

**CREATING WARM DEMANDERS:
A MIXED METHODS STUDY OF
SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS
COURSEWORK**

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ABSTRACT

Social Foundations of Education (SFE) courses have long been a staple of traditional teacher preparation programs. However, with the rise of alternative pathways to teacher certification, a debate has emerged around the usefulness of SFE courses, particularly as it relates to the development of pre-service teachers into effective educators. Employing a mixed methods design, this study explores the impact of SFE courses by examining how these classes affect pre-service teachers' critical awareness and teacher expectations. Data for this study was collected through pretest and posttest surveys and interviews during the Fall of 2017 at two mid-Atlantic universities. In total, 132 individuals participated in the quantitative portion of the study, with 18 of these subjects also comprising the study's focal sample. Results of this research show that SFE courses significantly increase pre-service teachers' critical awareness but do not have an effect on teacher expectations. However, in analyzing the data by institution, this study found that SFE courses are capable of raising pre-service teachers' expectations when course instructors adopt certain pedagogical and rhetorical practices.

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CHAPTER 1 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Introduction

My interest in researching teacher expectations stems from a specific incident that occurred early in my first year working as a 7th grade ELA teacher at a high-poverty charter school in North Philadelphia. One of my students, Ariana, lost her father to gun violence and wound up missing close to three weeks of school. Upon her return to school, I made a significant effort to draw on what I had learned in my education coursework about how hardships outside of school can impact student performance. I recognized that Ariana was in the midst of dealing with an unspeakable tragedy, so I decided to cut her significant slack with her work, believing this to be the empathetic – and thus appropriate – course of action. If Ariana had her head down while I was teaching, I ignored it. If she failed to complete assignments, I looked the other way. The more I lowered my expectations for Ariana, the further her grades fell. But Ariana was clearly still grieving the loss of her father, and I believed that pushing her to focus on her schoolwork would be insensitive.

One afternoon, almost two months after Ariana's dad had been killed, I walked around the class and distributed the weekly vocabulary quizzes that I had graded the night before. Ariana had failed yet again, as did her best friend and seat partner, Makaylah. I crouched next to Makaylah and gave her a pep talk. I told her that she was capable of doing better and that I expected her to earn an 'A' on next week's quiz. Makaylah nodded at me, indicating that she received the message and agreed with this sentiment. I smiled at her and proceeded to walk away from their desk cluster. As I strode toward my desk, Ariana called out, "What about me?"

I still remember the sinking feeling in my stomach as I processed the gravity of her question: I had a student in my own classroom urging me to expect more of her. I had lowered

the bar for her, and she noticed. I had been failing to fulfill my duties as her educator. I wondered to myself how I had let such a thing happen. In graduate school I had read Lisa Delpit's (2012) work about how educators need to be 'warm demanders'; yet, I was not adopting this mindset.

After that event with Ariana took place, I reflected on how I was constructing my expectations for all of my students as individuals, many of whom were facing significant obstacles in their lives. Some were homeless, while others had parents who were incarcerated. In thinking deeply about my actions, I soon realized that I had been very reluctant to push students whose lives contained particularly challenging hurdles. I felt that these kids had it bad enough and deserved to be cut some significant slack. I did not think about what this meant for their academic and occupational futures. Instead, I simply lowered my expectations for these disadvantaged students.¹

Not long after this event took place, I was teaching an undergraduate section of a Social Foundations of Education (SFE) as part of my duties as a doctoral student. In this class we discussed how structural ills such as racism and economic inequality prevented many low-income students and students of color from receiving a high-quality education. As the pre-service teachers in this class became aware of just how deeply rooted these inequities are in the fabric of America's institutions, some of my pupils became disheartened and began openly asking questions that often started with the phrase: "How can we expect students to learn when...?"

As I processed these despairing questions from my undergraduate students, I felt a strong sense of déjà vu. I recalled my time as a student in similar awareness-raising courses, and I

¹ Terminological note: This study particularly focuses on two particular groups of student: low-income students and students of color. Throughout the study, I will refer to these two groups of students together as 'disadvantaged students.' I use this term in a very literal sense, as research has long shown that these two groups of students do not enjoy the same advantages as their wealthy, white peers.

realized that while these classes helped me to identify the various systemic challenges that impeded my 7th grade students' ability to learn, they also failed to stress the importance of maintaining high expectations for all children regardless of their circumstances. Without an emphasis on the latter, I incorrectly believed that taking an empathetic approach with students like Ariana meant lowering the bar as opposed to simply making prudent accommodations for her. And now as a college instructor, I was at risk of leading pre-service educators into the same trap. I had been teaching my students about how external forces create opportunity gaps in schools, but I had failed to mention that reflexively lowering one's expectations for disadvantaged students merely exacerbates extant disparities. By connecting my actions as a teacher with the coursework I had completed as a student, I finally understood why I had adopted such a misguided approach in working with Ariana, and I began to wonder how many other pre-service teachers were walking away from SFE courses with heightened social awareness but lowered expectations.

This personal revelation raised other questions about the relationship between coursework, critical awareness, and teacher expectations. For instance, I wondered whether coursework was even capable of raising teacher expectations, particularly as it pertains to low-income students and students of color. Furthermore, I questioned whether courses such as Social Foundations of Education could both raise pre-service teachers' awareness about the obstacles that disadvantaged students face while simultaneously raising their expectations for these students. In other words, could the course help to create 'warm demanders'? In conducting this study, I explore each of these questions.

Broadly speaking, this study is situated within the current teacher education discussion, with a specific focus on SFE courses. I am particularly interested in investigating how two

constructs – critical awareness and teacher expectations – interact with one another within the context of SFE courses. Thus, my introduction will begin by providing a broad overview of the present teacher education climate before gradually narrowing in focus until I’ve laid out the research questions for this study.

With that in mind, in the next section I will provide an overview of the current teacher education landscape with a focus on the role that SFE courses play in contemporary teacher preparation programs.

Background

Over fifty years ago, the release of the *Equality of Educational Opportunity* report – more commonly known as The Coleman Report – brought widespread attention to the presence of stark achievement gaps across racial and socioeconomic lines. Today, America’s education system largely faces the same problem, as marked gaps persist despite an array of legislation and reforms that were crafted with the purpose of reducing these disparities. While gains in academic performance have been made by all groups, at the present these initiatives have fallen short in their aim to close extant achievement gaps (NCES, 2015).²

While the need to close these gaps is universally agreed upon, there remains great discord regarding the optimal approach for reaching this goal. Broadly speaking, education stakeholders have generally been organized into two camps. The first camp contends that the most effective approach for reducing achievement gaps is through education reform, including the implementation of school choice initiatives and strict accountability standards for teachers and

² According to results from the 2013 NAEP exam, just 22% of fourth-grade students who qualify for free- and reduced-price lunch were proficient in math and reading respectively. Conversely, 46% of students who do not qualify for free- or reduced-price lunch were proficient in math and 37% were proficient in reading. From a racial standpoint, the National Center for Education Statistics (2016) reported that the four-year high school graduation rate for white students is 87%, which is over ten points higher than that of black (76%), Hispanic (73%), and Native American (70%) students.

administrators (Ravitch, 2010). Conversely, the second camp asserts that closing achievement gaps requires America as a society to first close enduring gaps in *opportunity* by ensuring equitable school funding and equal access to basic necessities such as healthcare and affordable housing for all students and their families (Carter & Welner, 2013).

