogy (Dixon, 2003). Overall, participants in this study detailed their professor’s actions of othermothering,

spoke highly of them and attributed much of their success and readiness for the field to their professor's contributions.

In addition to discussions about assets, the participants indicated several obstacles that could have affected their perceptions of preparedness for the field. All ten participants' entry to the field of education contradicted recent research that suggested that lack of instructional support affected the pursuit of African-American females' entrance into the teaching profession (Farinde et al., 2015). Lena, Tracy, and Simone discussed the lack of institutional support at their universities regarding course scheduling and course availability. Katrina felt that she did not have much institutional support in areas like student teaching, and she expressed this concern in her blog and interview. Takara and Sonya discussed instances of inconsistency with the helpfulness of all departmental staff members in their blogs. Nevertheless, even with all of the hindrances mentioned above, all of the participants still chose to enter the profession of education. Fortunately, the issues with course availability, scheduling, and the lack of staff support did not cause them to turn away from teaching. Nevertheless, the women in this study revealed that these situations presented obstacles that they would have preferred to avoid. Therefore, the specific issues that could affect entry into the field for this particular race and gender should be a revelation for HBCUs. The African-American female teacher population in America is already relatively small (Toldson & Lewis, 2012). Hence, teacher education programs should make a conscious effort to address the obstacles on their end to retain them in the profession.

Participants experienced additional obstacles due to the lack of learning how to become culturally diverse educators. Diversity is important to address as students in today's classrooms face many educational inequities about race, socioeconomics, and linguistics (Morrell, 2010).

Noting the importance of diversity and the fact that educators will face many different educational inequities with the classroom (Morrell, 2010), Takara felt that HBCUs should focus on the various demographics of students. Teaching styles and effective or ineffectiveness of instruction might affect desires to enter the teaching field (Farinde et al., 2015). Instructors themselves must become self-conscious of their views regarding educational inequities in order to teach others about equity and social justice (Kelly-Jackson, 2015). The lived experiences, attitudes, and beliefs of teacher educators influence how they teach social justice to their students (Kelly-Jackson, 2015). Realizations as such validate the opinions of participants like Angela who felt that her student teaching placement should have consisted of two different environments so that she could learn how to work with various populations of students. Unfortunately, pre-service teachers educated at rural universities are falling behind in developing the knowledge, dispositions, and skills to implement the critical pedagogy and address diversity and social justice concerns (Han et al., 2015). Deanna brought to the forefront the realization that her HBCU teacher education program failed to provide her with instruction on diversity and cultural awareness. Pre-service teacher education programs must adjust their practices and curriculum to tackle the diversity realities that candidates may face when they obtain their classrooms, (Morrell, 2010) as feelings of unpreparedness surfaced within many of the participants.

Takara, Lena, and Deanna discussed important elements of teaching like organization and classroom management. Additionally, Simone, Deanna, Julia, and Lena felt that it was important to be proactive in initiating and maintaining parent and community relations. The participants suggested the use of social resources like communication and collaboration with mentors to address the gaps in important elements of teaching. Mentors assist with reducing the anxieties commonly felt by pre-service teacher candidates and beginning teachers (Caires et al., 2010;

Grima-Farrell, 2015). Additionally, their expertise enhances content knowledge and the performance of skills needed for the profession (Grima-Farrell, 2015; Hobson et al., 2012). None of the participants mentioned how mentors specifically helped them, but the positive effects of mentors may hint as to why they suggested them to assist with the bridging the aforementioned gaps.

Brown (2014) discussed how some African-Americans felt disconnections from their respective programs at PWIs. Without exactly asking about PWIs in the interviews, many of the participants volunteered information about how they felt or would feel attending one. Simone talked about her attendance at PWIs and how she felt that business occurred as usual, no more, no less. Courtney expressed that she was there to get her education and move forward with becoming a teacher, but her experience there did not compare to her experience at her HBCU. It is likely that Simone and Courtney felt disconnected from their learning experiences at PWIs. Katrina expressed that African-American students could easily get lost at a PWI. Haddix (2012) found that it was not uncommon for African-American females to be intentional about whom they conversed with and what they discussed when attending teacher education programs at PWIs. Katrina's actions were similar to this finding as she indicated that she only had two other peers who she would talk to and work with throughout her matriculation at the PWI that she attended. Katrina's actions were an example of being intentional in her interactions with others.

On the other hand, others focused on HBCUs and said that the personal touch that was experienced at these universities made the difference, and that they were individually given the attention that they needed. The unique learning environment of HBCUs has enhanced students' self-esteem and academic levels (Flowers et al., 2015). The present study involved participants who attended HBCUs where there were not many differences in race or language, so the

participants indicated that there were many people who “looked like them.” Statistics show that approximately 76% of the population that attend college at HBCUs is African-American (Postsecondary National Policy Institute, 2015). The racial makeup is likely the reason there were no indications of cultural jeopardy experienced by the participants in this study as there was at PWIs as found in the literature (Brown, 2014; Frank, 2003; Haddix, 2012; Kornfield, 2010). Meachem (2000) concluded that it was common for African-American students attending PWIs to feel as if they were in cultural jeopardy. These feelings surfaced primarily because once attending these universities, African-American students felt the pressure to conform to the cultural and linguistic norms already present (Meachem, 2000).

Critical race theory (CRT) is a broad framework used to determine the role that race plays in everyday educational experiences (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). After reflecting on the information shared by the participants in this study, participants seemed proud to be in the skin they were in and with the progress they have made as women. A CRT framework in teacher education is used to examine the impact that race has on structure, process, and discourse within programs (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). Overall, the positive findings of this study revealed a challenge towards dominant social assumptions of how individuals would typically perceive the educational experiences of African-American females. Challenging dominant social assumptions is a theme of CRT (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). Again Julia’s comment about having many African-American women in her educational environment to show her what she wanted to be when she grew up was evidence of how proud she was of her progress. Sonya, Angela, Lena, and Julia valued being in an environment where the professors and student body looked like them. The racial and gender makeup within their HBCU teacher education programs was beneficial for the participants in their everyday educational experiences and made them feel

as though they belonged. The institutional pride and legacy unique to the HBCUs seemed to have influenced the levels of preparedness for the field for some individuals. I intended to listen to the voices of marginalized individuals, African-American females, who may have otherwise felt silenced in certain situations. African-American women's efforts to attain higher education exceed those of any other race of women since the 1970s (Chavous & Cogburn, 2007). Because of their educational attainment, it is suggested that their efforts are unrecognized in education and literature both, despite their level of educational accomplishments and because of their educational accomplishments (Chavous & Cogburn, 2007). Much of the information found within this study counteracts stories of what one may typically think (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001) about African-American females educated at HBCU teacher education programs.

The findings of this study could aid HBCU faculty and staff, in assessing where their teacher education programs stand in specifically addressing the needs of African-American females. In doing so, the faculty could make changes to their programs to address some of the gaps or capitalize on some of the things that the women in this study indicated they were excelling in like professor relationships. Additionally, the results of this study provide racial insight about the things that African-American women have experienced at different university types. The cultural jeopardy and cultural silencing that occurred at PWIs did not occur within HBCUs in this study. The insight is beneficial for teacher education personnel at both PWIs and HBCUs as African-American females attend both universities to become educators. The overall goal of graduating African-American female educators is important due to the imbalance of the number of individuals of this gender and race who are currently employed within the field (Madkins, 2012; Toldson & Lewis, 2012).

## **Implications**

A single qualitative study cannot provide a sound basis for the generalizations of practice (Myers, 2000). However, the participants provided genuine input on the top five areas that they felt should be of focus for teacher education programs at HBCUs. Given that many of the individuals from this study were recent graduates, they likely had fresh ideas and emotions regarding the areas that they felt they could have used more support. For this reason, their insight is valuable to programs that have a majority of this population enrolled. Additionally, the information is relevant to school and district personnel who provide staff development. The participants indicated specific areas where they could have used more support. As a result, school and district staff development coordinators may use this information to design professional development that is in alignment with their teachers' needs. The areas of focus included: creating 21<sup>st</sup>-century classrooms, the basics of teaching, fostering teacher dispositions, and interacting with students after graduating. Theoretically for both stakeholders, it would be helpful to integrate meaningful real-world and hands-on experiences and allow time for reflection about how to apply the information in real classrooms.

### **For HBCU Teacher Education Programs**

A general implication for teacher education programs concerning Dewey's (1938) theory of experience and education is to hone in on creating cumulative and meaningful educational experiences that will shape future positive experiences. Many of the participants expressed the need to instruct teacher candidates on how to integrate technology into the classrooms. Technology integration is undeniably a 21st-century skill that would be useful for rising educators. Sonya indicated, "It's going to be hard to stay the course with technology" (interview, January 12, 2016), but due to the need of engagement for today's students, it is indeed important.



Other participants saw the same need for integration. Simone said that teacher education candidates need to know how to integrate technology meaningfully. She said, "Technology doesn't have to be used all the time . . . or if it is, it definitely needs to be very structured" (interview, January 17, 2016). Participants suggested that teacher education programs could assist with teaching technology integration by having technology accessible in the candidates' classrooms and by having professors model its use during instruction. Many times it was mentioned that the technology was utilized within the courses only to load the presentations for the day. Most of the candidates discussed instances of how their professors modeled effective practices for content which aided in their preparation, so using the same practice for teaching technology integration may be a useful starting point for this gap for schools of education at HBCUs.

Additionally, the participants thought that HBCUs should address differentiation of instruction and diverse learner strategies. Julia expressed that differentiation was probably one of the hardest things that she had to learn as a classroom teacher. Schools today are comprised of students with many different demographics. The students are not only different in terms of race, but they are different in terms of learning abilities and learning styles. Learners have different exceptionalities and teachers must stay the course in ensuring that they are meeting the needs of all of the subgroups represented in their classrooms. Lena discussed how teachers must learn how to balance their instruction so that students obtain the information in a way that is conducive, but then they must know how to transfer the learning to paper and pencil format (interview, January 27, 2016). Differentiation of instruction and coaching of specific strategies were indeed areas that the participants thought would be beneficial to teach future teachers. Perhaps a course should be provided by HBCU teacher education programs that allows teacher

education candidates the opportunity to learn about various strategies to use for low, average, or high learners. Eventually, they could be required to develop a comprehensive differentiation toolkit for a specific unit aligned to grade level standards, which could provide meaningful practice in that area. Allowing the teachers to use the unit that they developed within their student teaching could provide a balance of education and experience in terms of differentiation.

On the same note, some participants felt that it was important for candidates to become well-rounded teachers by focusing on students who come from low-income families. Furthermore, participants suggested that the teacher candidates have the opportunity to student teach in two different populations. Experiencing two areas would allow valuable experience on both ends of the spectrum and possibly, upon graduation candidates would feel prepared to teach students with varying backgrounds. HBCUs could take the suggestion into consideration to see if it is feasible to allow students to experience two different field placements. Lena said it best,

America is ever changing in our population and what we look like as a whole, and there's a lot going on between the races in America and with the poverty line and the middle class. There's a lot going on, and our teachers need to be aware that this affects their students. (interview, January 27, 2016)

Additionally, for 21st-century classrooms, the participants expressed the need for HBCU teacher education programs to focus more on literacy practices and incorporation of skills that involve cooperative learning. Knowing how to teach students how to read is a skill that will forever be a part of the education system. Lena said, "Everybody is going to have to learn how to read, and the phonics isn't necessarily going to change. There are certain basics and truths that people just have to learn" (interview, January 27, 2016). Knowing that the teaching of this skill is foundational and will be around for ages, many of the participants indicated that HBCU

teacher education faculty should cover the content in a stronger manner. Tracy also talked about infusing cooperative learning as an essential 21st-century skill. She said, "In today's day and age children like to socialize, and teachers can't stand up there and just talk . . . not thinking that the kids will socialize" (Tracy, interview, January 17, 2016). Therefore, cooperative learning is a structure that can assist students with developing the skills to discuss educational topics within a group. Guidance on how to structure these groups may be useful for teacher education candidates at HBCUs.

Maya Angelou (as cited in Kelly, 2003, p. 263) said, "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." As a reflection of this quote, many of the participants felt that HBCU teacher education programs simply needed to focus on encouraging teacher education candidates to develop a love for teaching children. Angela said, "You can't foster a relationship with a kid if you don't connect with them, they don't trust you. Kids can vibe and tell if you want to be there so I think that is important" (interview, January 15, 2016). Takara said, "You do need to be able to love children, and I do mean love them all no matter what abilities they have and don't have. You've got to get around their deficiencies" (interview, January 16, 2016). Therefore, directly teaching tolerance and acceptance may be helpful for teacher candidates within HBCUs. Some HBCU teacher education programs specifically focus on developing the dispositions expected of educators. Other dispositions that participants felt should be of focus for candidates included being a team player, organized, prepared, and a leader in the field.

Another area that participants identified as important were parent teacher relationships. The maintenance of relationships with all stakeholders is yet another soft skill that could align with content that is already present in teacher education programs. Julia said, "Parent-teacher

relations, even though you can't teach it there are some plain old manners that people can use to help foster those relationships" (interview, January 18, 2016). Lena felt the same way and corroborated on the importance of being an individual that the parents are comfortable speaking with (interview, January 27, 2016). The parent population represents the same diversity as the student population, and many times new teachers must learn ways to communicate with families in a timely and effective manner. They must learn how to navigate the systems in place at their respective schools to get information translated or schedule conferences. Therefore, HBCUs can assist teacher education candidates by emphasizing the importance of parent and teacher communication during courses and requiring student teachers to produce a parent-teacher communication log during their practicum. Many times the cooperating teacher retains the practice of communicating with parents during the student teaching period, but the participants indicated that communication is something that teacher candidates should be allowed to experience before becoming the actual teacher within their own classrooms.

Classroom management was denoted as an important component of teaching. Though many participants seemed to have adjusted well to managing their classrooms, it was something that many felt was important for teacher candidates to know. Takara said, "If you don't have order, you don't have anything going on." Lena said, "If they do not know when to sit down or turn it off, then it's pointless or purposeless" (interview, January 27, 2016). Angela discussed how the lack of preparation could cause behavior to slip within the classroom. Overall, the participants reiterated the importance of programs continuing to teach candidates classroom management and its significance to have an environment conducive for learning.

Other important components of teaching included having knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The participants repeatedly expressed the need for candidates to

know the standards and know their content. Therefore, HBCUs must stay abreast of the standards utilized by their respective states. They should unpack the standards or allow the students to go through the process of unpacking the standards so that they will know how to do so independently when the time comes. Some of the participants were attending their HBCUs when their states switched to the Common Core State Standards. Some expressed that this switch was abrupt, thus affecting their confidence in adjusting to the change. Universities should note that candidates are attentive to how they approach situations, and they must model how to be flexible and make changes as needed. Additionally, a couple of the participants expressed that they would value the experience of administering assessments before actually becoming classroom teachers. A way that universities can prepare students is to create an assessment course and purchase some of the assessments that the students can practice administering to one another. Moreover, teacher candidates may likely benefit from direct instruction on how to utilize data collected from assessments to drive instruction.

Immediately after graduating, some participants expressed that they would have appreciated hearing from those that they were close to throughout their preparation. Simone said she went through a number of emotions during her first semester of teaching, and she would have appreciated if someone from the university had reached out to her after graduation just to see how things were going. Making contact with previous candidates is something that HBCU teacher education programs should consider. Many participants felt very connected to their HBCUs and the staff, so strengthening the connections and relationships in order for them to continue well after graduation, may impact retention within the field.

### **For School and District Personnel**

To get to the crux of retention of African-American female teachers, I examined the teacher preparation experiences at HBCUs. Many of the participants reported that their institutes of training highly prepared them, which suggests in this case that the preparation itself was not an issue. Though there was much support given throughout the program, there were gaps that participants identified between preparation and entry to the field. School and district personnel who structure professional development could likely aid in addressing the gaps for teachers who are already in the field by offering access to sessions that focus on desired content and acquisition of skills. Using information from this study, the participants would benefit from sessions on (a) technology integration; (b) district and local level assessment administration; (c) analysis of instructional data; (d) differentiation of instruction for diverse learners; (e) strategies for implementing cooperative learning; (f) standards-based curriculum planning within professional learning communities; and (g) the general dispositions expected of educators for early career teachers. School and district personnel can share information and strategies with teachers by modeling practices, delivering hands-on sessions, or providing access to job-imbedded professional development. Continuing professional development is important to remain current within the practice and to ensure that individuals know how to employ skills related to their responsibilities. Conclusively, to address the concerns of disconnection and feelings of despair upon graduation, school level personnel can provide beginning teachers with access to building-level mentors to help ease the transition.

### **Limitations**

This study was designed to gain an understanding of the perceptions of readiness of African-American female teacher education graduates after attending HBCU teacher preparation

programs. The first thing that is important to note as a limitation is that all of the data allowed the participants to engage in self-reporting. Self-reports are sometimes inflated as participants may desire to portray themselves in a positive manner. The questionnaire contained the Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale with reliability scores of at least 90%, which indicates that it is reliable. However, the blogs and interviews were based on the participant's honor, and many times there may be bias in what an individual perceives. When people speak about themselves, they may see themselves in a different light than what others may see. Therefore, knowing that this information is self-reported and based on how they feel about their preparedness is indeed a limitation.

Another limitation is that different HBCUs were represented and the course of study and experiences varied at each one. The differing experiences that each participant had may have impacted her views on preparation, or it may have provided broader perspective to the study. Referring back to the data, most of the participants reported that they were prepared, but there were varying experiences that impacted why they felt this way. Ninety percent of the participants within this study were elementary teachers and this may be a limitation as the perceptions could be different with a participant pool comprised of 90% middle or high school teachers.

