

**"What is Missing Here?"**

**The Absence  
of a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in  
A Massachusetts` Early  
Childhood Teacher Preparation Program**

**By Julia Morin**

## Introduction

- This study is designed to assess how embedded a culturally responsive pedagogy is within Salem State University's pre-service teacher preparation program.

# Literature Review

- Black, Indigenous, and students of color face immense inequities in their schooling that includes teachers creating lower expectations for them, their cultural preferences in learning not being acknowledged, microaggressions, and so much more (Hammond, 2015; Douglas et al., 2008)
- K-12 Public Schools are diversifying at an increasingly rapid rate (Bryant et al., 2017)

## Literature Review (cont.)

- Fortunately, culturally responsive teaching was created as a response to the achievement gap and has been shown to improve the educational experiences of students of color (Vavrus, 2008)
- However, most teachers have been shown to be not properly trained to be culturally responsive educators (Taylor et al., 2016; Vavrus, 2008)

## Literature Review (cont.)

- This study conducted a content analysis; specifically looking at the course descriptions of Salem State University's Master of Education in Early Childhood to see how embedded a culturally responsive pedagogy is and, as a result, the degree of training pre-service teachers will have in this student-centered teaching approach

## Primarily Analysis:

### Explicit Reference to Culturally Responsive Teaching

- Culturally responsive teaching
- Culturally relevant pedagogy and/or culturally relevant teaching
- Asset-based perceptions
- Narrative frames
- Cultural frames of reference
- Establishing high expectations
- Building student-teacher relationships
- Cultural competence
- Culturally responsive learning communities.

# Methodology

## Secondary Analysis:

Indications of a spiral curriculum about racial and cultural sensitivity

- Racial/ethnic/linguistic diversity
- Social justice and/or social justice education
- Multicultural/multiculturism
- Cultural background
- Diverse background
- Diverse learning needs
- Prior experiences

## Tertiary Analysis:

Implicit Reference to Culturally Responsive Teaching

- Reflection/autobiographical writing
- Family engagement

# Selected Findings

## **EDU 737 - Applying Human Development to Teaching and Assessment**

**3 Credit(s)** This course introduces students to selected theories and topics in human development from early childhood to adolescence, with a special emphasis on how people learn. Students in this course will apply these theories and research on learning to standards-based instruction, and to their thinking about learning environment design and family engagement. Participants will build an understanding of teaching that is developmentally informed and responsive to all students in their present or future classrooms. Three lecture

**Explicit: Absent  
Implicit: Present**

**“Emphasis on how people learn.”**

**“Learning environment design.”**

**“Family engagement”**

**Key  
Words: A  
bsent**

# Selected Findings (continued)

Introductory Courses		
<p>EDU 720 - Child Growth and Development            3 Credit(s) Course focuses on the impact of childhood experiences on lifelong behaviors and attitudes, and on understanding the physical, psychosocial and cognitive aspects of development. Participants will explore both traditional and current theories; draw upon their own personal histories and autobiographical writings; and apply theories to classroom observation, management and instruction.</p>	<p>Explicit: Absent            Implicit: Present</p> <p>“Draw upon their own histories and autobiographical writings.”</p>	<p>Key Words: Absent</p>
<p>EDU 725 - Introduction to Literacy Development            3 Credit(s) This introductory course focuses on language and literacy development for diverse learners from preschool to elementary school, including English learners. The processes involved in teaching and assessing reading and writing development, using literature in support of literacy development, and approaches to teaching reading and writing will be explored. Three</p>	<p>Explicit: Absent            Implicit: Absent</p>	<p>Key Words: Present</p> <p>“Diverse learners”</p>

# Selected Findings (Continued)

**EDU 823 - Science and Mathematics in Early Childhood Education**  
**3 Credit(s)** This course will explore ways of enhancing children's natural tendencies to observe, explore and discover the world around them. Students will design engaging integrated mathematics and science experiences that support and nurture these tendencies as they establish a sound foundation for the wonder of and enthusiasm for math and science. Students will practice a variety of assessment techniques that will inform their instruction as they take children's diversity of prior experiences, cultures, background and abilities. Three lecture hours per week. Requires 25 hours of field-based pre-practicum experience.

**Explicit: Present**

**"Practice a variety of assessment techniques that will inform their instruction as they take children's diversity of prior experiences, cultures, background and abilities."**

**Implicit: Absent**

**Key Words: Absent**

## **Recommendations/ Implications**

Salem State University's Master's in Early Childhood Education program can begin to develop a culturally responsive framework by adding a critical racial and cultural consciousness component to its courses, as well as a self-reflection component

## Conclusion

- With changing student demographics, teacher preparation programs can no longer ignore the education conditions that have created an unjust learning environment for students that are from racial, cultural, or economically diverse groups.

## Conclusion (cont.)

- As a result, pre-service teacher preparation programs need to both be encouraged and held accountable by administrators and the surrounding community to properly prepare teachers to be culturally competent so that students will be able to effectively learn and grow within their classroom.