This debate on how to effectively close achievement gaps has spilled over into virtually all areas of education, including teacher preparation. The education reform faction, which enjoys bipartisan political support, has called into question the value of traditional teacher education programs. Rodney Paige, who served as Secretary of Education in the Bush administration, called the required number of teacher education credits “shocking” and “burdensome,” while also stating that coursework has not been empirically linked to improving student achievement (Neumann, 2011). Similarly, Obama-era Secretary of Education Arne Duncan accused traditional teacher preparation programs of being “out of step with the times” (Snyder, 2016). Reformers like Duncan and Paige have thus pushed for leaner teacher preparation programs that require fewer courses, with a particular focus on cutting classes that do not directly pertain to teaching methods (Neumann, 2009).

This push has given rise to the burgeoning alternative certification movement, which has created hundreds of nontraditional pathways to teaching through programs such as Teach For America and The New Teacher Project (David & Cuban, 2010). A number of prominent alternative certification programs operate under the assumption that achievement gaps are foremost a product of disparities in teacher quality (Ravitch, 2013). Advocates of these programs believe that gifted professionals are scared away from joining the teaching profession by the onerous requirements of traditional preparation programs; thus, proponents of alternative certification programs have sought to provide nontraditional routes to the classroom that greatly

reduce coursework requirements in an attempt to lure these talented individuals into a career in teaching (Redding & Smith, 2016). This movement highlights the core belief of reformers, such as Teach For America's Wendy Kopp, that placing bright individuals – as opposed to well-trained educators – in teaching positions is crucial for closing achievement gaps (Jansen, 2016).

In response to this wave of teacher education reform, advocates of traditional teacher programs have gone on the defensive, asserting that courses like SFE and Multicultural Education are imperative for preparing pre-service teachers to work with students of all racial, cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds (deMarrais, 2013; Neumann, 2009; Butin, 2005). Supporters of traditional teacher preparation programs point to education scholars who assert that achievement gaps are likely exacerbated by the fact that America's teaching force is predominantly white, while students of color now comprise over half of the nation's student population (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Hayes & Fasching-Varner, 2015). With this demographic mismatch in mind, traditional teacher education proponents have argued that all pre-service teachers should complete coursework that raises one's social awareness and cultural competence (i.e., SFE and Multicultural Education courses). This belief is rooted in the idea that developing culturally responsive educators is a key component in closing achievement gaps (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

With this study, I am not only interested in understanding how the constructs of critical awareness and teacher expectations interact with one another, but I also wish to learn more about the value of SFE courses at a time when their worth is presently up for debate.

The next section will outline the issues that this study wishes to address within the teacher education reform debate in greater specificity.

Statement of the Problem

A great deal of scholarship has been devoted to critiquing proposed reforms in teacher preparation that recommend significantly reducing, if not altogether eliminating, non-methodological coursework, such as SFE. While this scholarly work is important, empirical research that critically examines the value of teacher education coursework – particularly SFE and Multicultural Education courses – is severely lacking (Hollins & Guzman, 2005). Advocates of traditional teacher preparation programs cannot simply rely on attacking reform efforts aimed at overhauling these programs; instead, these folks must provide compelling evidence that buttresses the traditional teacher preparation agenda. There are many areas of traditional teacher preparation that require greater examination, but this study narrows its scope to one particular course: Social Foundations of Education.

Situating this study within SFE is ideal because the class exemplifies the type of non-methodological coursework that has become the focal point of debates on the value of traditional teacher preparation programs. On the one hand, proponents of SFE argue that the course provides pre-service teachers with essential knowledge that will enable them to best serve students whose academic performance is continuously hindered by structural inequities (Aronson & Anderson, 2013). Conversely, critics of SFE contend that the course possesses little practical value as it pertains to preparing teachers to increase student achievement on standardized tests.

By examining at SFE, this study aims to understand how the course affects teacher expectation construction, while also considering the relationship between critical awareness and teacher expectations. Furthermore, this study will examine how changes in pre-service teachers' critical awareness and teacher expectations manifest in their professional reflection (i.e.,

pedagogical decision-making). The gaps in research on SFE and teacher expectations will be explored further below.

Gap #1: Linking SFE to Effective Teaching

From a theoretical standpoint, SFE scholars have vigorously challenged reform initiatives that seek to cut non-methodological teacher preparation coursework (Hartlep et al., 2015; Neumann, 2009; Butin, 2005; deMarrais, 2013). While this theoretical work is important, the extant body of SFE research has struggled at times to produce generalizable evidence that highlights why courses such as SFE are critical elements of teacher training. This lack of generalizable evidence has provided critics of traditional teacher preparation programs with powerful ammunition in their fight to revamp teacher preparation (Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Neumann, 2011). Yet, teacher education advocates contend that courses such as SFE do contribute to the creation of effective teachers. With this in mind, this study seeks to find out whether SFE courses are truly making a contribution in this area.

Some may argue that there is already an extant body of research that explores the effects of non-methodological courses on pre-service teachers. To an extent, this is true, as numerous studies of SFE and Multicultural Education courses have been conducted in the past 15 years. However, the issue at-hand is one of quality, not quantity. Specifically, there are two major issues with SFE research. The first pertains to methodology, while the second relates to the research questions these studies investigate.

From a methodological standpoint, the bulk of the research on these courses employs a practitioner research model that – while useful – does lack distance between researcher and subject and often is quite small in scale. It should be noted that there is nothing wrong with conducting practitioner research or self-studies; in fact, this type of inquiry is quite important, as

educators should be engaging in a continuous process of self-reflection. However, it is important for SFE scholars to acknowledge that these types of studies are limited in their ability to contribute to ongoing debates regarding the importance of non-methodological coursework in teacher education due to issues around the generalizability of findings and the distance between researcher and subject. With this study, I seek to address these issues.

Methodology is not the only issue though, as SFE research has yet to show how the course helps to create effective teachers from an education reform perspective. Most SFE studies either examine the practices of teacher educators in these courses, or they consider how pre-service teachers grapple with content that challenges their general worldview in regards to both society and education (Tinkler et al., 2015; Hardee et al., 2012; Evans-Winters & Hoff, 2011; Puchner & Roseboro, 2011; Frederick et al., 2010; Miretzky, 2010; Bullough, 2008; Murrow, 2007; Minnici & Hill, 2007; Sevier, 2005). Once again, this is not to say that this research lacks import, but in this era in which debates are raging about the value of teacher education coursework, there is a dire need for research that investigates empirical links between SFE and effective teaching. At the moment, this need is not being met by SFE scholars. What makes this situation particularly confounding is the fact that SFE scholars have urgently and persistently called on proponents of the course to conduct studies that have the potential to address concerns raised by reformers regarding the value of the class (Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Miretzky, 2010). Despite these calls, very little empirical work of this nature has been produced.

Altogether, there is a significant need for research studying the impact that SFE courses have on the development of effective teachers. Some of this research must contain distance between researcher and subject to ensure that its findings are capable of adding to the teacher education debate in a meaningful way. Furthermore, there is a pressing need for SFE research

that is compelling to all who have a stake in the wider teacher education debate, and not simply those who support or instruct SFE courses. This can best be accomplished by investigating potential relationships between SFE and effective teaching.

Gap #2: Teacher Expectation Construction

For almost fifty years, researchers have examined the impact of teacher expectations. This work has uncovered many significant findings, as scholars have shown how teacher expectations affect teacher behavior and student outcomes. Additionally, researchers have revealed the multifarious ways that students are able to perceive teacher expectations, while also highlighting disparities in teacher expectations along racial, socioeconomic, and gender lines. While this work has made significant contributions to educational research as a whole, there are still some areas in need of further study.