A final limitation for this study may be the generalizability of the study to other areas due to the lack of variation in the location of the HBCUs attended. Considering that this study was conducted in an area with HBCUs in close proximity, a great deal of the participants reported that they attended the same universities. The universities were all located in the same geographic areas within two states.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

I was very selective in obtaining the participants for this study to bring focus to a topic. I used purposive sampling and only recruited participants who were African-American female educators with at least three years of teaching experience. The rationale for selecting only those with three or more years of experience was to provide some time between graduation from college and the actual practice of teaching. After having experiences, the participants may have had a more refined viewpoint of what the gaps were in their teacher education preparation programs. However, in the future, research could focus on those who are within their first year of teaching. The emotions and experiences will be fresh in the participants' minds and they may be able to articulate what it was that they did not take away from their preparation programs and immediately apply upon graduation. The information may be helpful for HBCUs so they may work on closing the gaps that teachers identify. The feedback from participants in this study may also be helpful to employing districts, as it may provide input on areas to structure professional development or give mentors ideas about support areas for beginning teachers within their districts.

Future research may also involve other individuals within the data collection process such as administrators. In this study, participants reported their own levels of preparedness for specific areas. Adding administrators may aid in triangulation by having them indicate how prepared they felt that the participants were to address the same areas. The self-reporting of preparedness and administrator reports could be compared to see if they are consistent with one another. Finally, addressing teacher preparation practices at the HBCUs around the United States is another recommendation for research. It would be helpful to look into the similarities and differences between teacher preparation programs at HBCUs everywhere. There was only a



small geographic location represented with the study that spanned across two states. It would be helpful to see how other African-American female teacher graduates at HBCUs in different states perceive their preparation experiences.

### **Summary**

African-American female teacher education graduates from HBCUs, with at least three years of experience within education, indicated that they were highly prepared for the field. There were varying reasons why each individual felt prepared. Some attributed their preparedness to their social environment at their HBCUs. They detailed the rich legacy that HBCUs fueled to educate future teachers. The evidence of racial progress and positive feelings of readiness indicated by the participants within this study were not how individuals would typically perceive the educational experiences of African-American females. The challenge toward dominant social assumptions was a theme indicative of the critical race theory (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). The African-American females in this study attributed their preparedness to being educated by teachers who not only looked like them, but who also demonstrated genuine love and care for them as othermothers. Their levels of preparedness connected to the findings of empirical research that suggested that students who experienced othermothering were likely to do well in academics and possess high self-esteem (Flowers et al, 2015). Additionally, this research also supports the findings of empirical research that suggested that some individuals have a spiritual connection to teaching due to what they experience and tend to follow the teaching legacies of other African-American females (Dingus & Dixon, 2008; Dixon, 2003).

The constructs of Dewey's (1938) theory of experience and education were noted in many of the participants' explanations of their HBCUs, as many participants indicated that there was an even balance of coursework and experiences within their programs. Experiential learning

opportunities aided in a seamless transfer of knowledge (Roberts, 2003). Many participants indicated that their professors modeled how instruction should look and they were able to take what was learned back to their own classrooms and apply it. Additionally, much of what the participants experienced impacted their future of teaching for better or for worse because all experiences are not beneficial and educative (Roberts, 2003). Along with reports of some of the positive things like the HBCU environment and professor support were reports of things that may stand for improvement. Areas of focus included consistency of course scheduling in the education department, variations of experiences in terms of diversity, and incorporation of personal development for students. All of the areas of focus were indicated as obstacles for participants in their educational journeys and they were important to note as institutional support is one of the areas that can influence teachers' pursuit of continuing in the field of education (Farinde et al., 2015). The areas that the participants perceived to be helpful in terms of content focused on curriculum and instruction.

The underlying goal of this study was to provide information that HBCU teacher education programs could use to inform their practice for new students. Based on their experiences, the participants provided rich insight and feedback by identifying areas that should be of focus for HBCU teacher education programs when preparing their rising candidates. These areas focused on fostering 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, reinforcing the nuts and bolts of teaching, and providing support for students even after they graduate from their universities. Implications were also provided for school and district personnel so that they could address the areas that the graduates, who are already practicing in the field, may feel that they are lacking in. Utilizing this information is important as it is directly from those who have experienced the phenomenon. If

the goal is to continue to promote diversity within the teacher population, then utilizing this input is a good starting point to produce prepared candidates of this particular race and gender.

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## Appendix A: IRB Approval Documentation

**LIBERTY UNIVERSITY**  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

December 11, 2015

Kimberly Bryant  
IRB Approval 2371.121115: A Phenomenological Study of African-American Female  
Teacher Graduates of Historically Black Colleges and Universities' Perceptions of  
Preparedness for the Field

Dear Kimberly,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

**G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP**  
*Administrative Chair of Institutional Research*  
**The Graduate School**

**LIBERTY**  
UNIVERSITY  
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## Appendix B: Emails

### **Email to Possible Participants Already Known**

Hello!

I hope you are doing well! As you may already know, I am a doctoral candidate at Liberty University and I am in the process of conducting research to complete my doctoral dissertation. I want to know how African-American female teachers feel about their preparedness for the teaching field after graduating from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). Therefore, I am looking for participants who are African-American female teachers with three or more years of teaching experience.

Participation in this study would involve the completion of an online questionnaire that asks about how confident you feel in certain areas of teaching, completion of two open-ended questions about your experiences at a HBCU that would be answered on a private personal blog site, and an interview with me to expand on your responses either in person or virtually.

I do not anticipate any risks to study participants. I will ask questions about the things that you considered assets or hindrances to your learning experiences at your HBCUs. You may provide brief answers or go into detail if you choose. It is completely up to you whether to participate. You may withdraw at any time and you may skip questions that you'd prefer not to answer.

After completion of the interviews your name will be placed in a drawing to win a \$50 Visa Gift Card. You will be notified via email if you are the winner and the gift card will be mailed.

If you are interested in participating in this study please email me within five days expressing your desire to participate. I will then email you an informed consent form to sign and complete digitally. Upon its receipt I will email you with a link that grants access to the online questionnaire.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kimberly Bryant  
Doctoral Candidate  
Liberty University

### **Email to Participants Obtained through Snowball Sampling**

Hello!

I am Kimberly Bryant, a doctoral candidate at Liberty University. I am in the process of conducting research to complete my doctoral dissertation. I am in the process of finding out how African-American female teachers feel about their preparedness for the teaching field after graduating from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). Therefore, I am looking for participants who are African-American female teachers with three or more years of teaching

experience. One of your friends (\_\_\_\_\_) gave me your contact information to see if you would be interested in participating.

Participation in this study would involve the completion of an online questionnaire that asks about how confident you feel in certain areas of teaching, completion of two open-ended questions about your experiences at a HBCU that would be answered on a private personal blog site, and an interview with me to expand on your responses either in person or virtually.

I do not anticipate any risks to study participants. I will ask questions about the things that you considered assets or hindrances to your learning experiences at your HBCU. You may provide brief answers or go into detail if you choose. It is completely up to you whether to participate. You may withdraw at any time and you may skip questions that you'd prefer not to answer.

After completion of the interviews your name will be placed in a drawing to win a \$50 Visa Gift Card. You will be notified via email if you are the winner and the gift card will be mailed.

If you are interested in participating in this study please email me within five days expressing your desire to participate. I will then send you an informed consent form to sign and complete digitally. Upon its receipt, I will email you with a link that grants access to the online questionnaire.

Thank you for your time and consideration.  
Kimberly Bryant  
Doctoral Candidate

#### **Email to Obtain Informed Consent**

Please complete the informed consent form to participate in the study. Upon its receipt digitally, I will email you with a link that grants access to the online questionnaire. Thank you for your time.

Kimberly Bryant

#### **Email Granting Access to Questionnaire**

Good afternoon,

Thank you for completing your informed consent form to participate in the study! Please find below the link to the questionnaire. Upon its completion I will give you access to your individualized blog site (part II).

Questionnaire Link: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you,  
Kim Bryant

### **Email Reminding Participants of Week Remaining- Questionnaire**

Good morning,

Thank you for consenting to be in the study. Please remember that the first component of the study, the questionnaire, is accessible to participants for two weeks. This is a reminder that there is one week remaining.

Please remember to visit \_\_\_\_\_ to complete your questionnaire by \_\_\_\_\_.

Thank you for your time and dedication.

Kim Bryant

### **Email Granting Access to Personal Blog Site**

Thank you for your completion of the questionnaire. Below is information on how to complete two blogs discussing what you considered as obstacles and assets at your HBCU.

Upon accessing the blog site please click on the tab with your respective participant number (P\_). Below you will find the link and password that you will need to enter which ensures that all information that you share is strictly confidential.

Please complete the blog at your earliest convenience, I do ask at least prior to \_\_\_\_\_ (2 weeks). A reminder will be sent after a week.

Thank you for your time,

Kimberly

Personal Blog Access Link: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Tab: \_\_\_\_\_

Password: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Email Reminding Participants of Week Remaining- Blogs**

Good Afternoon,

Please remember that the second components of the study, the blogs, are accessible to participants for two weeks. This is a reminder that there is one week remaining.

Please remember to visit your blog site to complete your responses by \_\_\_\_\_.

Personal Blog Access Link: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Tab: \_\_\_\_\_

Password: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your time and dedication.

Kim Bryant

### **Email to Determine Interview Type and Time**

Greetings again!

We are now at the final component of the study, which consists of an interview with you. It is my preference to have a face-to-face interview whether in person or virtually. However, I do understand that due to distance and scheduling issues this may not be possible in every case.

I am in close proximity to Raleigh, NC and would be open to meeting at a mutual place to complete the interview if this works for you. If this is not convenient we can complete a virtual interview via Skype or Face Time. If neither of these options work for you, a phone interview will suffice.

Please respond to this email indicating which interview method is most convenient for you and specify three ideal dates/times over the next two weeks to schedule these.

Please reply and copy and paste the information below including the information that is applicable to your interview preference.

#### **Interview Information**

Interview Preference (in-person, Skype, FaceTime, or phone):

In-Person Mutual Location Desired (library, Starbucks, etc.) if applicable:

Skype Name/ Email Address if applicable:

Face Time Email Address if applicable:

Phone Number if applicable:

---

Date/Time Preference 1:

Date/Time Preference 2:

Date/Time Preference 3:

Thank you for your time,  
Kim Bryant

### **Email for Interview Confirmation**

Thank you for providing information regarding your interview preference. Your (in-person, video, phone) interview is confirmed for \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_. I am looking forward to meeting with you.

Kim Bryant

### **Email for Member Checking**

Hello,

Attached to this email is a copy of your transcript from when you interviewed with me. Additionally, there is a document listing the themes that I feel have emerged from all of the

interviews. These themes attempt to answer the four research questions of my study.

Please read through your interview transcript and inform me if you agree that it represents what you said. Also, please read through the themes that I've attached and feel free to respond as to whether or not you agree with these findings. This process is called member checking. I welcome any feedback, as this process is imperative for my study.

Thank you,  
Kim Bryant



Appendix C: Informed Consent Form for Participants  
 A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN FEMALE TEACHER  
 GRADUATES OF HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES'  
 PERCEPTIONS OF PREPAREDNESS FOR THE FIELD

Kimberly Bryant  
 Liberty University  
 School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study about African-American female teacher graduates of Historically Black Colleges and Universities' perceptions of preparedness for the teaching field. You were selected as a possible participant because you are an African-American female who graduated from a Historically Black College and University with three or more years of teaching experience. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Kimberly Bryant, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

**Background Information:**

The purpose of this study is to understand and explain the perceptions of African- American female teachers' levels of preparedness for their careers after attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

**Procedures:**

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

- 1.) Within a two-week period, you will be asked to complete an online, approximately 10-minute questionnaire about how confident you feel in certain areas of teaching.
- 2.) After completion of the questionnaire, you will be given access to a personal blog. There you will be asked to respond within another two-week period to two questions about your HBCU experiences. This should take about 20 minutes.
- 3.) Upon completion of the blogs, you will be contacted to attend an approximately 30-minute interview with me in person or virtually based on your location. There you will be given an opportunity expand upon your initial responses.
- 4.) After the interviews, you will be allowed to review the typed transcripts and delete or elaborate on any of your responses if you choose.

**Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:**

There are no risks to those involved in the participation of this study.

The benefits to participation include the benefit to society. This study will provide meaningful information for teacher education programs at HBCUs.

**Compensation:**

You will receive a chance to win a \$50 Visa Gift Card for taking part in this study. All participants will be entered into a raffle. The raffle will take place after all interviews are conducted. **Page 1 of 3**

**Confidentiality:**

When the results of the research are published or discussed, no information will be included that would reveal the identity of the university attended or participants involved as pseudonyms will be used. Individual password protected blogs will be created for each participant, and they will only be accessible to the participant and myself. The laptop and iPad® of the researcher containing interview recordings and transcription documents will be password protected. After 3 years the documentation will be erased from the laptop and iPad® and deleted from the electronic Recycle Bin.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

**How to Withdraw from the Study:**

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

**Contacts and Questions:**

The researcher conducting this study is Kimberly Bryant. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the research's faculty advisor, Dr. Christopher Clark, at [REDACTED].

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Carter 134, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

*Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information to keep for your records.*

**Statement of Consent:**

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS IRB APPROVAL INFORMATION WITH  
CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that cause difficulties for teachers in their school activities. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below.



[illegible][illegible]



|  | 1-<br>Nothing         | 2                     | 3-<br>Very<br>Little  | 4                     | 5-Some<br>Influence   | 6                     | 7-<br>Quite<br>a Bit  | 8                     | 9-A<br>Great<br>Deal  |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| How well can you respond to defiant students?  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?                    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?                             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| How well can you provide appropriate challenge for very capable students?                        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Note. Scale from Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001). Reproduced with permission.



## Appendix E: Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale Long Form Subscale Questions

### **Efficacy for Instructional Strategies**

- How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?
- How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?
- To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?
- How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students?
- How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?
- To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?
- How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?
- How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students?

### **Efficacy for Classroom Management**

- How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?
- To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior?
- How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?
- How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?
- How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?
- How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?
- How well can you keep a few problem students from ruining an entire lesson?
- How well can you respond to defiant students?

### **Efficacy for Student Engagement**

- How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?
- How much can you do to help your students think critically?
- How much can you motivate students who show low interest in school work?
- How much can you do to get students to believe that they can do well in school work?
- How much can you help your students value learning?
- How much can you do to foster student creativity?
- How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing?
- How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?

Note. Scale from Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001). Reproduced with permission.

## Appendix F: Request to Use/Publish the Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale

**From:** Bryant, Kimberly Jessica  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 13, 2016 12:58 pm  
**To:** Tschannen-Moran, Megan; Anita Hoy  
**Subject:** Request to Use/Publish TSES

Greetings Dr. Tschannen-Moran and Dr. Hoy,

I am Kimberly Bryant, a doctoral student at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. I am currently in the process of completing a manuscript for my doctoral dissertation. I am seeking your permission to publish the Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) in my research. My qualitative study focused on explaining and understanding the perceptions of African-American female teacher graduates' feelings of readiness after graduating from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). The participants were asked to complete a questionnaire where one part asked demographical information about the university attended and the number of years they have taught and the second part contained the TSES. The responses from the TSES gave insight on how prepared the participants felt to address the areas of classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement. Additionally, its use assisted with asking additional questions during individual semi-structured interviews about what the HBCUs did to enhance learning in these areas or what they could do to improve.

My final manuscript will be published in the Liberty University library of doctoral dissertations. Additionally, I hope to submit an article for publication after graduation describing my research. If you would like more information as it pertains to my study and the use of the TSES I would be more than happy to speak with you. Please email me with your questions and consent if you grant permission for me to use the TSES in the publications with my university and future article.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kimberly Bryant


# Appendix G: Permission to Use/Publish the Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale

**From:** Anita Woolfolk Hoy  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 6, 2016 6:59 PM  
**To:** Bryant, Kimberly Jessica  
**Subject:** Re: Request to Use/Publish TSES

You are welcome to use include the TSES questions in your Appendix.

*Anita*

Anita Woolfolk HOY, PhD  
 Professor Emerita  
 The Ohio State University



<http://u.osu.edu/hoy.17/>


**From:** Tschannen-Moran, Megan  
**Sent:** Monday, March 14, 2016 10:09 AM  
**To:** Bryant, Kimberly Jessica  
**Subject:** Re: Request to Use/Publish TSES

Kimberly,

You have my permission to use the Teachers Sense of Efficacy Scale in your published dissertation and for your subsequent article based on the results of your study.

All the best,

Megan Tschannen-Moran  
 The College of William & Mary  
 School of Education



<http://wmpeople.wm.edu/site/page/mxtsch>  
<http://aeradivisiona.org/2015-awards.html>

## Appendix H: Interview Questions Validity and Reliability

A total of 11 interview questions were developed through referencing the content found within my literature review to achieve face validity. The initial set of questions before content expert review is referenced below. The idea was to limit the amount of questions so that the content may be covered within a thirty-minute interview to maintain the focus of the participants.

### Open-Ended Interview Questions Prior to Content Review

1. Thank you for completing your questionnaire and two blogs. I noticed on the blog you mentioned that something that was an asset to your learning was \_\_\_\_\_. Please expand upon your ideas about that.
2. Additionally on the blog you mentioned that something that was a hindrance to your learning was \_\_\_\_\_. Please expand upon your ideas about that.
3. What characteristics or challenges of your HBCU teacher education program do you feel likely differed from teacher education candidates at non-HBCUS?
4. In general, what did your graduating class make-up look like in terms of gender and race?
5. Which experiences at your HBCU if any contributed to your ability to be a teacher leader?
6. Which experiences at your HBCU if any contributed to your ability to create an environment conducive for learning for your students in terms of classroom management?
7. Which experiences at your HBCU if any contributed to your ability to be knowledgeable of content in the subjects you teach?
8. Which experiences at your HBCU if any contributed to your ability to facilitate learning for your students?

9. How prepared did you feel teaching immediately after graduating from your HBCU?

What areas do you feel should be top priority for teacher education programs to address with pre-service teachers? What additional resources should be in place?

10. Is there anything else you would like to mention about your teacher preparation experience?

The purpose of questions one and two were to gain additional insight on responses already provided by the participants through their blogs. The blogs utilized the strategy of reflexive photography. Kamper and Steyn (2011) discussed how reflexive photography allows participants the opportunity to reflect and refocus on experiences, and how its use is almost guaranteed to elicit rich descriptions of the meanings attached to those symbols. Asking about the blog responses within the interviews allowed me to capture more of the participants' lived experiences in words, which is the true goal of phenomenological interviewing.