To begin with, research has almost exclusively examined teacher expectation in terms of its effect on teacher behaviors and student outcomes, while neglecting to consider the process of teacher expectation construction. In this way, extant research seemingly assumes that teacher expectations cannot be developed in a positive, enduring manner prior to entering the classroom. This assumption is somewhat surprising, as scholars of this topic acknowledge that teachers often base their expectations on stereotypical views and “false definitions” of reality (Merton, 1948, p. 195). Thus, it is plausible to think that many teachers enter the classroom with their expectations for certain groups of students already affected, if not set altogether.

Despite this, little attention has been paid to how teacher expectations are influenced by teacher preparation programs and whether it is possible to change teacher expectations through coursework. This gap is particularly glaring, as research has shown the vast benefits of high teacher expectations. Therefore, studying whether it is possible to cultivate high expectations in

pre-service teachers is a logical step that needs to be taken. In exploring teacher expectation construction, this study assumes that teacher expectations are influenced long before one enters the classroom to begin teaching. Yet, this study also assumes that teacher expectations are dynamic, thus providing courses such as SFE with an opportunity to shape pre-service teachers' beliefs about students' ability to learn.

Gap #3: Teacher Expectations and Critical Awareness

Advocates of SFE often champion the course's ability to develop critical awareness in pre-service teachers (Hartlep et al., 2015; Butin, 2005). Lopez (2017) defines critical awareness as "essential knowledge that mitigates bias and prejudice among teachers" (p. 3). Although it is undoubtedly important for teachers to understand the challenges that students and their families continuously face, little is known about how an increase in critical awareness affects teachers' expectations for students who are most frequently and severely impacted by structural inequalities. While common sense may lead some to believe that critical awareness and teacher expectations naturally enjoy a positive correlation, this relationship has never actually been explored.

This study questions whether a rise in critical awareness is inherently coupled with a rise in teacher expectations. In fact, in considering the type of content that is typically taught in SFE courses, it is not all that difficult to imagine how pre-service teachers could develop the former without cultivating the latter. For example, in Carter and Welner's (2013) text *Closing the Opportunity Gap* – a book which is taught in SFE courses – the authors outline numerous areas in which disadvantaged students are systemically neglected. Carter and Welner then link these disparities in opportunity along racial and socioeconomic lines to differences in achievement among these same groups. The authors drive home their point by metaphorically comparing the

nation's education system to a race in which one competitor is properly nourished and trained while the other is not. In a sense, this analogy is not incorrect, as it does provide a fair portrayal of the inequities that plague America's schools and society. However, illustrations such as these – typified by “How can we expect poor students to learn when...” statements – are all too often unaccompanied by further discussion on the need for teachers to maintain high expectations for disadvantaged students despite the presence of structural hurdles. Without this clarity, scholars and teacher educators risk leaving pre-service teachers with the notion that they should not expect disadvantaged students to achieve at high levels. Thus, this study posits that it is quite possible that pre-service teachers experience an increase in critical awareness in SFE courses, while simultaneously lowering their expectations for certain student groups.

To be clear, I am not calling for teacher preparation coursework to push a ‘No Excuses’ approach on to pre-service teachers in preparing them to work with disadvantaged students. However, this study assumes that high quality teachers must maintain both critical awareness and high expectations for all students. The relationship between these two constructs has not yet been explored, and thus represents a significant gap in both SFE research and teacher education as a whole.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to answer the call for empirical research that examines the value of non-methodological teacher education coursework. This type of research has been necessitated by the swift actions of teacher education reformers who have questioned whether this type of coursework actually contributes to the development of effective teachers. While traditional teacher preparation advocates may interpret this rhetoric as being hostile in nature, reformers are not out of line for skeptically observing that the efficacy of non-methodological coursework has

not been empirically – and thus, sufficiently – proven. This challenge issued by reformers has largely gone unanswered by teacher education scholars, including those who vociferously defend the merits of non-methodological coursework. This research attempts to begin addressing these questions around the value of coursework.

Of course, no single project can definitively answer whether non-methodological teacher education coursework is a critical element in developing effective teachers. Thus, this study limits its scope to a single, specific course (SFE). This project is particularly interested in SFE's impact on pre-service teachers because, as Jacobs (2014) notes, the course “occupies a peculiar place in the teacher education curriculum” due to the fact that SFE is neither a methods course nor a purely pedagogical course (p. 249). This has led some reformers to label the course as an unnecessary requirement, an assertion that I aim to investigate empirically.

This study examines SFE's impact on developing effective teachers through the lens of two constructs: teacher expectations and critical awareness. These constructs were selected for a couple of reasons. First and foremost, research has yet to investigate whether SFE courses cultivate high expectations in pre-service teachers. This is a glaring gap in the scholarly literature on teacher preparation, as research has found that teacher expectations significantly impact student achievement. Therefore, this study seeks to measure whether SFE engenders high expectations in pre-service teachers for disadvantaged students. Second, little is known about how critical awareness and teacher expectations interact with one another. Because SFE courses explicitly aim to raise critical awareness in pre-service teachers, this study examines whether there is in fact a significant relationship between the two constructs, and how this relationship affects pre-service teachers' professional reflection.

Additionally, this study aims to bring a level of rigor to SFE research that has largely been absent up to this point. In order to accomplish this goal, this research will employ a mixed methods design that will enable teacher attitudes to be measured across methodologies. This comprehensive approach will allow for an investigation into SFE's effects on pre-service teachers that is objective and reliable, while also providing a structure for gleaning a deeper understanding of how the course impacts participants individually.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do Social Foundations of Education courses create changes in pre-service teachers' critical awareness and teacher expectations?
2. To what extent does an increase in critical awareness conflict with/overlap with an increase in teacher expectations?
3. How do changes in critical awareness and teacher expectations manifest in pre-service teachers' professional reflection on student learning difficulties?
4. What connections exist between teachers' different positions on these issues and their professional reflection?

Significance

This study has significance for teacher education programs both in terms of policy and practice. The implications of this study are particularly germane to the debate around reforming teacher education curricula. By researching SFE courses, this project seeks to commence the process of empirically examining the value of teacher education coursework that is not focused on teaching methodology. Although this is merely a single study, in its own small way this project begins the process of investigating the concerns of teacher preparation critics in a methodologically rigorous manner that has thus far been absent in SFE research.

However, in order to adequately address the concerns of SFE critics, it is necessary to analyze the course in a way that meaningfully attends to the issues raised by these skeptics. Simply measuring whether SFE courses raise critical awareness in pre-service teachers may be of interest to scholars of the course, but this is not the question that currently imperils both SFE and traditional teacher education curricula at-large. With that in mind, this study's decision to measure teacher expectation development in SFE courses is an intentional effort to consider the course's value in a manner that is relevant to all sides of the teacher education reform debate. Thus, this study will provide evidence that either opposes or supports recent doubts that have emerged in regards to the worth of non-methodological coursework in traditional teacher preparation.

As for this research's relevance to teacher education practice, this study's findings have the potential to inform the way that SFE courses are constructed and taught, particularly as it pertains to fostering teacher expectations and critical awareness. By studying these constructs within the context of SFE, this study sheds light on how pre-service teachers are developing in these particular areas. Additionally, in providing clarity regarding the relationship between critical awareness and teacher expectations, this study's findings may help guide teacher educators' selection of course content.