I developed question three to inquire about the infrastructure of HBCUs from previous students. HBCUs are known to have limited resources and a lack of finances (Irvine & Fenwick, 2011). The lack thereof may affect how participants view their experiences. Additionally, question three was developed to see if any information would surface about emotions and racial concerns. Kornfield (2012) conducted research on two African- American who attended non-HBCUs and reported how they were continuously made aware of their racial differences and how they felt as though they lived a divided life. As a result, the information from question three provided insight on how the participants perceived their experiences in comparison to others.

I developed question four to inquire about the general make up of the candidates being served in the HBCU teacher education programs. There has been much concern and discussion about the lack of African-American teachers in the field in general (Mawhinney, Mulero, &

Perez, 2012). According to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (2011), in the fall of 2011 African-American females made up 62% of HBCUs enrollment. Therefore, question four allows readers to gauge the number of females and African-Americans engaged in teacher preparation at HBCUs with the participants.

To describe the true essence of the teacher education program experiences at HBCUs by the African-American females, the researcher must understand how participants “perceive it, describe it, feel about it, and talk about it with others” (Patton, 2015, p.116). In-depth interviews are strategies used to gain specific descriptions of what the participants experienced and how. Therefore in a phenomenological interview, questions would contain content that elicits personal descriptions of lived experiences. Research questions five through eight focused on direct descriptions of specific situations as they were lived by the participant. These questions related to various areas of teacher preparation such as teacher leadership, classroom environment, content knowledge, and learning facilitation. A researcher should aim to describe a phenomenon in concrete terms (Adams & Van Manen, 2008, p. 618). I sought to obtain concrete descriptions by asking interview questions five through eight. These four questions helped answer the research questions that ask, “What characteristics of Dewey’s theory of combining experience and education do African-American female teacher graduates of HBCU programs feel contributed to their preparedness?” and “What are the perceptions of preparedness for African-American female teacher education graduates at Historically Black Colleges and Universities?”

Question nine asked specifically how prepared teachers felt for their careers after graduation. Other studies have focused on how prepared graduates felt for faculty careers after graduating from a HBCU but this question focuses on the teaching field specifically (Perna, 2001).

Question 10 sought to gain insight on areas for improvement for future pre-service teachers in preparation programs. Again while reflecting on what would be beneficial for others, the participants may revisit some experiences that they lived to arrive at their conclusion. Finally, Question 11 allowed participants to share any additional information that they desired about their teacher education preparation. This question served as a closing so that no opportunity was missed to share any information about their experiences.

Four content experts were contacted to serve as reviewers of my interview questions for content validity. Each content expert received an email from me asking that they provide feedback on how well each of my interview questions answered the research questions at hand. To complete this task I informed the content experts of the purpose and research questions for my study. Additionally, they were provided with a Microsoft Word document that included a table with my interview questions in one column, the corresponding research question in the next column, and a space to provide comments or suggestions in the final column. They were asked to complete the Microsoft Word documents and email it back to me within a week.

The content experts selected to review my interview questions were all consummate professionals within the field of education. The first content expert to review my questions, Reviewer A, has over 17 years of experience in education and is currently serving as an Associate Dean within a School of Education. She holds a doctorate degree in Educational Leadership and Administration. Her education and expertise within teacher education programs made her a great candidate to serve as a content expert to review my interview questions for content validity. Reviewer A emailed me with a brief response indicating that my questions looked decent; however, there was a need for explanation of Dewey's theory of experience and education (1938). She explained that teacher education graduates typically focus more on their

practical experience and knowledge more so than theory. Therefore, she felt that an explanation to the participants of exactly what Dewey's theory of experience and education (1938) entailed could be helpful.

Considering her feedback, I first revisited the literature to read about Dewey's theory of experience and education (1938). John Dewey suggested that there should be an intimate and necessary relationship between students' actual experiences and education (Dewey, 1938). The two tenets of this theory include continuity and interaction and suggest that learning experiences should be continuous to assist with the ease of catching on and they should allow participation in various contexts (Dewey, 1938). Therefore, the new question that I developed asked participants if they felt that their learning experiences went hand in hand with one another and exhibited interaction. Specifically the question was worded "Do you feel that your HBCU provided you with an equal combination of coursework (education) and experiences? How did this occurrence or the lack thereof contribute to your preparedness?"

Next, I received feedback from Reviewer B who has over 21 years of experience in higher education serving as both an Associate Dean and Professor of Education within a School of Education and Human Performance. Nearly, if not all, of her time in higher education has been at HBCUs. Additionally, she holds a doctorate degree in Student Personnel Work in Higher Education. Reviewer B's amount of experience in education coupled with her leadership specifically at a school of education made her an ideal content expert to review my interview questions. She provided thorough feedback on word choice and clarity for all 11 of my initial interview questions. Question one was worded "Thank you for completing your questionnaire and two blogs. I noticed on the blog you mentioned that something that was an asset to your learning was \_\_\_\_\_. Can you please expand upon that?" Reviewer B suggested that I change the



wording to “Explain how (content taken from blog response) was an asset or how it contributed to your learning ” The question was amended to reflect her suggestion. Question two was worded “Additionally, on the blog you mentioned that something that was a hindrance to your learning was \_\_\_\_\_. Can you please expand upon that?” Reviewer B suggested that I change the wording to “In what ways did (content taken from blog response) hinder your learning? How did you overcome or compensate for that?” I made the suggested change. For question three, Reviewer B questioned how would my respondents make a comparison should they not have the non-HBCU experience. As a result, for question three she suggested that I should focus on specific aspects of the teacher education program at the HBCU and the ways respondents felt they were unique to HBCUs. Therefore this question was changed to “What were some positive and negative aspects of your teacher education program that you felt were unique to HBCUs.” Question four was worded “In general what did your graduating class make-up look like in terms of gender and race?” Reviewer B suggested that I change the wording to “What are the demographics of your graduating class in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, age, and experience?” I made the suggested change to gain more details about the participant’s graduation class.

For question five Reviewer B suggested that I should put a limit on how many experiences that I want my respondents to discuss to maintain control and encourage participants to identify what was important. She felt that otherwise I may end up with more responses than I needed. As a result, she suggested changing the initial wording from “Which experiences at your HBCU if any contributed to your ability to be a teacher leader?” to “Identify the three most significant aspects of your HBCU experiences that enhanced your ability to become a teacher leader.” I did change this question to say “What were some experiences or educational opportunities at your HBCU, if any, that enhanced your ability to become a leader in the field.” I

worded it this way because I did not want to influence the participant's responses. I did address limiting the content that participants shared by adding a transition section before asking the questions that related to experience and education. Within that section I notified participants that if they had a response to the questions then to please describe up to three significant elements. My rationale was due to the fact that I felt some individuals might not have a total of three elements to discuss. They may likely have less than that. With that in mind I did not want to mandate that they provide three responses. Others may possibly have more than three things to share as Reviewer B suggested, so limiting responses to three would indeed help focus their answers on what is most important. Therefore, adding a transition statement at the beginning of these questions was the best option. Reviewer B made the same suggestion about limiting responses to three experiences for questions six through eight and I took the same approach by asking the participants the questions in a neutral way following a transition statement. Question six was initially worded "Which experiences at your HBCU if any contributed to your ability to create an environment conducive for learning for your students in terms of classroom management?" Reviewer B suggested that I change the wording to "Identify the three most important HBCU experiences that contributed to your ability to successfully manage your classroom to create an environment conducive for student learning?" The final wording became "Please describe the experiences or educational components at your HBCU, if any, that contributed to your ability to manage your classroom." Question seven was initially worded "Which experiences at your HBCU if any contributed to your ability to be knowledgeable of content in the subjects you teach?" Reviewer B suggested that I change the wording to "What are the three most specific experiences from your HBCU teacher preparation program that contributed to your knowledge of the content of the subjects you teach?" The final wording

became “Please describe the experiences or educational components at your HBCU, if any that contributed to your ability to teach the content after graduating.” Question eight was initially worded “Which experiences at your HBCU if any contributed to your ability to facilitate learning for your students?” Reviewer B suggested that I change the wording to “In what ways did your HBCU experiences contribute to your ability to facilitate learning among your students? Consider three or four significant experiences and how they impacted your ability.” The final wording became “Please describe the experiences or educational components at your HBCU, if any, that contributed to your ability to facilitate learning for your students. By that I mean fostering a learning environment that encourages students to take more control over their learning.” Reviewer B suggested that I frame question nine in a way that asked respondents to rate how prepared they felt in various areas. My initial question was worded “How prepared did you feel teaching immediately after graduating from your HBCU?” She suggested that I word it as “Upon graduation, how well prepared were you for teaching? Please rate your preparation on a scale of 1-5, with five being the highest level.” Some suggestions for possible areas for framing included both teaching and non-teaching duties, the classroom and community environments, interaction with other teachers, relationship with school administrators and collaboration with parents and the community. The areas that she suggested I frame were put into a transition statement before that question was asked. Question 10 asked about the areas that respondents felt should be top priority for teacher education programs to address with pre-service teachers and the resources that should be in place. Reviewer B suggested that it be worded “In order to ensure that new teachers are able to meet the challenges of 21st century schools and learners, what are the top five priorities on which teacher education programs should focus? What resources are required to ensure that these priorities are met?” That revision was

made. Finally, question 11 asked if there was anything else that respondents would like to mention about their teacher preparation experience. Reviewer B suggested that it be worded “What other aspects of your HBCU teacher preparation experience do you feel were significant to your development as a teacher.” The wording was left the same for the question 11, as its purpose was to allow an opportunity for respondents to share anything that they desired only if they wanted to. Framing it in the way it was suggested would require them to provide a response.

After reviewing the eleven questions that I provided, Reviewer B suggested adding two additional questions regarding diversity and social justice. These questions were (a) “In what ways did your teacher preparation program equip you to address the needs of a diverse learner population?” and (b) “What were specific aspects of your teacher preparation program that helped you develop an understanding of the concept of “social justice” in education and how to ensure that all students have access to equitable quality education?” I decided to add the first question that she suggested which asked respondents about their experiences that prepared them to address the needs of diverse learners. However, her suggested question referencing social justice was not in alignment with my research questions.

Next, I received feedback from Reviewer C who has over 19 years of experience in education and is currently serving as a Director of Support within a virtual public school. She has experience with being an Assistant Professor within a teacher education program at a HBCU. Additionally, she holds a doctorate degree in Educational Leadership. Her experiences with being an educator at a HBCU made her an excellent candidate to serve as a content reviewer for my interview questions.

Reviewer C wanted me to revise the wording in question three as she indicated that the words “challenges” and “characteristics” were not synonymous. She felt the question would be more powerful if it were two separate questions instead of one. She also stated that the wording should be phrased in a way that didn’t suggest that there were challenges with HBCU programs in comparison to majority preparation school programs. Question three was revised to remove the words challenges and characteristics. Instead these words were replaced with “positive aspects” and “negative aspects.” However, question three had already been already been revised using Reviewer B’s feedback to say “What were some positive and negative aspects of your teacher education program that you felt were unique to HBCUs.” Reviewer C suggested adding more detail to question four, which asked respondents what their graduating class looked like in terms of race and gender. She indicated that I should likely just ask individuals about the diversity noted at their respective HBCUs. Question four was fleshed out a bit more, asking students about the diversity represented at their respective HBCUs in terms of race, gender, age, and experience. Question four was another one that had already been revised with details using Reviewer B’s feedback to say “What are the demographics of your graduating class in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, age, and experience.”

Reviewer C indicated that questions six and seven were too wordy and interfered with clarity of the question. She felt that the questions should be more straightforward in asking participants about their experiences. Question six was edited to correct some of the wordiness that interfered with comprehension. The section within this question that talked about creating an environment conducive for learning was erased for clarity. Therefore combining Reviewer B and C’s suggestions question six was revised to “Please describe the experiences or educational components at your HBCU, if any, that contributed to your ability to manage your classroom.”

Question seven was revised to “Please describe the experiences or educational components at your HBCU, if any, that contributed to your ability to teach the content after graduating.”

Finally, Reviewer C felt that facilitating learning needed to be defined in question eight for the respondents, as it may be vague. Therefore, the question was revised to “Please describe the experiences or educational components at your HBCU, if any, that contributed to your ability to facilitate learning for your students. By that I mean fostering a learning environment that encourages students to take more control over their learning.”

My final content expert, Reviewer D, has well over 30 years of experience in education and is currently serving as an Elementary Education Program Coordinator at a HBCU. She has experienced being an educator, principal, director, and program coordinator at the school-building level and higher education level. Additionally, she holds a doctorate degree in Educational Leadership. Her various experiences and current position within a teacher education program at a HBCU made her a superior candidate to serve as a content expert to review my interview questions for content validity. She noted that my questions seemed to focus on the areas of teacher leadership, environment, content, and facilitating learning. She asked for clarity on what exactly I meant by teacher leadership but she indicated that the remainder of my questions seemed to be very thorough. I changed my wording to ask participants about being a leader in the field and provided some as examples such as serving on committees, being mentors, securing additional funding, presenting professional development, and so forth. The question was revised to “What were some experiences or educational opportunities at your HBCU, if any, that enhanced your ability to become a leader in the field? Examples of teacher leadership include being a department chair, serving on a committee, being a mentor, presenting professional development, securing additional funding, etc.” After reviewing my questions

Reviewer D provided a suggestion that she indicated was not necessary to add. However, addition of her question would be connected to research question one which sought to find out the participant's perceptions. Her suggested question was "From your experiences would you recommend attending a HBCU for a teacher preparation program, why or why not?" She felt that this question may give some additional information about the respondent's perceptions. She felt that responses to this question could provide additional information about the respondent's perceptions so I added it to my updated list.

After editing all of the interview questions for content validity, my number of interview questions increased to 14 questions. Due to the three-question increase I decided to be respectful of participants' time and offer participants the option to reconvene the interview at another time if the interview exceeded 30 minutes. I rearranged the questions in a way that they flowed and created an introduction statement, transitions for the different topics, and a closing statement (see Appendix J for interview script).

Next, I conducted a pilot interview with an individual who met the criteria of the participants in my study. She was an African-American female who attended a HBCU with three or more years of teaching experience. I asked the interview questions one by one while she responded to each of them and provided her thoughts and hesitations about the content or clarity. Her responses are included in the table below (see Appendix I for pilot interview analysis). In summary, we made corrections to questions three, four, ten, and thirteen. We changed the wording of questions one, three, and four but it did not alter the content suggested by the content experts. We added a transition sentence before question 13. These revisions were made on my interview script before scheduling interviews with my participants.

## Appendix I: Pilot Interview Question Analysis

| Question   | Notes about Person's Thoughts and Hesitations   |
|--|---|
| 1. Explain how _____ was an asset or how it contributed to your learning.  | This question is fine since you are asking about something that has already been mentioned. It is a good way to begin because participants already have their thoughts together. It is just an extension and they are not caught off guard. |
| 2. In what ways did ____ hinder your learning? How did you overcome or compensate for that?  | This question is also good. I would suggest going back and asking the participant if they forget to get around to the second question.  |
| 3. What were the demographics of your graduating class in terms of diversity? Feel free to reference gender, race/ethnicity, age, and experience.  | This is a good question. If you are not looking for the respondents to address everything I would suggest changing "and" in this question to "or."  |
| 4. What were some positive and negative aspects of your teacher education program that you felt were unique to HBCUs?  | How would they know this answer if they've only ever been to HBCUs? Would experiences be different at another school? I would delete "that you felt were unique to HBCUs."  |
| 5. From your experiences would you recommend attending a teacher education program at an HBCU, why or why not?"  | This is definitely a question participants can answer and they will likely base their recommendation off of the previous question you asked.  |
| 6. What were some experiences or educational opportunities at your HBCU, if any that contributed your ability to become a leader in the field? Examples of teacher leadership include being a department chair, serving on a committee, being a mentor, presenting professional development, securing additional funding, etc. | Your examples are good as it assists with making connections and knowing how to answer. This addition gives respondents a good starting point.  |
| 7. Please describe the experiences or educational components at your HBCU, if any that contributed to your ability to manage your classroom.   | This question is good. I like the incorporation of adding "if any" because it relieves pressure of having to provide a response if you don't have one.  |
| 8. Please describe the experiences or educational components at your HBCU, if any that contributed to your ability to teach the content after graduating.  | This question is good.  |
| 9. Please describe the experiences or educational components at your HBCU, if any that contributed to your ability to facilitate learning for your   | This question is good. Again, the examples are good for the respondents. I would hope that if your respondents do not   |



|  |  |
|--|--|
| students. By facilitating learning I mean fostering a learning environment that encourages students to take more control over their learning   | understand the question they would ask you to clarify.   |
| 10. In what ways did your teacher preparation program equip you to address the needs of a diverse learner population?  | I think this should be reworded to “Did your program equip you to address the needs of a diverse learner population? If so, please explain. If not, explain what they may have done.” Leaving it worded as it is automatically assumes they’ve had this exposure and they may not have.  |
| 11. Do you feel that your HBCU provided you with an equal combination of coursework (education) and experiences? How did this occurrence or the lack thereof contribute to your preparedness?  | This question is good as it is very straightforward.   |
| 12. Upon graduation, how well prepared were you for teaching? Please rate your preparation on a scale of 1-5, with five being the highest level.   | This question is good with the lead-in about what teachers should consider while rating their preparation.   |
| 13. In order to ensure that new teachers are able to meet the challenges of 21st century schools and learners, what are the top five priorities on which teacher education programs should focus? What resources are required to ensure that these priorities are met? | I think this should be revised to include a transition statement. My suggestion is “Based on everything you’ve shared today I’d like you to take a moment and reflect on what new teachers may need to meet the challenges of 21 <sup>st</sup> schools and learners.” After saying that transition sentence then I feel you should ask them the top five priorities that teacher programs should focus on. |
| 14. Is there anything else in closing that you would like to share about your teacher preparation experience?  | Good way to close out.   |

## Appendix J: Interview Script

*Good afternoon.*

*First, I would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in this study that is designed to understand and explain the perceptions of African-American female teachers' levels of preparedness for the teaching field after attending HBCUs. I intend to serve as the voice for African-American female teacher education graduates from HBCUs by gaining insight on your perspective of this phenomenon. Rich insight directly from individuals practicing in the field like you will assist universities with identifying what was useful and what was not. Therefore, I would love for you to feel comfortable in speaking openly and honestly about your experiences today. I only want to take up 30 minutes of your time but I realize that fourteen questions may require longer. After 30 minutes please notify me if you would like to reconvene the interview on another day.*

*First I would like to ask you more about your blog responses.*

Question One: Explain how \_\_\_\_\_ was an asset or how it contributed to your learning.