Dissertation Roadmap

In this introduction, I outlined the purpose of this study and situated this research within the present debate surrounding teacher preparation reform. Chapter 2 will discuss the various research that has been conducted that is pertinent to this study, particularly as it pertains to SFE, teacher expectations, and critical awareness. In this chapter I will also provide an overview of this study's theoretical framework. Chapter 3 will outline the methodology that this study

employed for measuring the development of teacher expectations and critical awareness in SFE courses. Chapter 4 will provide the results from the various quantitative and qualitative data analyses that were conducted, and Chapter 5 will discuss the implications of those results.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This study aims to understand how Social Foundations of Education (SFE) courses affect the development of teacher expectations in pre-service teachers, while also measuring the relationship between teacher expectations and critical awareness. This literature review discusses relevant theoretical and empirical work pertaining to SFE courses, critical awareness, and teacher expectations. Additionally, the study's theoretical framework will be outlined in this chapter.

To begin this chapter, I will provide an overview of SFE, touching on the course's history, its goals, and the body of extant empirical research that has considered the course's impact on pre-service teachers. Next, I will review extant literature around the construct of critical awareness. In particular, I will focus on empirical work that has measured student development of critical awareness in teacher education programs. Third, I will discuss teacher expectation theory and research in an effort to highlight how expectations affect teacher behaviors and student outcomes. Finally, the literature review will come to a close by outlining Chubbuck's (2013) theory of professional reflection, which will provide a framework for this study's qualitative data analysis.

Social Foundations of Education

This section begins with an overview of the history of Social Foundations of Education (SFE) courses, as well as a review of the stated purpose of SFE as outlined by the Council for Social Foundations of Education. Next, I will examine SFE-related research, with a particular focus on the various weaknesses that characterize this extant body of literature, and which ultimately serve in part as an impetus for this study.

Social Foundations of Education: A Historical Overview

Social Foundations of Education courses have long been a staple of teacher preparation programs (Jacobs, 2014). Rooted in the work of George S. Counts and Harold Rugg, SFE courses were conceived in the early 1940s with the purpose of providing “a critical, cross-disciplinary study of education, including schooling, as a cultural process grounded in the social institutions, processes, and ideals that characterize particular cultures” (Tozer & Miretzky, 2005, p. 108). In subsequent years, America has experienced many shifts in both its culture and education system; however, the purpose of SFE courses has changed very little in the seven-plus decades since Rugg and his colleagues first developed a full-fledged SFE course. This stability is evidenced by the most recent standards for instruction in SFE – released in 2012 by the Council for Social Foundations of Education – which in many ways still mirror Counts and Rugg’s ideals and vision for the course. Specifically, the 2012 standards call for SFE instruction to equip students with the ability to develop “interpretive, normative, and critical perspectives on education” through a multidisciplinary approach” (Tutwiler, et al., 2013, 111). Thus, it is evident that the purpose of SFE has changed very little in its aim to help pre-service teachers understand how education is influenced by and reflective of the broader society in which it is situated.

Neumann (2009) contends that, in general, there are two common types of SFE courses. The first type focuses on “philosophy, history of education, and sociopolitical aspects of schooling,” whereas the second type focuses on multiculturalism, which is characterized by a more intense exploration of non-dominant cultures that are increasingly represented in American classrooms. It is important to note that there is often significant overlap between these two types of SFE courses. Having said that, the two SFE courses featured in this study tend to align more closely with the first type.

The next section will discuss research that has examined whether SFE courses are in fact impacting pre-service teachers, and if so, in what ways?

Social Foundations of Education Research

In recent years, advocates of SFE have sounded the alarm, bringing attention to the fact that the course is under siege from education reformers who feel the course lacks value in preparing teachers (Neumann, 2009). Supporters of SFE have pushed back on these claims by publishing highly theoretical pieces that outline the course's importance, while also calling for more empirical research that highlights the course's worth (Butin, 2005; deMarrais, 2013; Hartlep et al, 2015; Miretzky, 2010). In recent years, a handful of studies have been situated in SFE courses; however, this work has largely yielded little in the way of results that are meaningful outside of their immediate context, thus providing proponents of the course with little ammunition to fight against the narrative espoused by reformers.

Broadly speaking, recent SFE scholarship has generally contained three gaps. First, too much SFE scholarship is not empirical work. Using the ERIC (EBSCOhost) database, a search for SFE literature published from 2001 to the present uncovered 45 journal articles directly pertaining to the course. Of these 45 articles, only 13 were empirical studies, while 29 of these articles were purely theoretical essays (the other three studies are best categorized as historical). Thus, it is clear that SFE scholarship is presently oversaturated with theoretical work explicating the course's value.

Second, the extant body of SFE research is lacking in methodological diversity. For instance, ten of the thirteen studies found in this search employed practitioner research methods (Tinkler et al., 2015; Hardee et al., 2012; Evans-Winters & Hoff, 2011; Puchner & Roseboro, 2011; Frederick, 2010; Miretzky, 2010; Bullough, 2008; Murrow, 2007; Minnici & Hill, 2007;

Sevier, 2005). While practitioner research is certainly very useful, it would be useful for the field to possess a complementary portfolio of research that maintains a little more distance between researcher and subject. Furthermore, practitioner research tends to be small in scale and unique to a specific context, which limits its ability to make more generalizable claims about SFE's impact on pre-service teachers.

Third, SFE research in the past fifteen years has been hyper-focused on analyzing the pedagogical methods employed by instructors of the course, which makes sense given the popularity of practitioner research. In some of these studies, researchers reflect on their own pedagogy in order to explore whether they are creating a democratic classroom environment or appropriately modeling culturally relevant teaching (Miretzky, 2010; Minnici & Hill, 2007; Sevier, 2005). In others, practitioner-researchers examine their experiences teaching resistant, white students about racism and other challenging topics (Hardee et al., 2012; Evans-Winters, 2011). While self-reflection is a critical aspect of teaching, there are other pressing issues related to the impact of SFE courses on pre-service teachers that require deep investigation.

Despite issues related to generalizability and distance, there are some practitioner research studies that have done well to understand what pre-service teachers are gaining from SFE courses. Murrow (2007) examined her students' final papers in her foundations course and found that these pre-service teachers were able to articulate a clear philosophy of education. Frederick et al. (2010) administered open-ended questionnaires to the 33 students in her foundations course at three different times throughout the class in order to gauge what they were taking away from the course. The authors found that students developed a greater understanding of systemic inequities from the start of the course to its completion.

Additionally, Benchik-Osborne (2013) examined how SFE principles manifest in teacher practices. In this study, the author observed and interviewed four in-service teachers and found that educators who possessed a better understanding of SFE principles created more democratic classroom environments. Unfortunately, Benchik-Osborne does not note whether the four teachers ever enrolled in an SFE course during the time in teacher preparation programs. Therefore, it is unknown why some teachers in the study were more dedicated to SFE principles in their practice than others.

It is clear that scholarship on SFE's impact on pre-service teachers is lacking in volume and rigor. With this in mind, in looking at the extant body of research on critical awareness below, I will cite works from teacher preparation programs more broadly in order to better understand how coursework can cultivate critical awareness in pre-service teachers.

Critical Awareness

Critical awareness has long been viewed as a crucial component of effective teaching. Possessing critical awareness is particularly important for educators who work with low-income students and students of color (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Freire, 1970). The concept of critical awareness is built upon past iterations of the construct, including Freire's concept of critical consciousness and Ladson-Billings concept of sociopolitical consciousness. This study borrows Lopez's (2017) definition of critical awareness:

Critical awareness reflects essential knowledge that mitigates bias and prejudice among teachers. It includes the understanding of the historical context of historically marginalized students; the discrepancy between what is typically validated as knowledge in classrooms and the challenges to those assumptions; and the ways the curriculum in schools serves to replicate the power structure in society (p. 3).