Question Two: In what ways did \_\_\_\_ hinder your learning? How did you overcome or compensate for that?

*Next, I would like to ask you some questions to get an idea of the demographics of the teacher education program at your HBCU.*

Question Three: What were the demographics of your graduating class in terms of diversity? Feel free to reference gender, race/ethnicity, age, or experience.

Question Four: What were some positive and negative aspects of your teacher education program?

Question Five: From your experiences would you recommend attending a teacher education program at an HBCU, why or why not?"

*In this next section I will ask you a few questions about your coursework (education) and your experiences within the teacher education program at your HBCU. When responding to these questions please try to limit your replies to up to three of your most significant memories.*

Question Six: What were some experiences or educational opportunities at your HBCU, if any that contributed your ability to become a leader in the field? Examples of teacher leadership include being a department chair, serving on a committee, being a mentor, presenting professional development, securing additional funding, etc.

Question Seven: Please describe the experiences or educational components at your HBCU, if any that contributed to your ability to manage your classroom.

Question Eight: Please describe the experiences or educational components at your HBCU, if any that contributed to your ability to teach the content after graduating.

Question Nine: Please describe the experiences or educational components at your HBCU, if any that contributed to your ability to facilitate learning for your students. By facilitating learning I mean fostering a learning environment that encourages students to take more control over their learning

Question Ten: Did your teacher preparation program equip you to address the needs of a diverse learner population? If so, please explain. If not, explain what they may have done?

Question Eleven: Do you feel that your HBCU provided you with an equal combination of coursework (education) and experiences? How did this occurrence or the lack thereof contribute to your preparedness?

*For this next question in framing your response think about both teaching and non-teaching duties, the classroom and community environments, interaction with other teachers, relationship with school administrators, and collaboration with parents and the community.*

Question Twelve: Upon graduation, how well prepared were you for teaching? Please rate your preparation on a scale of 1-5, with five being the highest level.

*Based on everything you have shared today I'd like you to take a moment and reflect on what new teachers may need to meet the challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century schools and learners.*

Question Thirteen: What are the top five priorities on which teacher education programs should focus? What resources are required to ensure that these priorities are met?

Question Fourteen: Is there anything else in closing that you would like to share about your teacher preparation experience?

*This concludes this interview. I will be typing up the transcript from today and emailing it to you along with some themes that emerged from the other interviews. Upon its receipt I'd like you to open the attachments and ensure that the transcript reflects what you said and inform me if it needs to be amended. Also feel free to comment on any of the themes that I will send in the additional attachment. This process is called member checking and it's an important component of my study. Thank you for your time.*

## Appendix K: Bracketing of Text From Blogs and Interviews

### Significant Statements for Research Question One

- Most definitely. Um I feel like teacher education in itself is a great field to go in and I tell people that all the time.
- Um most definitely, most definitely I would uh encourage well anybody not just a Black person but anybody to go
- I would, I would recommend attending because, just for the hands-on experience.
- Um for an African-American I would recommend it.
- Um I would but I am pro-HBCU period though teacher education program or not. Um especially if you're a person of color, any type of color.
- Yes, but just not where I went because teaching is not a bad thing.
- Um, I would if . . . I think for, I think so.
- I would enjoy, I think um I would say yes. I think it prepared me for the teacher education when I went into it.
- Definitely so I would recommend to go to a HBCU . . . but it just like it prepared me for everything. Like, yeah.
- I would recommend an HBCU for a teacher education program because overall HBCUs are catering to the minorities
- So I definitely do recommend if you are Black it's just good to be around like people doing the same thing you are doing that's positive. Especially like a lot of times on the news we are portrayed to do negative things so it's great to just be in that atmosphere where everyone's like about their business.
- Um teacher education at an HBCU is, I highly, highly, highly recommend that because number one we need more teachers who look like the students. And especially these Title I low poverty schools and that type of school that I work in and I see that when my students can relate to me as a mom, an auntie, not a grandma because I'm not that old. But um a sister or a big cousin and they can confide in me and I'm able to build that relationship with them.
- I had older African-American ladies who I considered like they reminded me of a great aunt or a grandmother that I may really talk to and kind of get all the way down to the nitty gritty about stuff. So I really appreciated that.
- Just making sure they understand the importance of not just our race but just like. Just, I don't think there's anything like going to a HBCU. And so I just think that it's like a great experience um and I definitely think it helped shaped me today who I am and it helped foster how to teach my kids.
- I've had people to say a HBCU teacher education program is easy. No, it's really not because we had to do what was required and what the professors already knew because our professors looked like us. They already knew what we were going to have to deal with going into the profession as an African American as being young, as being the new teacher on the block, all of those different things that may set somebody back or make them change their career from being a teacher. So we got the best of both worlds and um I think that is what really prepared me.
- And because my professors were minorities themselves they were able to speak from a different experience and they were able to say when you're dealing with this culture in this

way these are some helpful tips and when dealing with this culture in this way these are some helpful tips. Because they are coming from the side of the oppressed, of the neglected as far as curriculum and so they were very conscious of teaching their teachers or future teachers to be aware of what's missing. And I'm not sure if somebody who finds themselves as the majority in America would have thought to even teach their teachers about the minorities they are going to encounter.

- I would recommend it um because I know I didn't get lost at the university. And I've heard um at some of the non-HBCUs you're easily um overlooked and so for that reason I would recommend it.
- Yes, okay so when I didn't pass the Praxis they were like some still little classes that I may take at (specific non-HBCU). So I did take those classes. It was horrible. There was somebody just standing up there talking about nothing. I mean things where I feel like if I would have just went to (specific non-HBCU) I would have died. Like I would have not felt confident to do nothing. Like they had so many opportunities for like to just go off and if you want to help somebody with so and so. But it just like it prepared me for everything.
- So yes I would advise them to go to the HBCUs that way you get a different, um it's a different demographic and background. It's a different bringing versus the Caucasian school.
- Um yes overall it was amazing and I wouldn't trade it, I would not trade it for anything. Um especially after getting my masters degree in education um from a predominately white institute. Um I mean I was there for business you know and it was very, it was just like we're here to do this not that.
- Like you know we have fun of course and its college and you have fun but it's just nice to know that everyone is there for a reason to better themselves and I think that it helps me even with dealing with my kids now.
- I think you just get that camaraderie, that feeling from a HBCU that you're not going to find anywhere else. In my um, one of my blog post I put that you had an obligation to be involved and I'm not quite sure it's like that everywhere but at a HBCU you can't just come and be a student. You can't just come and go to class. You have to do something, you have to be somewhere because this was built for you so you have to give back some way, shape, or form.
- Um most definitely, most definitely I would uh encourage well anybody not just a Black person but anybody to go because it's just soulful and it's just rich with, you know that education is rich and the history is rich and I just think we really need to keep that alive and going.
- But I just as an undergrad I had a lot fun being at an HBCU with the culture and just it was just so fun. I really enjoyed my experience.
- And they showed us how to build relationships with our students because they built relationships with us. Um I still talk to my professors to this day. A lot of them when they come to my current school to visit student teachers they always stop by my class to see how things are going and talk about how they miss me being a student.
- Like I definitely like there were little tips that my professor would say like as far as, like he would say don't eat in the teacher's lounge. Don't like you know teachers gossip and women you know we gossip. So I think there were little tidbits like to this day I don't eat in the teacher's lounge like I kind of took that.
- They taught me a lot of social skills, a lot of things, a lot of conversation tips to make that relationship but only you can put it into practice.

- I would say my personal experience was a four and a half and I say four and a half because nobody's perfect. If I may give it a five I would but it's a four and a half. But I really feel like Windmont Hill University prepared me for the real world of teaching, not the sugarcoated part but the real world of teaching.
- Okay um I was prepared at a 3 or 3.5. I say 3.5 and I say that because right after I graduated in December 2011 in March 2012 I took over a class. Um a teacher had left and I was I felt like I was not prepared because the class was crazy. So a lot of it has come along the way but I was prepared enough to know what I had to do so my HBCU prepared me I knew what I was going there to do and I knew how to, I knew the steps.
- Thinking of all those things I would give it, I would give a 2. I did not have the community you know. I did not know how to access those, that part of teaching. As far as community, building rapport with administration, um, parents.
- I would say a four.
- I would say I was a four only because you, you can show and you can experience working within the community but until you have your own classroom that teacher parent relationship you can't teach it. So other than that I was pretty prepared
- Leaving school, probably a two simply because I wasn't really ready but I did know that this is what I was going to do.
- Uh so okay maybe like um like a five to six.
- I think I was a 5. I enjoyed student teaching. I enjoyed teaching.
- Five. I would say um to manage the workload I think we were beyond prepared for that.
- I would say a five. I might have come out and behaved at a four but not for they didn't tell me, they didn't teach me.
- And I would say I might have performed at a four due to the paperwork. But we were definitely told about the paperwork in um, in school and with the documentation, documentation, documentation. Like I remember my professor saying that.
- I really feel like everybody from the dean to the lady that worked in the \_\_\_\_\_ center that just said good afternoon and good morning when I came in. They were all very supportive and they uh asked was there something you need, was there something I may help you with, do you have questions about anything. So they were always concerned with how we were feeling as students in the education department because they knew that at anytime you may give up. It may become too much and I know people personally who had some stories where they had to stop and leave and come back and finish um and those professors were right there every step of the way to make sure that they didn't give up and to make sure that they returned.
- Um I was very very pleased with my teacher preparation experience. Um being at a HBCU taught me how to work with different types of kids but how to appreciate every child um just the same way that our professors appreciated us.
- They taught us how to motivate the same way that our professors motivated us and I'm not sure that you would get that at a larger or more diversified program. Um it felt like there was a need like I wasn't just going through the programs so I may be another teacher.
- Um overall I had a great experience. I would do it all over again. Um and I'm still thankful for the relationships that I made like with my friends who are teachers now and the people who aren't either. But like my professors I know I can call them now and say Dr. \_\_\_\_\_. So it's great to know that you have those long like great lasting relationships with people.

- It was awesome. I would go to Bliss State again. So um I would say that being at Bliss State prepared me for everything- how to deal with men, how to deal with church people, how to deal with just everything. It was a great experience and I wouldn't change nothing because those friends are your friends for the rest of your life. It was just great.
- Um well again the positives were the connections that I made with the staff in general at Windmont Hill University. And then definitely the connections that I made with the people that I was in the program with that I still am connected to today.
- Um I think it allowed too for an intimate setting. Um we were kind of like a little family just because it was the same you know group of us for at least the last three years because like the first year you were kind of doing like your core classes. So that was nice. It was nice because we became close and we would all kind of work together and like experience like student teaching and things together so that was definitely a positive.
- Um, positives. I guess because it was the same people um for the elementary ed and it was a small group. So I knew the same people would be in the same classes over and over again. So you got to make connections that way um and in student teaching different classes we may call them and ask them what are you doing in your school um to compare lessons like that.
- So positive aspects were, I would have to go back to my professors.
- They made it a really great experience as far as taking us out on field experiences, showing us the different classrooms, what to do, what not to do. So really hands-on in that aspect.
- Um, positive I would go back to the professors being caring um wanting the best of, of us; wanting us all to succeed. Um, if they felt like there was something you didn't understand they actually would pull you after class and work with you.
- Positive aspects were role models. I always felt like, even though I've never visited other teacher education programs that we had enough women um in our program to show us what we wanted to be when we grew up. Um the, the people that we were surrounded with were definitely assets.
- Um I think the positives um were like the professors. I think like because we were such a small classroom setting we were able to do more. Like they may spend more time going over material or working with us or making sure that we got things.
- The positive aspects were the professors who were just set on making sure I understood what it was I was doing and they let that be known at the beginning of the year.
- There was one professor I had starting my sophomore year at Frazelle all the way until my senior year. He was by far an important asset to my learning during the program at Frazelle, and he is a continued asset to why and how I teach today.
- A person who was a great asset to me during my journey to becoming an educator was Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_. She played a big role in teaching me a different way of viewing the classroom through creativity.
- I love the connections that I made with the staff in the Education Department. I can go to them to ask a question, receive a recommendation, and volunteer my time to give back.
- The professors that I had took the information from the textbooks and made it relevant to the current teaching practices. My professors instructed us using strategies that we may use in the classroom while we were student teaching. My instructors were not lecturers but "facilitators of learning."



- Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ was our advisor. I believe he had the biggest impact on my experience at Saint Clairview. Everyone from the dean down to the professors knew who we were and had high expectations of us. We were expected to soar.
- The professors were very knowledgeable of the current education trends. Most teachers taught information using hands on approach.
- Throughout each year, Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ held monthly enrichment workshops. We also had test taking skills workshops to help ensure we all passed both the Praxis 1 and Praxis 2 assessments.
- My professor would spend time when he may be at home, helping me study for the test and giving me test taking strategies. He never gave up on me and let me know that if teaching was what I wanted to do, then I may do it.
- My son was the biggest asset to me while working on my Bachelor Degree.
- We met in the gospel choir and it was really a blessing to have best friends who shared the same beliefs and goals as myself. We pushed each other!
- I was a member of Model United Nations where I went onto compete as a delegate, the next year we competed in Nationals in New York, and then my last competition I was the Secretary General (highest office).
- At Bliss State several sorority members took me under their wing. Dinners, outings, transportation, math help, anything. Which is still true to this day.
- After and during my attendance at Windmont Hill, I met a lot of older females and males in my home state of Virginia who attended Windmont Hill when it was the Teacher's College. They shared their personal stories and how they had been teaching
- This rich legacy fuels the education program at West Graham University today. Because it comes from such a rich and devoted history the education department at West Graham continues to honor the commitment it has to its students and community.
- I came in contact with a lot of different professors who were experts in their own fields. I chose Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ as an asset because she genuinely took an interest in our success through the Teacher Education Program. She also took an interest in us personally, and was the driving force to not only make me a college graduate but an excellent educator.
- Having Education Week and the Excellence in Teaching Conference on your college campus sets the standard for academic achievement and professional achievement. It makes you empowered knowing teachers across the district are on the campus of your HBCU to learn more about perfecting their craft.

### **Significant Statements for Research Question Two**

- Um, uh I think we had what was it Project Pal? I think that's what it was called that we were on. Uh, I was on that, I was in that organization I guess you would call and that was where a lot of the student teachers or education majors would get together and discuss those different topics like we talked about earlier.
- Okay um, well I got to be a part of the student organization of um educators there. Um and that helped me you know get the foot in the door of learning a lot about the politics of being a teacher in my state um and how important that organization is.
- We had um Kappa Delta Pi and I mean that we didn't really do too much community service with that but we had like little seminars and events and that was like education related and I think that definitely helped us.

- We went to an educator organization conference in \_\_\_\_\_ um and I remember the president right then and there said “Well ya’ll are getting ready to graduate, you need to join.” And one of the girls that we were, that accompanied us on the conference she wasn’t a member of the educator organization. He reached in his pocket he pulled out the \$25 and she registered right then and there because he was adamant about people getting in and getting to work. So I remember him and I remember thinking okay when he said he needs something done he’s one of those people he’s not playing so I took that back to work
- So Model United Nations would be one because that was like speaking and planning and programming and all that stuff that we had to do.
- Um so we did a program where we were kind of like big sisters and so um it was the, there was a church that was nearby. So we were partnered with the church and we would like take the kids to like a Frazelle game or we did like little study sessions to help them with their homework. So I think that definitely helped because it was like I knew like I’ve always known that I wanted to help kids, well people but like kids specifically sorry.
- My class were mentors for the next round of the um scholarship recipients. That contributed to my ability, yes.
- I also was able to study abroad. Um I went to Ghana and went to Benin and I was able to learn about the education system there and apply that to what I was learning for you know America or in my state. So I was able to um get more of a broader experience instead of just you know education right here that um opportunity allowed me to study education um basically transcontinental you know more than just in America um and I was the only education major that went on that trip.
- We went to Belize, Central America and we taught there for um about three weeks in the summer. So that helped with um working with various levels and the different cultures of students.
- Um another thing that sticks out is, and I mentioned this in my blog post is Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ celebrations. Um it was one way all of us got a chance to speak and there was no being shy you had to speak even though public speaking wasn’t an area of concern for me, it was for other people. So that really promoted those skills and um let us be more personable with one another so we may do that amongst colleagues and it definitely carried over to the profession.
- Um, another experience, uh that kind of made, not made me to be the leader but secured me in knowing that it’s okay to ask questions when you don’t understand. I had a professor who told us on the first day of my freshman seminar to ask for what you want. The worst answer you can get is no and that stuck with me every since then. Um and that’s what I do now. When I don’t understand or I need something to be done I am going to ask and if you tell me no I may wait maybe a week or two and ask you again so um that’s number two. Knowing how to talk to people or how to communicate what you need from people or what you need as an individual.
- Oh, we had a lot of um professional development sessions, which I really liked. Um, once you got into the program and especially during your semester of um student teaching. I know we did a couple different uh classroom management professional uh professional developments with principals from um different counties um and they would come in and let us know from the principal’s perspective what they would like to see going on in the classroom as far as classroom management. So um I think that is what really helped a whole lot having those professional development sessions prior to getting to the classroom and going to district uh given professional development.