In short, critical awareness is an ability to identify the presence of discrimination (racism, sexism, etc.) and systemic inequities, as well as their sources. In an educational context, critical awareness manifests in teachers' practices in many ways. For instance, critically aware teachers recognize how systemic inequities negatively impact students' academic and behavioral outcomes (Bodur, 2012). Based on this knowledge, these teachers reject false narratives about marginalized students, their families, and their communities at large (McKown & Weinstein, 2002; Lopez, 2017; Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007). Additionally, critically aware teachers recognize school processes and instructional content that are not culturally relevant and understand how these insensitive processes and content can negatively affect student achievement (Gay, 2000). Critically aware teachers then make adjustments to processes and content, tailoring them to better fit students' backgrounds. In this way, critically aware teachers have a respect for students' cultures and life experiences, viewing them as assets rather than obstacles (Lopez, 2017). Finally, critically aware teachers use these assets as leverage in educating their students (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

In order to cultivate critical awareness, pre-service teachers must encounter content in their teacher preparation coursework that challenges dominant narratives, which in turn will help develop their ability to critically analyze society (Ladson-Billings, 1995). To begin developing critical awareness, one must be exposed to a broader, more inclusive account of history (Lopez, 2017). This requires engaging with content that examines past events from the perspective of non-dominant groups, which naturally call into question the validity of dominant historical narratives (Apple, 2004). Developing critical awareness also requires that pre-service teachers become familiar with non-dominant perspectives in other areas, such as political science and political economy (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

This ability to recognize and challenge assumptions takes practice, and courses such as SFE and Multicultural Education are viewed as ideal spaces where critical awareness can be cultivated (Butin, 2005). Research has examined the development of critical awareness in pre-service teachers both at the individual course-level and across the entirety of teacher preparation coursework. This research will be discussed more in-depth below.

Critical Awareness Development in Teacher Preparation

A number of practitioner research studies situated outside of SFE courses have found that teacher preparation coursework is capable of developing critical awareness in pre-service teachers (Kreamelmeyer et al., 2016; Endo, 2015; Kolano & King, 2015; Curry, 2013; Milner, 2006); however, the conflict of interest that is inherent in practitioner research calls into question the validity of these studies. With this in mind, I will not consider practitioner research studies in this discussion of relevant literature. While this eliminates a number of studies focusing on critical awareness development in teacher preparation, there are still a handful of articles that meet this review's standards.

For instance, Capella-Santana (2003) surveyed 52 students in a teacher education program in order to examine what changes these pre-service teachers experienced throughout their teacher preparation and what variables they attributed these changes to. In all, 72% of participants reported a change in their belief of stereotypes about students of color, and 50% of students reported experiencing a positive shift in their belief of the importance of asset-based pedagogy. In terms of the variables that influenced this change, 48% of students cited the effect of Foundations of Education courses, while 73% of students credited Multicultural Education courses. Further, 77% of students attributed their growth to Bilingual Education courses.

Other studies have also shown that teacher preparation coursework can foster the development of critical awareness. For instance, Bodur (2012) used mixed methods to examine the impact of a course titled Teaching Diverse Populations on pre-service teachers' beliefs about culturally and linguistically diverse students. This experimental study, which contained both a control and treatment group, found that students who took this course were significantly more aware of how systemic inequities can hinder student performance, while students who had yet to take the course tended to offer explanations that placed the blame for academic struggles on children and their parents.

Similarly, Enterline et al.'s (2008) quantitative study measured over 1,000 pre-service teachers at the start and completion of a teacher preparation program. The study's results revealed a stark difference in critical awareness between the new teacher candidates and those who had completed their program, with the authors stating that "exiting candidates indicated more understanding of the complexities of teaching for social justice and the role of teachers and teaching in school and social change" (p. 282). Furthermore, Schaub's (2013) qualitative study found that pre-service teachers' critical awareness was heightened in courses that allowed for discussion and reflection on the relationship between diversity and education.

Kumar and Hamer's (2013) longitudinal, quantitative study of 868 pre-service teachers produced particularly interesting findings. The author followed participants from the start of their teacher preparation program to the end of their student teaching, and ultimately found that teacher preparation coursework - including an SFE course - helped students abandon stereotypical beliefs about low-income students and students of color, while also engendering a respect for other cultures. However, Kumar and Hamer also found that challenges in student teaching often caused pre-service teachers to revert back to endorsing stereotypical beliefs and

deficit narratives. In response to these findings, it should be noted that the author recommended that more coursework related to multicultural education and critical awareness be embedded in teacher preparation curricula, with the assumption that taking more of these courses will foster enduring critical awareness.

Additionally, Bradley-Levine's (2012) study of 17 students in an unnamed master's level course found that critical awareness development is typically a slow, incremental process. Thus, the author concurs with Kumar and Hamer's (2013) assertion that awareness raising content should not be limited to single courses. Similarly, Picower's (2013) qualitative study of 12 pre-service teachers discovered growth in students' critical awareness, particularly with regards to understanding how systemic oppression impacts both education and local communities. It should be noted that the participants in this study were enrolled in a year-long course that employed a social justice curriculum, which further validates the contention that building critical awareness requires more than a one-semester course.

In sum, it is evident that teacher education coursework is capable of cultivating critical awareness in pre-service teachers, although some question the extent to which one course alone can facilitate this growth. In the next section, theory and research related to the construct of teacher expectations will be discussed.

Teacher Expectations

Teacher expectation research is a unique phenomenon in the sense that the construct is rooted in sociological theory, but virtually all of the extant scholarly work on the topic has been carried out by educational psychologists. This has led to an interesting gap in the body of literature on teacher expectations, as studies have tended to focus on how expectations affect teacher behaviors and student outcomes, while largely neglecting the actual construction of teacher

expectations. This section will begin by providing an overview of the prominent sociological and educational theory that has informed teacher expectation inquiry before discussing extant teacher expectation research that is relevant to this study.

Teacher Expectations Theoretical Framework

As it pertains to teacher expectations as a construct, theoretically, this study is underpinned by the work of Robert Merton and Gloria Ladson-Billings. I will begin by outlining Merton's theory of self-fulfilling prophecies, before reviewing Ladson-Billings' work on the topic.

Self-Fulfilling Prophecies. The vast majority of teacher expectation research has focused on how teachers' beliefs about their students can impact academic and behavioral outcomes. This research has uncovered two common types of teacher expectations: sustaining expectations and self-fulfilling prophecies (Good & Brophy, 2008). *Sustaining expectations* are produced when teachers base their expectations for students off of prior performance. This type of expectation is more relevant for measuring how in-service teachers' expectations, which are typically developed within the first few weeks of the school year, impact their students' outcomes throughout the course of a year. Since this type of teacher expectation is only relevant for in-service teachers, it is not of use to this study.

The second type of teacher expectation, *self-fulfilling prophecies*, are unfounded expectations that have been built upon fallacies. This lack of an evidential basis is the hallmark of self-fulfilling prophecies. These unfounded expectations typically skew teacher perceptions of and behavior toward students, both of which ultimately impact academic outcomes. The vast majority of teacher expectation research utilizes a self-fulfilling prophecies framework, and this study is no exception.

Although the bulk of teacher expectation research has been conducted by educational psychologists, the theory of self-fulfilling prophecies was actually developed by sociologist Robert Merton. Merton's theory was inspired by the work of sociologist W.I. Thomas, who posited that social perceptions produce very real and meaningful results. Merton built his theory upon Thomas's contention that "if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Merton, 1995, p. 380). This idea, known as the Thomas theorem, serves as the foundation for Merton's theory of self-fulfilling prophecies.

Merton defined self-fulfilling prophecies as, "a *false* definition of the situation evoking a new behavior which makes the originally false conception come *true*" (p. 195). It is useful to break Merton's theory down into three distinct parts: (1) the adoption and/or consumption of a false definition; (2) the subsequent behavior, which is influenced by the false definition; and (3) the outcome, which is influenced by both the false definition and the behavior. Merton contends that self-fulfilling prophecies "perpetuate a reign of error," as people – failing to recognize how their perceptions and subsequently affected behaviors induce a specific outcome – point to this heavily influenced result as proof of an objective truth. Then, these flawed expectations are shared and adopted widely.

High Expectations: Demanding Excellence. In her outline of culturally relevant pedagogy, Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) states that academic success is essential for all students, including those from marginalized groups. Ladson-Billings argues that it is incumbent upon all teachers to demand excellence from their students, regardless of the hardships and inequities they may face. In fact, Ladson-Billings contends that teachers need to do everything in their power to push students to succeed academically, stating that the best teachers "cajole, nag,

pester, and bribe students to work at high intellectual levels” (p. 479). Thus, it is imperative that teachers remain firm in their belief that all students can achieve.

Along with demanding excellence, Ladson-Billings (1995) posits that in order for teachers to maintain high expectations for their students, they must eschew deficit perspectives of their students, their students’ families, and their students’ communities. Ladson-Billings argues that rather than using a “language of lacking” (p. 479) in discussing students’ academic gaps, successful teachers who possess high expectations instead believe that their students have skills and knowledge that are often unappreciated and unrecognized in traditional American schooling. Along with this belief that all students’ cultures are an asset rather than a burden, Ladson-Billings asserts that high expectation teachers habitually reflect on their own practice when considering their students’ academic issues. By looking inward, these teachers question whether they have adequately tapped into their pupils experiences and funds of knowledge instead of blaming students for their struggles.

It should be noted that calling for high, unwavering expectations is not an endorsement of a ‘No Excuses’ approach to teaching students, particularly those who are marginalized. Ladson-Billings breaks from this model by encouraging teachers to be empathetic towards students and considerate of the obstacles they face. However, she asserts that lowering the bar for disadvantaged students academically is not going to help push back against inequities; rather, it will exacerbate them. In this way, teachers need to consider how their practices and advocacy work inside and outside of school can combat the social injustices perpetrated against vulnerable students.

Low Expectations: Permission to Fail. Whereas high expectation teachers demand excellence from their students, low expectation teachers are willing to allow marginalized and

neglected students to underperform. In fact, Ladson-Billings (2002) posits that these teachers enable students to underachieve by granting them “permission to fail” (p. 110). Ladson-Billings provides an illustration of what a low expectations teacher looks like with an excerpt from her field work. In this scenario, a teacher asked a student who was off-task if she would like to do her work. When the child shook her head no, the teacher replied, “That’s okay. Maybe you’ll feel like writing tomorrow” (p. 110). For Ladson-Billings, this anecdote exemplifies the permission to fail style that low teacher expectation teachers often adopt.

However, it is important to note that teachers who grant their students permission to fail may do so for different reasons. For some teachers, adopting low expectations is a defense mechanism of sorts meant to protect their own personal teaching efficacy. For others, setting low expectations is meant to serve as an empathetic gesture. Finally, some low expectations are a product of teachers’ deficit views of children. Ladson-Billings (2007) notes that there are common deficit narratives (i.e., self-fulfilling prophecies) that are often embraced by low expectation teachers. She provides several examples of deficit narratives, which she contends are frequently cited by teachers with low expectations. They include: “(1) The parents just don’t care; (2) These children don’t have enough exposure/experiences; (3) These children aren’t ready for school; (4) Their families don’t value education; and (5) They are coming from a ‘culture of poverty’” (p. 318). Yet, regardless of the motive, low expectations impede student academic performance.

In conclusion, Merton’s theory of self-fulfilling prophecies serves as the theoretical framework for understanding teacher expectation construction. Additionally, Ladson-Billings’ writings on teacher expectations have been conceptualized into two parts: Demanding excellence

(high expectations) and permission to fail (low expectations). Later in this review, there will be an explanation as to how these concepts will be operationalized in this study.

The next section will discuss teacher expectation research that is germane to this project.

Teacher Expectation Research

Studies of teacher expectations began in earnest in 1968, with the publication of Rosenthal and Jacobson's *Pygmalion in the Classroom*, in which the authors employed Merton's self-fulfilling prophecy theory to test the effect of teacher expectations on student performance. Since this time, many shifts have occurred in the study of teacher expectations. The most prominent shift occurred in the first-half of the 1980s and was spurred by both methodological and ethical criticisms of early studies. Research prior to 1980 was typically situated in a laboratory setting and consisted of researchers feeding false information about students to unsuspecting teachers in an effort to induce desired expectations for individual students. While these studies consistently found significant relationships between teacher expectations and student outcomes, critics argued that the laboratory setting did not accurately portray what was happening in classrooms (Jussim & Haber, 2005). Other scholars questioned the ethics of these studies due to their practice of artificially creating negative expectations for certain students (Weinstein, 2002). To combat these issues, teacher expectation research shifted from laboratory settings to natural settings, as scholars sought to measure this construct in actual classrooms where researchers had less of an influence on manipulating expectations. While other trends have occurred in teacher expectation research since this time, contemporary studies continue to take a naturalistic approach.

Despite shifts in teacher expectation research, the use of Merton's theory of self-fulfilling prophecy as a theoretical foundation has remained constant. Weinstein (2002) states that the basic assumption that has undergirded the teacher expectation construct is the belief that all

individuals “bring a set – that is, a preparedness – to perceptual processes” (p. 40), which in turn influences the way we view events. Thus, it is clear that the impact of Merton’s – and Thomas’s – sociological theory has not waned.

This section considers teacher expectation research that is germane to this study. More recent research will be prioritized over earlier works due to issues with the latter that were noted above. However, it is important that this early research not be discarded altogether, as it paved the way for much of the more rigorous work that has since been carried out. This research on teacher expectations will be organized into four groups: (1) effects on student outcomes; (2) effects on teacher behavior; (3) effects by group; and (4) student perceptions of teacher expectation.

Effects on Student Outcomes. While there is a consensus among researchers that teacher expectations affect student outcomes, there is much debate about the size of this effect. Some scholars argue that the effect size is fairly small (Jussim & Harber, 2005; Jussim & Eccles 1995); however, others contend that the effect is actually quite significant (Lopez, 2017; van den Bergh et al., 2013; Good & Nichols, 2001). For instance, Lopez (2017), using test scores and survey data, found that students who were taught by educators with high expectations scored .5 standard deviations higher on standardized tests in reading than their peers whose teachers did not maintain high expectations. Similarly, van den Bergh et al. (2013) coupled implicit bias tests with a teacher expectation scale that asked teachers’ questions about specific students and found a positive relationship between low teacher expectations and math achievement.

There is also debate about whether the effect of low expectations is enduring; recent research appears to indicate that these effects are in fact lasting. Sorhagen’s (2013) longitudinal study found that arbitrary expectations of first-grade teachers can affect students’ achievement

all the way into high school. The author found that students who were exposed to low expectations in first grade – based on inaccurate estimations of their ability – achieved significantly lower scores on math and reading standardized tests. Similarly, Sorhagen uncovered a positive effect between high expectations at the first grade level and achievement in high school level math and reading exams. Hinnant et al. (2009), using the same longitudinal data set as Sorhagen, also found that teacher expectations in math can have lasting effects on academic outcomes.

In sum, it is clear that teacher expectations profoundly affect student performance, not just in the short-term, but in the long-term as well.