- We did have workshops on classroom management um we had people come in and explain you know the breakdown you know of the consistency and all that kind of stuff. So I would say that we attended a lot of workshops.
- We visited a lot of schools um and they really honed in on that classroom management.
- Um, I would say the university required us to go into to volunteer in the schools. And that was every year that I was, that I was there. We had so many um contact hours that we had to go into the schools and I guess getting that experience of being in different classrooms um helped me with my classroom management and different grade levels.
- We had to before we even entered the teacher education program, just if we took any classes associated with it, you had to get community service hours in a school, in an actual school. Wasn't just what you wanted to teach we had to do preschool, elementary, middle, and high school and luckily West Graham is set in the middle of a community which is also has those community schools in West Graham.
- And then of course practicum . . . field experience and practicum. Even though with field experience you don't have to teach a lesson or anything like you just really go and observe. A lot of the teachers who I had the opportunity to visit their classrooms saw the passion I had so they would tell me "You know Ms. \_\_\_\_\_, if you would like to do a small group or something you can let me know
- I think that I was well prepared when I became a teacher um mainly from the help of the professors and the teaching and also because my student teaching was in a school similar to what I actually got hired in. So the population of the kids, the economic background of the kids it was very similar to what I student taught actually where I did my teaching at.
- So our teachers did not play any foolishness so that was an automatic like. Oh, I had one really strict social studies teacher and that was \_\_\_\_\_. I can't even tell you her last name. All I remember was \_\_\_\_\_. So she would always have us build into our lesson how you were going to manage everything.
- Classroom management was a big thing with my, her name was Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ at the time. She was coming from the classroom straight the um, straight to teaching to help us that year when we were student interning.
- Um Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ always had a story to tell and she never mentioned names of any students. Everybody was named Denzel. So we heard all about how Denzel would cut up or how about Denzel's mama wouldn't sign these papers or about how Denzel struggled in school but we always knew that in the end she was going to find some type of way to help Denzel. It wasn't so much about class management but it was more so of, you're going to your face, you're going to have a Denzel, what are you going to do about it? And it got us to thinking ahead of time what can I do um as a teacher with students who have limited resources.
- And I will never forget Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ taught, I think she probably taught every math course I ever took but, well as far as in education program. And I remember she had me scared to death because she preached you need to know your content or your kids are not going to know math and that was just the bottom line. There was no gimmick, no sweet treat if you did what you were supposed to do. It was just either you do it so your kids can succeed or you won't. Even though I didn't quite agree with her approach it did work. Like it scared me enough to be a better math teacher, to learn my content more and to put into practice so my kids will be efficient on the test.

- Going back to the professors actually um staying abreast of the current trends of education and making sure that we were aware of the content that we would, we were going to, that we were expected to teach once we got into the classroom.
- Um I didn't really put it into as much practice so classroom management as a whole was something I had to do once I started working.
- I had to come out and actually experience it (classroom management).
- I don't really think, I really don't know how prepared you can be in undergrad for that because that's something that you're learning all the time (facilitating learning).
- I don't think it, I don't think it helped me for the diverse population. I feel like I may have received just a little more maybe even my professors if they had been of mixed races then I may have gained a little more experience more insight on what they were teaching you know their different perspectives of things.
- I went to professional developments so that's what got me to do that part (reaching a diverse learner population).
- Yeah so definitely not a diverse uh. Yeah, I mean because I don't know how they . . . I think they, um which I'm sorry if I'm repeating myself but I feel like they should . . . I feel like every kid should student teach in two different environments. So like put them in the low-income environment and put them in like one that's maybe not.
- Uh we had to align that standard with the standard course of study and with the common core standards. So I was semi familiar with common core at the time, which was good because during my student teaching I was learning how to teach common core per say with my cooperating teacher who was preparing to teach it the following year. So it wasn't like it was already set in stone. So that was really good because I got to learn like a professional at the time when I was just a student teacher. Um that way when I started my job that I have now when my first year teaching was the first year they rolled out common core fully. So I think with all the states. So having that prior knowledge of what common core entails and how its supposed to be taught and the purpose of common core and why they changed it really kind of gave me an edge on it just a little bit better than some of the other teachers who may not have had common core training.
- Can I equate this to a lot of student teaching? Because I feel like that's when it came. You know, it was solid for me, you know in teaching the content, looking up the standards and making sure that everything meshed with the standards as well as the projects we did. We had to make sure that the standards were in line with whatever we were doing. So just that alignment, that standard alignment. Then knowing the standards and what students had to do and it trickling down to make sure that that's what we were following.
- For the social studies we had to like write out the activities and then like share those out. So that was like a lot of the way I memorized like this is my standard. Because you would have to say like what standard does this go with or can I pair that with and I was like oh okay. So just a way to like memorize it.
- Um well so this state, I mean definitely again we had lots of courses that kind of like, like we had history, we had math and it was like for elementary you know. So it was definitely helpful but then it was like every program is different so like the standards that the state I went to school in has are different then the standards that this state had or has.
- Um well we had a class in every content area. Um so we had social studies, sciences, math, and reading were the main um four. Uh so just having classes that were specific to how to teach these you know subjects was extremely helpful and important.

- Um, it was helpful that we had our content classes the semester before we actually student taught. And so we had our methods of math, methods of English language arts and that was the semester right before they sent us into the classroom.
- Um we took uh classroom management I believe. Yeah, we had to come up with a whole binder resource of like our class motto if we're going to have one, or a class mascot, and our rules and our consequences. And just we had to really think about those pieces and thinking about them kind of early on even though we had never had a class of our own really helped, just put that in the forefront of how important it is to have this class classroom management. Um so I think just having a class about that in itself is so important and I'm glad that my HBCU had that.
- Because you know I remember specifically having conversations about having, teaching African-American kids that did not grow up the way that I grew up so that's diversity.
- And then in one of my classes we had to address um the differences of gender, how boys learn versus girls, um ethnicities, um and I think in my classroom at that time I did my student teaching um a majority of my class was Caucasian American and Hispanic. And I had African-Americans in the class at the time so being able to take a lesson and teach it and reflect on okay well how did my boys group do? How did this subgroup perform? How did subgroup A perform in comparison to subgroup C?
- So, after it was like once a week I would say, we had to present our lesson plans to our classmates. So I remember that for math for sure. And then he would just like randomly bring us some manipulatives which when else would you have known that you are supposed to introduce these things to your real kids if somebody didn't teach you that. So that to me helped us learn the content.
- So being able to actually teach the lesson and my classmates respond as kindergarteners was very interesting because you go in with the mindset Oh these are you know, young twenty year olds in my class but they are actually acting like kindergarteners, not paying attention, and calling out, and having attitudes. So it was really good that we kind of got to do that trial lesson to see this is how it's going to really work.
- Um, we did courses in project based learning um where students had to you know we learned about how to make, how to make it student-centered. Um, and that creativity and hands-on experience they really taught us about really limited amount of workshops and hands-on things like building things, like the engineering part was a big deal in most of my classes.
- So they literally mimicked um how, how to teach once we came into the schools with how they taught the classroom. Um and that went down to the cooperative learning groups, the group projects that we had um. Sometimes we didn't necessarily um have to take a test but we might have had a project um with our peers instead or we had to do a portfolio instead. And so those were things that I was able to bring into my classroom.
- Um, I remember a couple of assignments and I can't quite remember what class it was but we were in charge of creating games or and then one time we had to make a book. Um it was an easier way for me to teach the content and then turn it back over to the students let them have a student-led conversation and put what I was teaching into practice for reading and math.
- Um and so you know we got to do things where we would do like skits or like put on little scenarios and like have people volunteer to come up and do things or even just doing presentations but just more hands-on things. So that was fun too like creating lessons and then like doing the hands-on things you know that kids would like.

- Um, I think it was pretty balanced if I recall. Um, I know every semester up until my practicum I did field experience and we had to have at least 40 hours in the classroom I believe. I think that's right or 30. Um like I said earlier we were able to visit different types of classrooms, different grade levels. Um, I think it was pretty balanced
- Okay. Um I think so.
- I think it did provide a good amount of balance between the two. The coursework I think it prepared me as far as getting a portfolio. Making sure that I had all of the different components, knowing how to do a resume, you know everything that they required us to do. And the experience, we had tons of hours of field experience to adhere to and make sure that we covered.
- I think they did.
- Um I do think they gave us a balance of coursework and experience. At one point I felt like they were just giving us too much coursework. But looking back it was to better prepare us.
- I definitely think the classes that we had, like the core classes, the education related classes were great
- Yes I think if they gave us anymore course work then I wouldn't want to do it. But I think they divided it up equally enough to give us that, the one semester we did student teaching was completely free of actually going to class.
- Coursework and experiences, definitely so. It was like never a time that we were just in the class all the time. Like we would walk over to the library and sit there and do different things or go to uh different schools.
- I would say they had a pretty even balance since if you took any course that was registered under education you had to get observation hours or you may choose to work with um, you may tutor to get your observation hours. But any course that you took under the school even before you entered the school of education there was a real live observation or practicum piece to it. So I think it was very balanced and that was important because I was able to immediately apply what I was learning.
- 1 Notable Exception: Nope. Coursework sure. Coursework, yeah, because they give you the work and the work you do and you make sure you get it done because it's more of an endurance test more so than it is go take this course and do this. But as far as experiences no. I did not get those until I got out and had to see.
- Now, may they have prepared us more to deal with grownups that are your colleagues, definitely. I would say like my first year of teaching that was like the only thing that I was not aware that people were not as wonderful as the teachers at the HBCU because it was just like you sure are negative.
- Um but yeah again just the student teaching aspect, I think it should have been longer where we were actually in the classroom. Because the actual class, I actually do feel like that was long, like that was like months.
- The only thing I wish I would had been more assertive about learning more of would be special education and special education laws. But granted being an elementary education major I did go through the special education classes but it wasn't a focus. It wasn't a minor or a second course of study so I did the requirements but at the same time I feel like that might need to be a little bit more of a focus then it is already.
- Um after talking to other people going in and volunteering is totally different then actually being responsible for the teaching part. And so some of the, and it might be other HBCUs

but I know some of my friends who taught at non-HBCUs, their student teaching is for a year and not for a semester and so I think that would have better prepared us.

- Um I, I would have liked to have written more lesson plans I think by the, by the time I was finished. Um I know when you graduate you don't know what grade you going to teach but it would've been nice to maybe like have the year of being a junior or senior choose a grade and then every day write plans for that grade in all areas you know just getting that, getting used to doing that.
- The only time we ever really used the Smart board was to do a PowerPoint so I think lessons other then uh EDU Media needed to be taught or some type of professional development on how to use the Promethean board and the Smart board to engage the students during the lesson. Because a lot of times you did not get that until you did your student teaching or you would lose the students attention if you didn't know how to use the board and they did. So I think that was the only downfall that I remember about the experience versus the coursework.

### **Significant Statements for Research Question Three**

- Um, number one I'd have to say would be diverse learning communities.
- Children of poverty, different demographics of kids, different learning abilities, different learning styles.
- Differentiation! Like that's probably one of the hardest things to do because it's just not easy.
- I think they should focus on the different learning methods. Um a lot of times we teach the way we remember having been taught simply because its easiest or we just tend to teach in the way that we learn the best. So you might find some people always using manipulatives but then we don't necessarily know how to bring it back to paper or maybe were always dancing and singing but then we have a silent test. So just getting them exposed to all the different types of methods and then giving them situations in which they can actually use it.
- Uh another thing I would say is that we need to speak on diversity again. America is ever-changing in our population and what we look like as a whole on and there's a lot going on between the races in America and with the poverty line and the middle class. There's lot going on and our teachers need to be aware that this affects their students. We have to be aware of that in the classroom because again you don't learn from people you don't like. So we have to make sure that our classrooms are diverse as well as our learning methods.
- And finally classroom management because if they love coming in your classroom and you teach them in all kind of ways but they don't know when to sit down or when you turn it off and it's pointless and it's purposeless.
- So you have to have classroom management.
- Um, classroom management would be number one.
- Classroom management is definitely important. My first year I struggled with that so much because I think I'm just nice and I think I came in too nice and like you don't realize that they're little people so they know what they are doing and they can eat you alive if you let them. So I think like classroom management and just like that fine line between um like being their friend and being their teacher.
- Um, classroom management because that's the main key. Because if you don't have that you don't have order. You don't have anything going on. I hear teachers down the hallway always yelling and all I can think of is please stop yelling nobody's listening.
- Classroom management

- I guess I would say classroom management. Just making that all around teacher you know, just handling situations as they come. Organization, that would be a main thing. Just showing them how to stay organized and how to come up with a system of organization.
- Number two, I would have to say would be the use of technology in the classroom um. But technology is changing so much and so much faster these days that I think it's, it's going to be hard to stay the course with technology but if student teachers learn how to use it in the classroom meaning instead of just loading in their flash drive to show the PowerPoint that they have to present for the day.
- Um another one would have to be technology. Uh learning, knowing when to use it, when is it appropriate for student learning and when is it not appropriate. Technology doesn't have to be used all the time you know, or if it is it definitely needs to be very structured.
- I would say the top five would be incorporating technology, um making sure that you know, they have access to SMART Boards<sup>®</sup> and BrightLinks<sup>™</sup> as it would be in the classroom.
- Number four would be I guess now with the new common core it would just be 21st-century learning and knowing how to incorporate technology into the classroom.
- Technology is a must and with technology that does not mean you just have it in your room, but you need to use it.
- Also curriculum making sure they understand they really need to understand their curriculum. Um we had to print out our curriculum at the time of course it was standard course of study. So I do understand colleges might have a harder time with that because it is constantly changing. But um just letting your teachers know that you have to know what you are going to be teaching and letting them know that that might mean you might be studying before some of your lessons but it's necessary so that you know what you're talking about. And that curriculums change but they stay the same. They're certain basic and truths that people just have to learn and those they should make sure their students understand.
- Um, lesson planning I think would be number two. Just making sure that they are prepared for lesson and they had backup plans and they are flexible and able to change.
- And then know the curriculum. I know my first year there was like a math lesson and I was like oh my gosh and I thought that I may just like print out the pacing guide and just like be fine and like I was like oh gosh hold on guys Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ needs to like take a second. You know I teach second grade so it was okay but if I was doing older kids . . . but even them that minute that you slip that's when behavior slips, they get rowdy. So then it's like you have to be prepared. And that's another thing you always need to be prepared and over planned.
- Um my third one would have to be continued practice in breaking down standards and breaking these common core standards down. Any standards that teachers are going to go off and be teaching need practice looking at that, um especially in the being in a situation where like me you go to a different grade level every year you know? You have to be able to know how to adapt to each standard.
- Realizing that the curriculum changes from day to day, week to week, year to year, and being flexible
- Um a fourth one would be continued learning in communication with parents. Um diverse parents at that especially parents who don't speak English having and knowing how to use your resources when it comes to, to that and how important it is that you pre-plan homework and pre-plan letters so that you can get them translated so that your parents can, all your parents have the same amount of access to help their, to help their child.



- Parents, how to communicate with parents, how to quote on quote deal with parents. That's a huge thing.
- Uh, parent-teacher relations even though like I said you can't teach it there are some plain old manners that people can use to help foster those relationships.
- Also parent and community communications- just how to be a leader in your school with your parents and your community. Reinforcing that the contact is important. Just simply talking to the parents is important. Um tips on how to not because we are dealing with diversity we might not be dealing with somebody who has as much education as us. So how do we speak to people who might not be understanding the words that were used and how do we come across as relatable and as a leader?
- So one thing you have to have is to be able to look at data and be able to decide where to place kids with your data. You have to know how to collect the data too that's going to be important, and to maintain it.
- I think student teachers like I said in my blog need the support when it comes to the assessment piece um because as I stated early when you get in your first year of teaching you have so much that you are learning. And EOGs and EOQs, DIBELS®, and K-2 assessments, and all those different things are so important. They carry so much weight during your first year of teaching or every year that matter but especially your first year if you may just learn a little bit about it, or just be a little bit familiar with it, outside of you being the student or recalling from when you were in school or you were taking them. It's different when you're on the other side of the fence. So I feel that if the district and the education department come together to do a professional development on those types of things that would eliminate a lot of the stress that first year teachers have when it comes down to the things that they have to do.
- Um, time management and being able to use assessments to do assessments and use them for um instruction, to guide instruction.

#### **Significant Statements for Research Question Four**

- I was told that I was able to take an extra like elective class. So I chose to take a sign language class um and you know thinking that I was on the right track but come to find out that summer I missed the class or something with the schedule. Like I'm not even really sure because it really wasn't explained to me. So I had to take a computer class in the summer um and then there was still another class that I missed along the way and I had to make up for it that following fall so that put me a semester behind. So I didn't graduate until December 2011 instead of 2012 um because of a computer class.
- It hindered my learning because everybody has their four your plan in their head and then this class says sike [*sic*] you can't take me until two semesters from now which means you can't take this other class until three semesters from now. So it just threw me off. My scholarship wasn't for summer school and some of the classes were only offered during summer session which means I had to find a way to pay through summer school. So that was, it was just a hindrance monetary wise and um it kind of messed up my bigger vision.
- For course scheduling um back then, for teaching for your methods classes if you didn't get them in the fall you couldn't take them in the spring because spring was um designated for student teaching. So the one year that I got sick so I missed out on some classes in the fall so

I had to wait a whole another year just taking elective classes because I couldn't get into it and I didn't do my student teaching until the following year. So I graduated a year later because the courses just weren't offered.