Effects on Teacher Behavior. Teacher behaviors are influenced by their expectations for students in a number of ways. Using data obtained from interviews with elementary students, Weinstein and McKown (1998) proposed eight ways that teachers' differential expectations manifest in the classroom. Chief among these are differences in quality both in feedback and in student-teacher relationships. Tenenbaum and Ruck (2007), too, noted that teachers provided less positive feedback to pupils whom they expected less of academically. This was found to be especially true for students of color.

Students in Weinstein and McKown's (1998) study also pointed to the practice of ability grouping as a clear sign of differential expectations. While ability grouping does not necessarily indicate the presence of differential expectations, research has found that teachers do tend to maintain higher expectations for students based on their ability group or track. Through interviews, Kelly and Carbonaro (2012) found that students who were concurrently enrolled in two tracks typically enjoyed higher expectations from their teachers in higher track classes.

This research highlights how low expectations can manifest in teacher behaviors, while also illustrating how teacher expectations – by way of these influenced behaviors – ultimately impact student outcomes. The next section considers how teacher expectations differ along demographic lines.

Effects by Group. While teacher expectations affect students from all groups, it is clear that some races/ethnicities, genders, and socioeconomic groups are more vulnerable to experiencing the negative effects of low expectations, both in terms of frequency and effect size (Sorhagen, 2013; Riley & Ungerleider, 2012; van den Bergh et al., 2010; Jussim & Harber, 2005; Weinstein, 2002). This has led some researchers to posit that bias in teacher expectations along demographic lines has perpetuated and even exacerbated achievement gaps (Zyngier, 2012; van den Bergh et al., 2010; McKown & Weinstein, 2008). Jussim and Harber's (2005) review of teacher expectation research over a thirty-five year span confirms this sentiment, as the authors note that students from black and Latino backgrounds have consistently suffered from low teacher expectations due to the persistence of self-fulfilling prophecies. More recent studies have verified these findings, as non-Hispanic white students, along with Asian students, continue to be exposed to higher teacher expectations than black and Latino students (Lopez, 2017; Dandy et al., 2015; Glock & Krolack-Schwerdt, 2013; Riley & Ungerleider, 2012; Rodriguez, 2012; Zyngier, 2012; van den Bergh et al., 2010; Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007; Good & Nichols, 2001).

Certain populations of students are not only more likely to be negatively affected by self-fulfilling prophecies, but they are also especially prone to more acute reactions to teacher expectations (Hinnant et al., 2009; Jussim et al., 1996). In fact, Jussim et al. (1996) found that teacher expectations had particularly large effects on black students (three times larger than their white peers), low income students, and girls. Teacher expectations have also been shown to have

a greater influence – both positively and negatively – on students from low-income backgrounds (Sorhagen, 2013). Additionally, research has discovered effects to be cumulative for students who belong to multiple groups that are typically prone to low teacher expectations. Jussim et al. (1996) found that the effect of teacher expectations increased when a student belonged to two or more marginalized groups (e.g., black females). Hinnant et al. (2009) similarly uncovered a significant relationship between gender, race, and teacher expectations.

There are different theories as to why certain groups tend to experience stronger reactions to teacher expectations than others. In regards to black students, Ferguson (2003) finds a potential explanation in Casteel's (1997) survey of nearly 1700 eighth grade students in Los Angeles. The study found that black students were most concerned with pleasing their teachers with their academic performance, whereas white students were primarily concerned with impressing their parents. Thus, Ferguson argues that because black students put so much stock in their teachers' opinions, the effects of their views are naturally going to be larger.

Scholars have also connected expectation effects to Steele and Aronson's (1995) theory of stereotype threat (McKown & Weinstein, 2002; Ferguson, 2003). This theory posits that students who are aware of the presence of academic stereotypes about the group(s) that they belong to may feel intense pressure to disprove these notions. This pressure can then cause what Steele & Aronson call self-threat, which can take the form of severe anxiety and diminishing self-confidence. Self-threat can then negatively affect academic outcomes. The authors note that dominant groups (e.g., white males) are not vulnerable to stereotype threat. While this study will not investigate why certain groups are more susceptible to teacher expectation effects, recognizing the presence and significance of these relationships is crucial for understanding why teacher expectations are of such great importance.

Methodologically, many studies examining variations in teacher expectations by group used artificial situations to measure the construct. For example, Glock and Krolack-Schwerdt (2013) provided their sample with fake academic reports about hypothetical students before measuring how teachers' perceptions of these students' abilities differed by race. Similarly, Riley and Ungerleider (2012) asked participants to make recommendations for student tracking placements based on a fabricated report the authors provided. Furthermore, Dandy et al. (2015) asked teachers to complete questionnaires predicting academic and life outcomes for hypothetical students from different racial backgrounds. Finally, Zyngier (2012) developed vignettes about students from marginalized communities and then analyzed participants' responses with a focus on the presence of deficit attitudes.

All told, there is by-and-large a consensus that students of color and low-income students are more frequently subject to low teacher expectations, and that the effects of these low expectations are especially large for these groups. This section on teacher expectation research will conclude by examining studies that have investigated students' perceptions of teacher expectations.

Student Perceptions of Teacher Expectations. Over the past two decades, researchers have devoted more time to considering how students perceive and respond to teacher expectations. Students are often able to pick up on teacher expectations indirectly through interpreting teacher behavior, and research has shown that students develop these perceptions as early as first grade (Tyler & Boelter, 2008; Weinstein, 2002). As students progress through middle school and high school, these perceptions become even more fully developed, and students start to realize that they lack the full support of their teachers. This is evidenced by Pringle et al.'s (2010) qualitative study of black high school students, in which more than 75% of

the study's 48 participants expressed the belief that their teachers maintained low expectations for them. These students reported that these low expectations affected their motivation and discouraged them from registering for more difficult courses. Similarly, Tyler and Boelter's (2008) research revealed a link between students' perceptions of teacher expectations and their engagement academically and behaviorally.

It is important to note that some students are able to resist low expectations (Good & Brophy, 2008). This is highlighted in Pringle et al.'s (2010) study when a participant notes that he enrolled in honors courses at his high school after receiving encouragement from his mother, which outweighed the negative feedback he was given at school. Weinstein (2002) also points out that parental support can play a pivotal role in helping students overcome low teacher expectations. This area of teacher expectation research is particularly valuable, as it shows that low expectations not only negatively affect student outcomes, but they also can harm students' self-efficacy.

In the next section, I will outline this study's theoretical framework.

Theoretical Framework

This study seeks to understand how SFE impacts the development of critical awareness and teacher expectations in pre-service teachers, and how this development affects teachers' professional reflection in addressing student learning issues. With these questions in mind, a framework is required for analyzing teachers' professional reflection process, particularly as it pertains to addressing student learning issues. Chubbuck (2010) offers a theory that explains this process.

Chubbuck's Theory of Professional Reflection

On a daily basis, teachers are faced with the task of helping students learn new content and concepts in a variety of subjects. In this endeavor, students often encounter learning difficulties and thus require support from their teachers to overcome these challenges. Chubbuck (2010) contends that in providing support to students, teachers engage in what she refers to as *professional reflection*. According to Chubbuck, professional reflection is a two-step process: First, the teacher identifies the cause of the student's learning issue; second, the teacher devises a strategy for overcoming the learning issue. Chubbuck provides a basic example of professional reflection in action:

A teacher will see a student struggling to learn to read, engage in professional reflection about that struggle, and decide that the cause of the academic struggle is the student's lack of content understanding and essential skills. Based on that identified cause, the teacher will then decide on a solution, such as selecting curriculum and methods to teach the missing content and skills (p. 199).