- Um, actually they were real rude. A lot of them were really rude, if I must say. They really were. Um they were really acting as if I . . . just “Oh go do something different, go find you a different major.” Like they were really bad off. It's sad to say I think some of them knew my mom and when people know who she is and they figure out who I am, they treat me a little differently.
- So I think what messed me up the first time with the Praxis was when we took Praxis I it was like mostly computer based. So our computer teacher was like oh you guys love the computer you can do, oh you can do all this stuff already it's really no big deal. So for some reason I heard no big deal and just ran with it. Um so I guess they may have gotten some more people together or even made it mandatory or something to get you to make sure that you would pass because like when they said here's some books that we have in this room, um you can go pick from those. And I was just like but where do I go?
- I, um my student teaching, my university supervisor did not follow through with the amount of observations and um time that she was supposed to spend with me. She felt like that I had it and that I was good and I felt like it didn't hinder my student teaching but there's always room for growth. And so um I just felt like I was kind of left high and dry like “Oh you're good.” And which I was fine but um she may have given me more ideas.
- So I would, my only, the only thing that I would take away from Frazelle is that the student teaching experience isn't realistic. But that may be anywhere too, but for that like it was only two weeks I believe . . . maybe three weeks. Maybe like one week you are kind of shadowing the teacher and then I think maybe the second week you kind of start taking over and then maybe three weeks because the third week it's all you. So that wasn't really long enough to get your feet wet because once like you have your own classroom like student teaching was like a joke
- Um for the diversity part, just um knowing the different cultures, how to identify with different cultures and how to reach them like their holidays and you know just all the different cultures.
- And I just wasn't prepared because it was the opposite of what I grew up with and it was opposite of what I student taught with. And it was like they had issues that I just never thought or even fathomed.
- Um and going back to myself actually once my first year started the only thing I was familiar with was DIBELS® and so being the person that I am I spoke up and said I don't know how to do this, are we going to receive training on this?
- My experience with such a diverse group was very low and it was night and day compared to my student teaching experience. I was assigned to a school that was predominately white with a pretty well off population
- One thing I regarded as a hindrance or an obstacle my learning was during my student teaching period.
- The only thing I may think of that may be a possible obstacle in my teacher education program is my student teaching.
- I'd say the hindrance experience was the lack of resources and knowledge needed to be a culturally aware teacher. I would have loved to be introduced to certain customs and given insight on reaching children in that culture.

- The major issue that I had while a student at Windmont Hill was the course planning. As a result of choosing to take those two elective classes and an administrative change to the course plan, I had to take a needed class during the summer and still was a semester behind.
- An obstacle that I experienced during the teacher education program was with the schedule of classes. Certain classes that were required to take were only offered one semester. Therefore, if you missed out on a class you had to wait until the following year before it was offered again.
- The other problem I had with my student teaching was my university supervisor. She did not consistently keep track of me because she felt like I was okay.
- I couldn't get any help in finding the right courses. I was technically on my own. This was a difficult obstacle not knowing how to get on the right path.
- I received no guidance from the education department staff members.
- Being at an HBCU, it is expected to be involved with different extracurricular activities. You feel a sense of obligation to not just be a student but to also active participant in different organizations, clubs, and groups. However, for individuals like me, being a part of different groups, and not having a set schedule or plan for getting things done was very frustrating. I had to learn how to prioritize my assignments, my personal life, and my other obligations.
- As a student athlete, my classes always needed to be scheduled around my practice schedule. Unfortunately, following the recommended order of classes and pre-requisites did not always fall in line with my practice schedule for the semester
- Class availability would either slow down my momentum or speed it up but it was never the steady 4 classes a semester. Knowing which classes were going to be offered for only one session in the fall, open two sessions in the spring and no sessions open in the summer was hard work.
- During the summer, unnecessary financial hardships arose due to class availability. My financial aid only covered fall and spring semesters. To take classes that were only offered during the summer cost me much more than the amount of the class. I had to also find a way to cover room and board.
- Looking back, I would not have chosen to take those two elective classes and maybe I wouldn't have had to take out the only loan I have for one more semester.
- Hindrance, this was the other half where um teachers who were no it's in the book you read the book and you take this test and you have 30 minutes to take this test. Well that was a hindrance because I need to talk with you about it but you weren't even in class to teach us about it because you had your undergraduate major I mean you had your grad student teach us and she really didn't really know. So the classes that were ran as far as read the book take the test those were not beneficial to me.

## Appendix L: Two-Tiered Coding

## Research Question One

| <b>Main Theme I: Participants have confidence in HBCUs' abilities to educate future teacher education candidates as they report a high level of preparedness for the teaching field after graduating from teacher education programs at HBCUs.</b> |   |
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| <b>Supporting Details: People should attend HBCUs for Teacher Preparation</b>  |   |
| Naturally drawn to the field of teaching   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, but just not where I went because teaching is not a bad thing. No they don't pay us a lot. No, they don't. Yes we do get great benefits; yes we get great summers and all this stuff. But if you are not into children, if you are not into communicating with people in general then you should not be in that field. But yes I would tell people to go ahead and do it because we are losing so much and the children that are coming up now are the ones who will be our doctors and lawyers and our this and our that. And if we want them to be successful we are going to have to train them</li> <li>• Most definitely. Um I feel like teacher education in itself is a great field to go in and I tell people that all the time. Um and I let people know if you were looking for job that pays a lot no teaching is not going to give you that. But if it's something you really want to do and you have a love for children a love for seeing them learn and grow then it's something you should do because we need more teachers like that.</li> </ul> |
| Race exception-some recommend for all races some recommend it for people of color  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Um for an African-American I would recommend it.</li> <li>• Um I would but I am pro-HBCU period though teacher education program or not. Um especially if you're a person of color, any type of color.</li> <li>• Um most definitely, most definitely I would uh encourage well anybody not just a Black person but anybody to go.</li> <li>• So I definitely do recommend if you are Black it's just good to be around like people doing the same thing you are doing that's positive. Especially like a lot of times on the news we are portrayed to do negative things so it's great to just be in that atmosphere where everyone's like about their business</li> </ul>  |
| Recommend attending due to Levels of preparedness  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I would enjoy, I think um I would say yes. I think it prepared me for the teacher education when I went into it</li> <li>• Definitely so I would recommend to go to a HBCU . . . but it just like it prepared me for everything. Like, yeah.</li> <li>• I would, I would recommend attending because, just for the hands-on experience.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Supporting Details: HBCUs versus non-HBCUs</b>  |   |
| Different dynamics caused worry about  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I would recommend it um because I know I didn't get lost at the university. And I've heard um at some of the non-HBCUs you're</li> </ul>   |

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| <p>how preparation would have felt at a non-HBCU</p>   | <p>easily um overlooked and so for that reason I would recommend it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, okay so when I didn't pass the Praxis they were like some still little classes that I may take at (specific non-HBCU). So I did take those classes. It was horrible. There was somebody just standing up there talking about nothing. I mean things where I feel like if I would have just went to (specific non-HBCU) I would have died. Like I would have not felt confident to do nothing. Like they had so many opportunities for like to just go off and if you want to help somebody with so and so. But it just like it prepared me for everything.</li> <li>• So yes I would advise them to go to the HBCUs that way you get a different, um it's a different demographic and background. It's a different bringing versus the Caucasian school.</li> <li>• Um yes overall it was amazing and I wouldn't trade it, I would not trade it for anything. Um especially after getting my masters degree in education um from a predominately white institute. Um I mean I was there for business you know and it was very, it was just like we're here to do this not that.</li> <li>• They taught us how to motivate the same way that our professors motivated us and I'm not sure that you would get that at a larger or more diversified program. Um it felt like there was a need like I wasn't just going through the programs so I may be another teacher.</li> <li>• Um well again the positives were the connections that I made with the staff in general at Windmont Hill University. And then definitely the connections that I made with the people that I was in the program with that I still am connected to today.</li> <li>• Um I think it allowed too for an intimate setting. Um we were kind of like a little family just because it was the same you know group of us for at least the last three years because like the first year you were kind of doing like your core classes. So that was nice. It was nice because we became close and we would all kind of work together and like experience like student teaching and things together so that was definitely a positive.</li> <li>• Um, positives. I guess because it was the same people um for the elementary ed and it was a small group. So I knew the same people would be in the same classes over and over again. So you got to make connections that way um and in student teaching different classes we may call them and ask them what are you doing in your school um to compare lessons like that.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Supporting Details: Overall Levels of Preparedness after Graduation</b></p>  |  |
| <p>A majority of individuals were over the halfway mark and were closer to a 5, which is the highest level of preparation.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I would say my personal experience was a four and a half and I say four and a half because nobody's perfect. If I may give it a five I would but it's a four and a half. But I really feel like Windmont Hill University prepared me for the real world of teaching, not the sugarcoated part but the real world of teaching.</li> <li>• Okay um I was prepared at a 3 or 3.5. I say 3.5 and I say that</li> </ul>  |

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| <p>A couple of teachers felt like the experience had to come along the way.</p>   | <p>because right after I graduated in December 2011 in March 2012 I took over a class. Um a teacher had left and I was I felt like I was not prepared because the class was crazy. So a lot of it has come along the way but I was prepared enough to know what I had to do so my HBCU prepared me I knew what I was going there to do and I knew how to, I knew the steps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thinking of all those things I would give it, I would give a 2. I did not have the community you know. I did not know how to access those, that part of teaching. As far as community, building rapport with administration, um, parents.</li> <li>• I would say a four.</li> <li>• I would say I was a four only because you, you can show and you can experience working within the community but until you have your own classroom that teacher parent relationship you can't teach it. So other than that I was pretty prepared</li> <li>• Leaving school, probably a two simply because I wasn't really ready but I did know that this is what I was going to do.</li> <li>• Uh so okay maybe like um like a five to six.</li> <li>• I think I was a 5. I enjoyed student teaching. I enjoyed teaching.</li> <li>• Five. I would say um to manage the workload I think we were beyond prepared for that.</li> <li>• I would say a five. I might have come out and behaved at a four but not for they didn't tell me, they didn't teach me.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Main Theme II: There were many social and emotional factors surrounding the participants' levels of preparedness.</b></p> |   |
| <p><b>Supporting Details: Teachers that Look Like the Students</b></p>  |   |
| <p>Being able to relate to those you teach and who taught you influenced perception of preparedness.</p>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I've had people to say a HBCU teacher education program is easy. No, it's really not because we had to do what was required and what the professors already knew because our professors looked like us. They already knew what we were going to have to deal with going into the profession as an African American as being young, as being the new teacher on the block, all of those different things that may set somebody back or make them change their career from being a teacher. So we got the best of both worlds and um I think that is what really prepared me.</li> <li>• Um teacher education at an HBCU is, I highly, highly, highly recommend that because number one we need more teachers who look like the students. And especially these Title I low poverty schools and that type of school that I work in and I see that when my students can relate to me as a mom, an auntie, not a grandma because I'm not that old. But um a sister or a big cousin and they can confide in me and I'm able to build that relationship with them.</li> <li>• I had older African-American ladies who I considered like they reminded me of a great aunt or a grandmother that I may really talk to and kind of get all the way down to the nitty gritty about stuff. So I really appreciated that.</li> </ul>  |

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|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Just making sure they understand the importance of not just our race but just like. Just, I don't think there's anything like going to a HBCU. And so I just think that it's like a great experience um and I definitely think it helped shaped me today who I am and it helped foster how to teach my kids.</li> <li>• And because my professors were minorities themselves they were able to speak from a different experience and they were able to say when you're dealing with this culture in this way these are some helpful tips and when dealing with this culture in this way these are some helpful tips. Because they are coming from the side of the oppressed, of the neglected as far as curriculum and so they were very conscious of teaching their teachers or future teachers to be aware of what's missing. And I'm not sure if somebody who finds themselves as the majority in America would have thought to even teach their teachers about the minorities they are going to encounter.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Supporting Details: HBCU Feel and Purpose</b>  |  |
| <p>The history and overall learning and social environment played a role.</p> <p>Extracurricular activities and outside individuals played a role in how teacher education graduates perceived the quality of their experiences. Others helped along the way in their own way.</p> <p>The historical background of some HBCUs beginning as teacher colleges were considered as assets. The legacy lives on through service and word of mouth from past graduates.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Like you know we have fun of course and its college and you have fun but it's just nice to know that everyone is there for a reason to better themselves and I think that it helps me even with dealing with my kids now</li> <li>• I think you just get that camaraderie, that feeling from a HBCU that you're not going to find anywhere else. In my um, one of my blog post I put that you had an obligation to be involved and I'm not quite sure it's like that everywhere but at a HBCU you can't just come and be a student. You can't just come and go to class. You have to do something, you have to be somewhere because this was built for you so you have to give back some way, shape, or form.</li> <li>• Um most definitely, most definitely I would uh encourage well anybody not just a Black person but anybody to go because it's just soulful and it's just rich with, you know that education is rich and the history is rich and I just think we really need to keep that alive and going.</li> <li>• But I just as an undergrad I had a lot fun being at an HBCU with the culture and just it was just so fun. I really enjoyed my experience.</li> <li>• After and during my attendance at Windmont Hill University, I met a lot of older females and males in my home state who attended Windmont Hill when it was the Teacher's College. They shared their personal stories and how they had been teaching.</li> <li>• This rich legacy fuels the education program at West Graham University today. Because it comes from such a rich and devoted history the education department at West Graham continues to honor the commitment it has to its students and community.</li> <li>• We met in the gospel choir and it was really a blessing to have best friends who shared the same beliefs and goals as myself. We pushed each other!</li> </ul> |



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|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I was a member of Model United Nations where I went onto compete as a delegate, the next year we competed in Nationals in New York, and then my last competition I was the Secretary General (highest office).</li> <li>• At Bliss State several sorority members took me under their wing. Dinners, outings, transportation, math help, anything. Which is still true to this day.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Supporting Details: Professor Contributions</b>  |  |
| <p>The professors at the HBCU were invaluable in the experiences for the students. They provided support, motivation, modeled best teaching practices, and made the learning experience feel personalized for many students.</p> <p>Building relationships was imperative and appropriate social skills were taught within many programs.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• And they showed us how to build relationships with our students because they built relationships with us. Um I still talk to my professors to this day. A lot of them when they come to my current school to visit student teachers they always stop by my class to see how things are going and talk about how they miss me being a student.</li> <li>• Like I definitely like there were little tips that my professor would say like as far as, like he would say don't eat in the teacher's lounge. Don't like you know teachers gossip and women you know we gossip. So I think there were little tidbits like to this day I don't eat in the teacher's lounge like I kind of took that.</li> <li>• They taught me a lot of social skills, a lot of things, a lot of conversation tips to make that relationship but only you can put it into practice.</li> <li>• And I would say I might have performed at a four due to the paperwork. But we were definitely told about the paperwork in um, in school and with the documentation, documentation, documentation. Like I remember my professor saying that.</li> <li>• It was awesome. I would go to Bliss State again. So um I would say that being at Bliss State prepared me for everything- how to deal with men, how to deal with church people, how to deal with just everything. It was a great experience and I wouldn't change nothing because those friends are your friends for the rest of your life. It was just great.</li> <li>• Um I was very very pleased with my teacher preparation experience. Um being at a HBCU taught me how to work with different types of kids but how to appreciate every child um just the same way that our professors appreciated us.</li> <li>• Um overall I had a great experience. I would do it all over again. Um and I'm still thankful for the relationships that I made like with my friends who are teachers now and the people who aren't either. But like my professors I know I can call them now and say Dr. _____. So it's great to know that you have those long like great lasting relationships with people.</li> <li>• I really feel like everybody from the dean to the lady that worked in the _____ center that just said good afternoon and good morning</li> </ul> |



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|  | <p>when I came in. They were all very supportive and they uh asked was there something you need, was there something I may help you with, do you have questions about anything. So they were always concerned with how we were feeling as students in the education department because they knew that at anytime you may give up. It may become too much and I know people personally who had some stories where they had to stop and leave and come back and finish um and those professors were right there every step of the way to make sure that they didn't give up and to make sure that they returned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So positive aspects were, I would have to go back to my professors.</li> <li>• They made it a really great experience as far as taking us out on field experiences, showing us the different classrooms, what to do, what not to do. So really hands-on in that aspect.</li> <li>• Um, positive I would go back to the professors being caring um wanting the best of, of us; wanting us all to succeed. Um, if they felt like there was something you didn't understand they actually would pull you after class and work with you.</li> <li>• Positive aspects were role models. I always felt like, even though I've never visited other teacher education programs that we had enough women um in our program to show us what we wanted to be when we grew up. Um the, the people that we were surrounded with were definitely assets.</li> <li>• Um I think the positives um were like the professors. I think like because we were such a small classroom setting we were able to do more. Like they may spend more time going over material or working with us or making sure that we got things.</li> <li>• The positive aspects were the professors who were just set on making sure I understood what it was I was doing and they let that be known at the beginning of the year.</li> <li>• There was one professor I had starting my sophomore year at Frazelle all the way until my senior year. He was by far an important asset to my learning during the program at Frazelle, and he is a continued asset to why and how I teach today.</li> <li>• A person who was a great asset to me during my journey to becoming an educator was Mrs._____. She played a big role in teaching me a different way of viewing the classroom through creativity.</li> <li>• I love the connections that I made with the staff in the Education Department. I can go to them to ask a question, receive a recommendation, and volunteer my time to give back.</li> <li>• The professors that I had took the information from the textbooks and made it relevant to the current teaching practices. My professors instructed us using strategies that we may use in the classroom while we were student teaching. My instructors were not lecturers but "facilitators of learning."</li> </ul> |
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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. _____ was our advisor. I believe he had the biggest impact on my experience at Saint Clairview University. Everyone from the dean down to the professors knew who we were and had high expectations of us. We were expected to soar.</li> <li>• The professors were very knowledgeable of the current education trends. Most teachers taught information using hands on approach.</li> <li>• My professor would spend time when he may be at home, helping me study for the test and giving me test taking strategies. He never gave up on me and let me know that if teaching was what I wanted to do, then I may do it.</li> <li>• I came in contact with a lot of different professors who were experts in their own fields. I chose Dr. _____ as an asset because she genuinely took an interest in our success through the Teacher Education Program. She also took an interest in us personally, and was the driving force to not only make me a college graduate but an excellent educator.</li> </ul> |
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### Research Question Two

| <b>Main Theme I: The participants noted that there was continuity in their teacher education programs at their HBCUs as there was a balance and intersection of coursework and experiences.</b> |  |
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| <b>Supporting Details: Organizational/ Extracurricular Opportunities</b>  |  |
| The construct of interaction was present as the environment and activities that were naturally around the students effectively contributed and assisted with making connections.                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Um, uh I think we had what was it Project Pal? I think that's what it was called that we were on. Uh, I was on that, I was in that organization I guess you would call and that was where a lot of the student teachers or education majors would get together and discuss those different topics like we talked about earlier.</li> <li>• Okay um, well I got to be a part of the student organization of um educators there. Um and that helped me you know get the foot in the door of learning a lot about the politics of being a teacher in my state um and how important that organization is.</li> <li>• We had um Kappa Delta Pi and I mean that we didn't really do too much community service with that but we had like little seminars and events and that was like education related and I think that definitely helped us.</li> <li>• We went to an educator organization conference in _____ um and I remember the president right then and there said "Well ya'll are getting ready to graduate, you need to join." And one of the girls that we were, that accompanied us on the conference she wasn't a member of the educator organization. He reached in his pocket he pulled out the \$25 and she registered right then and there because he was adamant about people getting in and getting to work. So I remember him and I remember thinking okay when he said he needs something done he's one of those people he's not playing so I took</li> </ul> |

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|   | <p>that back to work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So Model United Nations would be one because that was like speaking and planning and programming and all that stuff that we had to do.</li> <li>• Um so we did a program where we were kind of like big sisters and so um it was the, there was a church that was nearby. So we were partnered with the church and we would like take the kids to like a Frazelle game or we did like little study sessions to help them with their homework. So I think that definitely helped because it was like I knew like I've always known that I wanted to help kids, well people but like kids specifically sorry.</li> <li>• My class were mentors for the next round of the um scholarship recipients. That contributed to my ability, yes.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Studying Abroad</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I also was able to study abroad. Um I went to Ghana and went to Benin and I was able to learn about the education system there and apply that to what I was learning for you know America or in my state. So I was able to um get more of a broader experience instead of just you know education right here that um opportunity allowed me to study education um basically transcontinental you know more than just in America um and I was the only education major that went on that trip.</li> <li>• We went to Belize, Central America and we taught there for um about three weeks in the summer. So that helped with um working with various levels and the different cultures of students.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Supporting Details: Carrying Dispositions Over into the Profession</b></p>  |   |
| <p>The principle of continuity suggests that experiences carried over from the past to the future will allow learning to advance (Dewey, 1938).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Um another thing that sticks out is, and I mentioned this in my blog post is Dr. _____ celebrations. Um it was one way all of us got a chance to speak and there was no being shy you had to speak even though public speaking wasn't an area of concern for me, it was for other people. So that really promoted those skills and um let us be more personable with one another so we may do that amongst colleagues and it definitely carried over to the profession.</li> <li>• Um, another experience, uh that kind of made, not made me to be the leader but secured me in in knowing that it's okay to ask questions when you don't understand. I had a professor who told us on the first day of my freshman seminar to ask for what you want. The worst answer you can get is no and that stuck with me every since then. Um and that's what I do now. When I don't understand or I need something to be done I am going to ask and if you tell me no I may wait maybe a week or two and ask you again so um that's number two. Knowing how to talk to people or how to communicate what you need from people or what you need as an individual.</li> </ul>  |

| <b>Supporting Details: Balance of Education and Experience</b>   |  |
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| <p>According to John Dewey's theory of experience and education, the two should go hand in hand. These two entities should intercept and be continuous actions for optimal learning experiences (Dewey, 1938).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Um, I think it was pretty balanced if I recall. Um, I know every semester up until my practicum I did field experience and we had to have at least 40 hours in the classroom I believe. I think that's right or 30. Um like I said earlier we were able to visit different types of classrooms, different grade levels. Um, I think it was pretty balanced</li> <li>• Okay. Um I think so.</li> <li>• I think it did provide a good amount of balance between the two. The coursework I think it prepared me as far as getting a portfolio. Making sure that I had all of the different components, knowing how to do a resume, you know everything that they required us to do. And the experience, we had tons of hours of field experience to adhere to and make sure that we covered.</li> <li>• I think they did.</li> <li>• Um I do think they gave us a balance of coursework and experience. At one point I felt like they were just giving us too much coursework. But looking back it was to better prepare us.</li> <li>• I definitely think the classes that we had, like the core classes, the education related classes were great.</li> <li>• Yes I think if they gave us anymore course work then I wouldn't want to do it. But I think they divided it up equally enough to give us that, the one semester we did student teaching was completely free of actually going to class.</li> <li>• Coursework and experiences, definitely so. It was like never a time that we were just in the class all the time. Like we would walk over to the library and sit there and do different things or go to uh different schools.</li> <li>• I would say they had a pretty even balance since if you took any course that was registered under education you had to get observation hours or you may choose to work with um, you may tutor to get your observation hours. But any course that you took under the school even before you entered the school of education there was a real live observation or practicum piece to it. So I think it was very balanced and that was important because I was able to immediately apply what I was learning.</li> <li>• 1 Notable Exception: Nope. Coursework sure. Coursework, yeah, because they give you the work and the work you do and you make sure you get it done because it's more of an endurance test more so than it is go take this course and do this. But as far as experiences no. I did not get those until I got out and had to see.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Main Theme II: There were a variety of intentional experiences embedded within their education that aided in preparation in various areas for the teacher education graduates.</b></p>                       |  |
| <p><b>Supporting Details: Examples include Experiential Learning, Coursework, Field Experiences, and Professional Developments, Professor Influence</b></p>  |  |

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| <p>Learning experiences should be continuous to assist with the ease of catching on and they should allow participation in various contexts (Dewey, 1938).</p> <p>Therefore, those engaging in the theory would allow cumulative educational experiences that allow individuals to create meaning as each experience shapes future experiences (Schmidt, 2013).</p> <p>The theoretical premise that this study is based on is Dewey's theory of experience and education that suggests that education can be enhanced by intentional and variable experiences.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Experiential Learning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So, after it was like once a week I would say, we had to present our lesson plans to our classmates. So I remember that for math for sure. And then he would just like randomly bring us some manipulatives which when else would you have known that you are supposed to introduce these things to your real kids if somebody didn't teach you that. So that to me helped us learn the content.</li> <li>• So being able to actually teach the lesson and my classmates respond as kindergarteners was very interesting because you go in with the mindset, Oh these are you know, young twenty year olds in my class but they are actually acting like kindergarteners, not paying attention, and calling out, and having attitudes. So it was really good that we kind of got to do that trial lesson to see this is how it's going to really work.</li> <li>• Um, we did courses in project based learning um where students had to you know we learned about how to make, how to make it student-centered. Um, and that creativity and hands-on experience they really taught us about really limited amount of workshops and hands-on things like building things, like the engineering part was a big deal in most of my classes.</li> <li>• So they literally mimicked um how, how to teach once we came into the schools with how they taught the classroom. Um and that went down to the cooperative learning groups, the group projects that we had um. Sometimes we didn't necessarily um have to take a test but we might have had a project um with our peers instead or we had to do a portfolio instead. And so those were things that I was able to bring into my classroom.</li> <li>• Um, I remember a couple of assignments and I can't quite remember what class it was but we were in charge of creating games or and then one time we had to make a book. Um it was an easier way for me to teach the content and then turn it back over to the students let them have a student-led conversation and put what I was teaching into practice for reading and math.</li> <li>• Um and so you know we got to do things where we would do like skits or like put on little scenarios and like have people volunteer to come up and do things or even just doing presentations but just more hands-on things. So that was fun too like creating lessons and then like doing the hands-on things you know that kids would like.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Coursework</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Um well we had a class in every content area. Um so we had social studies, sciences, math, and reading were the main um four. Uh so just having classes that were specific to how to teach these you know subjects was extremely helpful and important.</li> <li>• Um, it was helpful that we had our content classes the semester before we actually student taught. And so we had our methods of math, methods of English language arts and that was the semester</li> </ul> |
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|  | <p>right before they sent us into the classroom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Um we took uh classroom management I believe. Yeah, we had to come up with a whole binder resource of like our class motto if we were going to have one, or a class mascot, and our rules and our consequences. And just we had to really think about those pieces and thinking about them kind of early on even though we had never had a class of our own really helped, just put that in the forefront of how important it is to have this class classroom management. Um so I think just having a class about that in itself is so important and I'm glad that my HBCU had that.</li> <li>• Because you know I remember specifically having conversations about having, teaching African-American kids that did not grow up the way that I grew up so that's diversity.</li> <li>• And then in one of my classes we had to address um the differences of gender, how boys learn versus girls, um ethnicities, um and I think in my classroom at that time I did my student teaching um a majority of my class was Caucasian American and Hispanic. And I had African-Americans in the class at the time so being able to take a lesson and teach it and reflect on okay well how did my boys group do? How did this subgroup perform? How did subgroup A perform</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Workshops/Professional Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oh, we had a lot of um professional development sessions, which I really liked. Um, once you got into the program and especially during your semester of um student teaching. I know we did a couple different uh classroom management professional uh professional developments with principals from um different counties um and they would come in and let us know from the principal's perspective what they would like to see going on in the classroom as far as classroom management. So um I think that is what really helped a whole lot having those professional development sessions prior to getting to the classroom and going to district uh given professional development.</li> <li>• We did have workshops on classroom management um we had people come in and explain you know the breakdown you know of the consistency and all that kind of stuff. So I would say that we attended a lot of workshops.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Field Experience</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We visited a lot of schools um and they really honed in on that classroom management.</li> <li>• Um, I would say the university required us to go into to volunteer in the schools. And that was every year that I was, that I was there. We had so many um contact hours that we had to go into the schools and I guess getting that experience of being in different classrooms um helped me with my classroom management and different grade levels.</li> <li>• We had to before we even entered the teacher education program,</li> </ul> |
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|  | <p>just if we took any classes associated with it, you had to get community service hours in a school, in an actual school. Wasn't just what you wanted to teach we had to do preschool, elementary, middle, and high school and luckily West Graham is set in the middle of a community which is also has those community schools in West Graham.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• And then of course practicum . . . field experience and practicum. Even though with field experience you don't have to teach a lesson or anything like you just really go and observe. A lot of the teachers who I had the opportunity to visit their classrooms saw the passion I had so they would tell me "You know Ms. _____, if you would like to do a small group or something you can let me know"</li> <li>• I think that I was well prepared when I became a teacher um mainly from the help of the professors and the teaching and also because my student teaching was in a school similar to what I actually got hired in. So the population of the kids, the economic background of the kids it was very similar to what I student taught actually where I did my teaching at.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Professor Influence</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So our teachers did not play any foolishness so that was an automatic like. Oh, I had one really strict social studies teacher and that was _____. I can't even tell you her last name. All I remember was _____. So she would always have us build into our lesson how you were going to manage everything.</li> <li>• Classroom management was a big thing with my, her name was Ms. _____ at the time. She was coming from the classroom straight the um, straight to teaching to help us that year when we were student interning.</li> <li>• Um Dr. _____ always had a story to tell and she never mentioned names of any students. Everybody was named Denzel. So we heard all about how Denzel would cut up or how about Denzel's mama wouldn't sign these papers or about how Denzel struggled in school but we always knew that in the end she was going to find some type of way to help Denzel. It wasn't so much about class management but it was more so of you're going to your face, you're going to have a Denzel, what are you going to do about it? And it got us to thinking ahead of time what can I do um as a teacher with students who have limited resources.</li> <li>• And I will never forget Dr. _____ taught, I think she probably taught every math course I ever took but, well as far as in education program. And I remember she had me scared to death because she preached you need to know your content or your kids are not going to know math and that was just the bottom line. There was no gimmick, no sweet treat if you did what you were supposed to do. It was just either you do it so your kids can succeed or you won't. Even though I didn't quite agree with her approach it did work. Like</li> </ul> |
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|  | <p>it scared me enough to be a better math teacher, to learn my content more and to put into practice so my kids will be efficient on the test.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Going back to the professors actually um staying abreast of the current trends of education and making sure that we were aware of the content that we would, we were going to, that we were expected to teach once we got into the classroom.</li> </ul> |
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### Research Question Three

| <b>Main Theme I: Most of the resources that participants perceived to have been helpful centered around curriculum and instruction.</b> |   |
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| <b>Supporting Details: Standards, Curriculum, and Lesson Planning</b>   |   |
| New teachers need a thorough understanding of standards, curriculum, and how to translate it into instruction.                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also curriculum making sure they understand they really need to understand their curriculum. Um we had to print out our curriculum at the time of course it was standard course of study. So I do understand colleges might have a harder time with that because it is constantly changing. But um just letting your teachers know that you have to know what you are going to be teaching and letting them know that that might mean you might be studying before some of your lessons but it's necessary so that you know what you're talking about. And that curriculums change but they stay the same. They're certain basic and truths that people just have to learn and those they should make sure their students understand.</li> <li>• Um, lesson planning I think would be number two. Just making sure that they are prepared for lesson and they had backup plans and they are flexible and able to change.</li> <li>• And then know the curriculum. I know my first year there was like a math lesson and I was like oh my gosh and I thought that I may just like print out the pacing guide and just like be fine and like I was like oh gosh hold on guys Ms. _____ needs to like take a second. You know I teach second grade so it was okay but if I was doing older kids . . . but even them that minute that you slip that's when behavior slips, they get rowdy. So then it's like you have to be prepared. And that's another thing you always need to be prepared and over planned.</li> <li>• Um my third one would have to be continued practice in breaking down standards and breaking these common core standards down. Any standards that teachers are going to go off and be teaching need practice looking at that, um especially in the being in a situation where like me you go to a different grade level every year you know? You have to be able to know how to adapt to each standard.</li> <li>• Realizing that the curriculum changes from day to day, week to week, year to year, and being flexible.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Supporting Details: Diverse Learner Dynamics</b>   |   |
| Additional training on differentiation of   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Um, number one I'd have to say would be diverse learning communities.</li> </ul>   |



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| instruction and working with students of all demographics.                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children of poverty, different demographics of kids, different learning abilities, different learning styles.</li> <li>• Differentiation! Like that's probably one of the hardest things to do because it's just not easy.</li> <li>• I think they should focus on the different learning methods. Um a lot of times we teach the way we remember having been taught simply because its easiest or we just tend to teach in the way that we learn the best. So you might find some people always using manipulatives but then we don't necessarily know how to bring it back to paper or maybe were always dancing and singing but then we have a silent test. So just getting them exposed to all the different types of methods and then giving them situations in which they can actually use it.</li> <li>• Uh another thing I would say is that we need to speak on diversity again. America is ever-changing in our population and what we look like as a whole on and there's a lot going on between the races in America and with the poverty line and the middle class. There's lot going on and our teachers need to be aware that this affects their students. We have to be aware of that in the classroom because again you don't learn from people you don't like. So we have to make sure that our classrooms are diverse as well as our learning methods.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Supporting Details: Technology</b>  |   |
| Learning technology trends and how to embed them meaningfully into the curriculum. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number two, I would have to say would be the use of technology in the classroom um. But technology is changing so much and so much faster these days that I think it's, it's going to be hard to stay the course with technology but if student teachers learn how to use it in the classroom meaning instead of just loading in their flash drive to show the PowerPoint that they have to present for the day.</li> <li>• Um another one would have to be technology. Uh learning, knowing when to use it, when is it appropriate for student learning and when is it not appropriate. Technology doesn't have to be used all the time you know, or if it is it definitely needs to be very structured.</li> <li>• I would say the top five would be incorporating technology, um making sure that you know, they have access to SMART Boards® and BrightLinks™ as it would be in the classroom.</li> <li>• Number four would be I guess now with the new common core it would just be 21st-century learning and knowing how to incorporate technology into the classroom.</li> <li>• Technology is a must and with technology that does not mean you just have it in your room, but you need to use it.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Supporting Details: Assessments</b>   |   |
| Additional practice may be helpful for teacher education                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So one thing you have to have is to be able to look at data and be able to decide where to place kids with your data. You have to know how to collect the data too that's going to be important, and to</li> </ul>   |

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| candidates to experience conducting assessments and utilizing them for instruction prior to becoming a teacher.                      | <p>maintain it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I think student teachers like I said in my blog need the support when it comes to the assessment piece um because as I stated early when you get in your first year of teaching you have so much that you are learning. And EOGs and EOQs, DIBELS®, and K-2 assessments, and all those different things are so important. They carry so much weight during your first year of teaching or every year that matter but especially your first year if you may just learn a little bit about it, or just be a little bit familiar with it, outside of you being the student or recalling from when you were in school or you were taking them. It's different when you're on the other side of the fence. So I feel that if the district and the education department come together to do a professional development on those types of things that would eliminate a lot of the stress that first year teachers have when it comes down to the things that they have to do.</li> <li>Um, time management and being able to use assessments to do assessments and use them for um instruction, to guide instruction.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Main Theme II: Some additional resources that participants would have perceived to be helpful focused on non-teaching duties.</b> |  |
| <b>Supporting Details: Classroom Management</b>  |  |
| Classroom management is important.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>And finally classroom management because if they love coming in your classroom and you teach them in all kind of ways but they don't know when to sit down or when you turn it off and it's pointless and it's purposeless.</li> <li>So you have to have classroom management.</li> <li>Um, classroom management would be number one.</li> <li>Classroom management is definitely important. My first year I struggled with that so much because I think I'm just nice and I think I came in too nice and like you don't realize that they're little people so they know what they are doing and they can eat you alive if you let them. So I think like classroom management and just like that fine line between um like being their friend and being their teacher.</li> <li>Um, classroom management because that's the main key. Because if you don't have that you don't have order. You don't have anything going on. I hear teachers down the hallway always yelling and all I can think of is please stop yelling nobody's listening.</li> <li>Classroom management</li> <li>I guess I would say classroom management. Just making that all around teacher you know, just handling situations as they come. Organization, that would be a main thing. Just showing them how to stay organized and how to come up with a system of organization.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Supporting Details: Parent Relations and Communication</b>  |  |
| Learning how to connect and communicate with   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Um a fourth one would be continued learning in communication with parents. Um diverse parents at that especially parents who don't speak English having and knowing how to use your resources</li> </ul>  |

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| parents in an appropriate and timely manner, which may also involve different languages. | <p>when it comes to, to that and how important it is that you pre-plan homework and pre-plan letters so that you can get them translated so that your parents can, all your parents have the same amount of access to help their, to help their child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents, how to communicate with parents, how to quote on quote deal with parents. That's a huge thing.</li> <li>• Uh, parent-teacher relations even though like I said you can't teach it there are some plain old manners that people can use to help foster those relationships.</li> <li>• Also parent and community communications- just how to be a leader in your school with your parents and your community. Reinforcing that the contact is important. Just simply talking to the parents is important. Um tips on how to not because we are dealing with diversity we might not be dealing with somebody who has as much education as us. So how do we speak to people who might not be understanding the words that were used and how do we come across as relatable and as a leader?</li> </ul> |
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#### Research Question Four

| <b>Main Theme I: The obstacles faced were departmental, instructional, and personal.</b>   |   |
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| <b>Supporting Details: Departmental Concerns</b>   |   |
| <p>The schedule of courses were not predictable as they were not offered as often as students needed them to be. This in turn created financial challenges for some.</p> <p>All education department staff members were not helpful. Leaving students to their own for good reasons or due to the lack</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I was told that I was able to take an extra like elective class. So I chose to take a sign language class um and you know thinking that I was on the right track but come to find out that summer I missed the class or something with the schedule. Like I'm not even really sure because it really wasn't explained to me. So I had to take a computer class in the summer um and then there was still another class that I missed along the way and I had to make up for it that following fall so that put me a semester behind. So I didn't graduate until December 2011 instead of 2012 um because of a computer class.</li> <li>• It hindered my learning because everybody has their four your plan in their head and then this class says sike[sic] you can't take me until two semesters from now which means you can't take this other class until three semesters from now. So it just threw me off. My scholarship wasn't for summer school and some of the classes were only offered during summer session which means I had to find a way to pay through summer school. So that was, it was just a hindrance monetary wise and um it kind of messed up my bigger vision.</li> <li>• For course scheduling um back then, for teaching for your methods classes if you didn't get them in the fall you couldn't take them in the spring because spring was um designated for student teaching.</li> </ul> |

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|  | <p>So the one year that I got sick so I missed out on some classes in the fall so I had to wait a whole another year just taking elective classes because I couldn't get into it and I couldn't do my student teaching until the following year. So I graduated a year later because the courses just weren't offered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the summer, unnecessary financial hardships arose due to class availability. My financial aid only covered fall and spring semesters. To take classes that were only offered during the summer cost me much more than the amount of the class. I had to also find a way to cover room and board.</li> <li>• Looking back, I would not have chosen to take those two elective classes and maybe I wouldn't have had to take out the only loan I have for one more semester.</li> <li>• The major issue that I had while a student at Windmont Hill was the course planning. As a result of choosing to take those two elective classes and an administrative change to the course plan, I had to take a needed class during the summer and still was a semester behind.</li> <li>• An obstacle that I experienced during the teacher education program was with the schedule of classes. Certain classes that were required to take were only offered one semester. Therefore, if you missed out on a class you had to wait until the following year before it was offered again.</li> <li>• Class availability would either slow down my momentum or speed it up but it was never the steady 4 classes a semester. Knowing which classes were going to be offered for only one session in the fall, open two sessions in the spring and no sessions open in the summer was hard work.</li> <li>• The other problem I had with my student teaching was my university supervisor. She did not consistently keep track of me because she felt like I was okay.</li> <li>• I couldn't get any help in finding the right courses. I was technically on my own. This was a difficult obstacle not knowing how to get on the right path.</li> <li>• I received no guidance from the education department staff members.</li> <li>• Um, actually they were real rude. A lot of them were really rude, if I must say. They really were. Um they were really acting as if I . . . just "Oh go do something different, go find you a different major." Like they were really bad off. It's sad to say I think some of them knew my mom and when people know who she is and they figure out who I am, they treat me a little differently.</li> <li>• So I think what messed me up the first time with the Praxis was when we took Praxis I it was like mostly computer based. So our computer teacher was like oh you guys love the computer you can do, oh you can do all this stuff already it's really no big deal. So for some reason I heard no big deal and just ran with it. Um so I guess</li> </ul> |
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|  | <p>they may have gotten some more people together or even made it mandatory or something to get you to make sure that you would pass because like when they said here's some books that we have in this room, um you can go pick from those. And I was just like but where do I go?</p>   |
| <b>Supporting Details: Instructional Concerns</b>  |   |
| <p>Lack of education and experiences in exposure to diversity and information needed to pass qualifying examinations.</p> <p>Student teaching experiences were not long enough in some instances and some individuals felt alone in the journey.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Um for the diversity part, just um knowing the different cultures, how to identify with different cultures and how to reach them like their holidays and you know just all the different cultures.</li> <li>• And I just wasn't prepared because it was the opposite of what I grew up with and it was opposite of what I student taught with. And it was like they had issues that I just never thought or even fathomed.</li> <li>• Um and going back to myself actually once my first year started the only thing I was familiar with was DIBELS® and so being the person that I am I spoke up and said I don't know how to do this, are we going to receive training on this?</li> <li>• I, um my student teaching, my university supervisor did not follow through with the amount of observations and um time that she was supposed to spend with me. She felt like that I had it and that I was good and I felt like it didn't hinder my student teaching but there's always room for growth. And so um I just felt like I was kind of left high and dry like "Oh you're good." And which I was fine but um she may have given me more ideas.</li> <li>• So I would, my only, the only thing that I would take away from Frazelle is that the student teaching experience isn't realistic. But that may be anywhere too, but for that like it was only two weeks I believe . . . maybe three weeks. Maybe like one week you are kind of shadowing the teacher and then I think maybe the second week you kind of start taking over and then maybe three weeks because the third week it's all you. So that wasn't really long enough to get your feet wet because once like you have your own classroom like student teaching was like a joke.</li> <li>• One thing I regarded as a hindrance or an obstacle my learning was during my student teaching period. I feel like if I was able to student teach at a school with similar demographics then the transition in my first few months of teaching may of been smoother.</li> <li>• The only thing I may think of that may be a possible obstacle in my teacher education program is my student teaching. At Saint Clairview, student teaching is only 1 semester. I have talked to colleagues who attended other schools HBCU's and non HBCU's who were in the class they did their student teaching in for a full year.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Supporting Details: Individual Hindrances</b>   |   |
| Time management  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being at an HBCU, it is expected to be involved with different extracurricular activities. You feel a sense of obligation to not just</li> </ul>   |

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|  | <p>be a student but to also active participant in different organizations, clubs, and groups. However, for individuals like me, being a part of different groups, and not having a set schedule or plan for getting things done was very frustrating. I had to learn how to prioritize my assignments, my personal life, and my other obligations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• As a student athlete, my classes always needed to be scheduled around my practice schedule. Unfortunately, following the recommended order of classes and pre-requisites did not always fall in line with my practice schedule for the semester</li></ul> |
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## Appendix M: Audit Trail

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| 11-Dec-15 | Received IRB Approval.   |
| 12-Dec-15 | Emailed participant script to eight possible participants.   |
|           | Emailed interview questions to four content experts for content analysis.  |
|           | Uploaded IRB stamped informed consent form into DocuSign® so that it will be ready to send for individuals who desire to participate.  |
|           | One participant expressed her desire to participate via email. As a result, I went into DocuSign® and digitally signed the IRB stamped consent form for my study and sent the form over to her to sign digitally. Participant signed informed consent form and I emailed her the link to access the questionnaire. She will be referred to as P1 until pseudonyms are assigned.  |
| 13-Dec-15 | Emailed participant script to one possible participant.  |
| 14-Dec-15 | One participant expressed her desire to participate via email. As a result, I went into DocuSign® and digitally signed the IRB stamped consent form for my study and sent the form over to her to sign digitally. Participant signed the informed consent form and I emailed her the link to access the questionnaire. I noted that she did not check the box which gave me consent to audio-record her. I emailed and asked her about this. She indicated via email that it was not intentional and that she does give consent to be audio recorded. She will be referred to as P2 until pseudonyms are assigned. |
|           | Emailed participant script to two possible participants that I obtained through snowball sampling. One participant emailed me back indicating that she did not meet one of the study's criteria.   |
|           | Responded to an email from a content expert asking me to re-send the interview question attachments. Re-sent the interview questions over to the content expert.   |
|           | P2 completed her questionnaire.  |

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| 15-Dec-15 | Emailed participant script to a possible participant. Participant responded indicating that they had not been in the classroom for quite some time so instead of participating they would check some of their acquaintances to see if they met the criteria.  |
|           | Received an email from one of the participants expressing her desire to participate. As a result, I went into DocuSign® and digitally signed the IRB stamped consent form for my study and sent the form over to her to sign digitally. She will be referred to as P3 until pseudonyms are assigned.  |
|           | Received feedback on my interview questions from Reviewer A. She suggested adding more specifics about the theory underlying the study.   |
| 16-Dec-15 | Re-sent the participation invitation to some candidates from December 12, 2015 who indicated that my message did not come through to their emails.  |
|           | A participant expressed her desire to participate via email. As a result, I went into DocuSign® and digitally signed the IRB stamped consent form for my study and sent the form over to her to sign digitally. Participant signed informed consent form and I emailed her the link to access the questionnaire. She will be referred to as P4 until pseudonyms are assigned. |
|           | Received an email from one of the participants expressing her desire to participate. As a result, I went into DocuSign® and digitally signed the IRB stamped consent form for my study and sent the form over to her to sign digitally. She will be referred to as P5 until pseudonyms are assigned.  |
| 17-Dec-15 | Received two electronic informed consent forms back from P3 and P5. Both were emailed the access link to the questionnaire.   |
|           | Emailed participant script to a possible participant.   |
| 18-Dec-15 | Received an email from one of the participants expressing her desire to participate. As a result, I went into DocuSign® and digitally signed the IRB stamped consent form for my study and sent the form over to her to sign digitally. She will be referred to as P6 until pseudonyms are assigned.  |
|           | Emailed participant script to three possible participants.  |
|           | P3 completed her questionnaire.   |



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| 19-Dec-15 | Emailed participant script to a possible participant.  |
|           | Received an email from one of the participants expressing her desire to participate. As a result, I went into DocuSign® and digitally signed the IRB stamped consent form for my study and sent the form over to her to sign digitally. She will be referred to as P7 until pseudonyms are assigned.   |
|           | P1 completed her questionnaire.  |
|           | Emailed P1, P2, and P3 access to their password protected blogs to complete. I asked that they complete them no later than January 2nd and committed to sending them a one-week remaining reminder email.  |
| 20-Dec-15 | Received an email from two of the participants expressing their desire to participate. As a result, I went into DocuSign® and digitally signed the IRB stamped consent form for my study and sent the form over to them to sign digitally. They will be referred to as P8 and P9 until pseudonyms are assigned.  |
|           | P1 completed one out of her two blogs.   |
| 21-Dec-15 | Received electronic informed consent form back from P7. She was emailed access to the questionnaire link. She completed her questionnaire and was emailed access to her password-protected blog. I asked that she complete her blogs no later than January 4th and committed to sending her a one-week remaining reminder email.   |
|           | Received an email from one of the participants expressing her desire to participate. As a result, I went into DocuSign® and digitally signed the IRB stamped consent form for my study and sent the form over to her to sign digitally. She will be referred to as P10 until pseudonyms are assigned. Received electronic consent form back from P10. She was emailed access to the questionnaire link. She completed her questionnaire and was emailed access to her password-protected blog. |
| 23-Dec-15 | Received electronic informed consent form back from P9. She was emailed access to the questionnaire link.  |
|           | P4 completed her online questionnaire and was emailed access to her password-protected blog. I asked that she complete the blog no later than January 6th and committed to sending her a one-week remaining reminder email.  |

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| 24-Dec-15 | Received electronic consent form back from P6. She was emailed access to the questionnaire link. P5 was sent an email reminding her that there was one week remaining on the two-week completion window for her questionnaire.   |
| 26-Dec-15 | P1, P2, and P3 were sent emails reminding them that there was one week remaining on the two-week completion window for their blogs.  |
|           | Received an email from one of the participants expressing her desire to participate. As a result, I went into DocuSign® and digitally signed the IRB stamped consent form for my study and sent the form over to her to sign digitally. She will be referred to as P11 until pseudonyms are assigned   |
| 28-Dec-15 | Received electronic informed consent form back from P11. She was emailed access to the questionnaire link.   |
|           | P7 and P10 were sent emails reminding them that there was one week remaining on the two-week completion window for their blogs.  |
| 30-Dec-15 | P4 was sent an email reminding her that there was one week remaining on the two-week completion window for her blogs.  |
|           | P9 was sent an email reminding her that there was one week remaining on the two-week completion window for her questionnaire.  |
| 31-Dec-15 | P6 was sent an email reminding her that there was one week remaining on the two-week completion window for her questionnaire. She completed her questionnaire. A link was sent granting her access to her password-protected blog. I asked that she complete the blog no later than January 14th and committed to sending her a one-week remaining reminder email. |
|           | P11 completed her questionnaire and was sent a link granting her access to her password-protected blog. I asked that she complete the blog no later than January 14th and committed to sending her a one-week remaining reminder email.  |

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| 2-Jan-16 | I received an email today from P1 about her inability to complete her blog posts within her 2-week window due to being away from her laptop and obtaining an error message. I also received an email from P3 about her inability to complete her blog posts during the 2-week window due to being away from her laptop over the holiday break.  |
|          | I went into the blog post website today and switched the plugins to allow more pixels for the pictures to be posted. After this, I tested the blog site and it appeared to be working properly.   |
| 3-Jan-16 | I notified P1 that the blog site was running normally and asked her to try to re-post her blogs today. P1 completed her two blog posts today.   |
|          | P5 contacted me today notifying me that she accidentally overlooked her 2-week completion date for the questionnaire. I notified her that she may still submit her questionnaire responses. P5 completed her questionnaire today. A link was sent granting her access to her password protected blog. I asked that she complete the blog no later than January 17th and committed to sending her a one-week remaining reminder email. |
|          | P7 completed her two blog posts today.  |
|          | P3 completed her two blog posts today.  |
| 4-Jan-16 | P2 completed her two blogs today.   |
|          | One content expert, Reviewer B, provided feedback about the interview questions constructed for the study. Many of her suggestions involved editing for clarity. A lot of the wording was changed on questions 1-11 to reflect her feedback.  |
| 5-Jan-16 | P10 sent an email asking to withdraw from the study. No rationale was provided however, I destroyed all of the data she contributed prior to withdrawing as I indicated I would in the informed consent form.   |

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|          | <p>Emailed participant script to a possible participant. The participant expressed her desire to participate. As a result, I went into DocuSign® and digitally signed the IRB stamped consent form for my study and sent the form over to her to sign digitally. She will be referred to as P12 until pseudonyms are assigned.</p>  |
|          | <p>One content reviewer, Reviewer D, provided feedback about the interview questions constructed for the study. She had minor revisions and suggestions about adding additional questions.</p>  |
|          | <p>P9 completed her questionnaire and was sent a link granting her access to her password-protected blog. I asked that she complete the blog no later than January 19th and committed to sending her a one-week remaining reminder email.</p>   |
| 6-Jan-16 | <p>P4 completed her two blogs today.</p>  |
|          | <p>P12 completed her informed consent form and I provided her the link to access the questionnaire. She completed the questionnaire and was sent a link granting her access to her password-protected blog. I asked that she complete the blog within the two-week window. She went ahead and completed her two blogs today as well. As a result she received an interview invitation and selected her most convenient dates to meet.</p> |
|          | <p>P1, P2, P3, P4, P7, P11, and P12 were all sent emails inquiring about their interview preferences (face to face/ virtual) and their availability.</p>  |
|          | <p>One content reviewer, Reviewer C, provided feedback about the interview questions constructed for the study. She had minor revisions and suggestions about wording and clarity. Her comments were addressed.</p>   |
| 7-Jan-16 | <p>P6 was sent an email reminding her that there was one week remaining on the two-week completion window for her blogs.</p>  |
|          | <p>P12 scheduled her interview for January 13th at 4:00.</p>  |
|          | <p>I finalized finished my interview questions using the content experts' feedback. I created an interview script with transition statements for the questions.</p>   |

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|           | A meeting was set up for January 8th with the pilot interviewee.  |
|           | P2 sent some interview times and location that were convenient for her.   |
| 8-Jan-16  | P4 scheduled her interview for January 11th at 4:00.  |
|           | Met with the pilot interviewee today. She responded to the questions and provided comments for revisions. Questions were revised for the first interview on Monday. |
| 10-Jan-16 | P7 scheduled her interview for January 15th at 4:45.  |
|           | P6 was sent an email reminding her that there was one week remaining on the two-week completion window for her blogs.   |
| 11-Jan-16 | P1 notified me that she would need to reschedule her interview to January 12, 2016 at 7:40.   |
|           | P3 scheduled her interview for January 12, 2016 at 11:15.   |
| 12-Jan-16 | Held virtual interview with P1.   |
|           | Held face-to-face interview with P3.  |
|           | Held face-to-face interview with P4.  |
|           | P2 scheduled her interview for January 17th at 1:30.  |
|           | P6 scheduled her interview for January 16th at 4:00.  |
|           | P9 was sent an email reminding her that there was one week remaining on the two-week completion window for her blogs.   |
| 13-Jan-16 | Held face-to-face interview with P12.   |
| 15-Jan-16 | Held face-to-face interview with P7.  |
|           | P11 scheduled her interview for January 17th at 6:00.   |
| 16-Jan-16 | P6 completed her two blogs. I held a face-to-face interview with her at 4:00.   |
| 17-Jan-16 | Held virtual interview with P2.   |
|           | Held virtual interview with P11.  |
|           | P5 completed her two blogs. She scheduled her interview for today at 6:30 but had to reschedule for January 18th at 12:00.  |

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| 18-Jan-16 | Held virtual interview with P5.  |
| 20-Jan-16 | P9 completed her two blogs. She scheduled her interview for January 27 <sup>th</sup> at 3:45.        |
| 27-Jan-16 | Held face-to-face interview with P9 which concluded data collection process for all 10 participants. |
| 9-Feb-16  | Emailed member checking emails out to all 10 participants.   |