In this hypothetical situation, the educator relies solely on her technical knowledge of literacy instruction to identify the cause of the student's learning difficulty. Yet, Chubbuck (2010) contends that the professional reflection process rarely plays out like this. Instead, Chubbuck asserts that teachers typically attempt to identify a "deeper cause that explains why those skills and content are missing" (p. 200). It is through this deeper reflection around the cause of student learning difficulties that a teacher's level of critical awareness becomes apparent.

Chubbuck (2010) proposes that teachers are usually either individually or structurally oriented in their professional reflection. Chubbuck posits that teachers with low levels of critical awareness are typically individually oriented in their professional reflection. These teachers tend

to view learning issues almost entirely through the lens of the individual student. This leads teachers to believe that student academic struggles are a product of shortcomings on the part of the student, the student's home-life, and the student's culture. In this way, individually oriented teachers' professional reflection is often characterized by a reliance on deficit narratives that place the burden of responsibility for academic struggles almost entirely on the child, the child's family, and the child's community. These teachers tend to eschew self-reflection of their own practices.

Yet, Chubbuck (2010) notes that it is important for teachers to maintain some level of individual orientation in their approach to supporting students. Chubbuck argues that each child is unique and possesses their own set of life experiences that teachers must tap into as a way to catalyze learning. Therefore, to some extent teachers should be individually oriented in their professional reflection, but only in a manner that views students' experiences and culture as assets. In this way, it is evident that one's level of critical awareness mediates how an individual orientation manifests in the professional reflection process.

On the other hand, Chubbuck (2010) contends that teachers with high levels of critical awareness are consistently structurally oriented in their professional reflection. This type of teacher "may identify and respond to the larger systemic inequities within the educational system that have affected the child's ability to succeed" (p. 201). Chubbuck cites a handful of ways in which educational inequities can produce learning difficulties for marginalized students, including the implementation of a curriculum that lacks cultural relevance and the overrepresentation of inexperienced, underqualified teachers in high poverty schools.

Chubbuck (2010) emphasizes that the ideal teacher is actually both structurally and individually oriented in their professional reflection. This balance is particularly important as it

pertains to the second component of the professional reflection process: the development of a solution to overcome a learning challenge. In crafting a solution, Chubbuck argues that teachers should be structurally oriented in the sense that they may need to take action against inequities that are actively hampering their students' ability to learn. In addition to this, Chubbuck asserts that it is important for teachers to also maintain an individual orientation in their problem solving, as each student possesses different experiences that teachers can draw from in their efforts to provide support. By tapping into students' funds of knowledge, teachers are valuing students' experiences and using them to help facilitate learning. This is fundamentally different than viewing students' experiences through a deficit lens. Thus, teachers are encouraged to blend the two orientations in their professional reflection, with the understanding that the individual orientation should only be taken in an asset-based manner.

It is important to note that teacher expectations often manifest in the solution component of professional reflection. For instance, Chubbuck (2010) points out that an educator who is individually oriented in her professional reflection may determine that a student needs to be "fixed," or even worse, is simply incapable of learning (p. 201). Due to their reliance on deficit narratives, individually oriented teachers are particularly prone to perpetuating self-fulfilling prophecies. However, it should be noted that individually oriented teachers can still hold high expectations for their students. Similarly, it is possible for structurally oriented teachers to hold low expectations for their students. In fact, it is this very relationship that this investigates in greater depth.

Applying Chubbuck's Theory of Professional Reflection

Chubbuck (2010) contends that teachers are perpetually engaging in a process of professional reflection as they make pedagogical decisions regarding student learning difficulties. Chubbuck

asserts that this professional reflection consists of two parts: (1) interpreting the cause of the problem; and (2) developing an appropriate solution. Further, each component of the professional reflection process provides insights into teachers' critical awareness and teacher expectations. This theory will serve as a framework for analyzing participants' professional reflection through their responses to vignettes, which will contain situations featuring low-income students of color who are encountering learning difficulties. Guided by this professional reflection framework, participants will be asked what they believe is the cause of the hypothetical student's learning difficulty, and what they propose as a solution to this issue. Their responses to these vignettes will then enable me to analyze how pre-service teachers' critical awareness and teacher expectations manifest in both their thoughts and in their hypothetical behaviors.

Whipp (2013) used Chubbuck's theory of professional reflection in a similar fashion in analyzing her interviews with 12 teachers who just completed their first year in an urban school. Whipp asked participants about their teaching practices, with a particular focus on how they approached student learning issues. Whipp then used Chubbuck's theory of professional reflection to analyze how participants' expectations and awareness manifested in their reported practices. Ultimately, Whipp found that the teachers in her study varied in the way they mixed structural and individual orientations into their professional reflection.

Summary

Chapter 2 provided an overview of the relevant theory and prior research that has informed this study. In particular, this review of the literature revealed three major gaps: (1) SFE scholarship is in dire need of empirical research that investigates the course's impact on developing effective teachers in a manner that is methodologically rigorous; (2) little is known about teacher

expectation construction and development, particularly as it pertains to the adoption of self-fulfilling prophecies; and (3) research has yet to explore the relationship between critical awareness and teacher expectations. With this in mind, this study has set out to examine whether SFE courses engender high expectations and critical awareness in pre-service teachers, and whether high expectations correlate with growth in critical awareness. Finally, Chubbuck's (2010) theory of professional reflection will serve as a framework for this study's qualitative data collection, as it provides a tool for investigating how critical awareness and teacher expectations influence the way that teachers address learning difficulties in their classroom.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Due to the nature of this study's research questions, I utilized a mixed methods design to guide the data collection and analysis processes. In this chapter, I provide a clear rationale as to why a mixed methods design is the most appropriate approach for investigating the research questions at hand, while also explaining how the quantitative and qualitative methods in this study informed one another. Additionally, this chapter explicates the criteria for selecting this study's research sites and sample before ultimately delineating the data collection and data analysis procedures that I employed. First, I begin with a positionality statement.

Positionality Statement

Although I am taking great measures to ensure that my research is not influenced by my own experiences, ideological views, and epistemological perspective, it is simply not possible to completely control for these natural biases. These inclinations will - to some extent - affect the way that I conduct my research. Thus, it is fair to say that these biases, to an extent, inform my work; however, through awareness of the presence of my biases, I can construct a coherent plan to negate their impact on my research. This effort requires that I openly discuss some of my predispositions as it pertains to this project, which is what I aim to do in this section.

First, I must discuss my experiences as an SFE instructor at Temple University. During my two semesters teaching SFE, I gained a great deal of anecdotal knowledge about how students experience the course. This knowledge has been accrued through reading student papers and facilitating small-group and whole-class discussions. This experience has not only served as motivation for my present study, but it has also helped to inform my construction of research questions, my selection of theories to guide my work, and my creation of *a priori* codes for analyzing participants' interviews. If I had never taught this course before, my approach to

studying SFE would likely take a much different form. However, I do not view my familiarity with the course as problematic. Rather, I believe that my time instructing the course has heightened my awareness of both the potential strengths and shortcomings of SFE. At the same time, I am striving to produce work that is considered methodologically rigorous, particularly from a validity standpoint. Therefore, I must continue to take steps to ensure that my biases do not unduly impact this study's findings.

Second, my research is colored by my own work as a former educator in various K-12 schools. As a teacher, I have worked in a variety of contexts and at various grade-levels. Most of my time teaching was spent in low-income schools that were predominantly populated by students of color. This experience certainly has had an effect on how I have conceived of this study. In fact, in considering this topic, I often thought of my own struggle to maintain high expectations for students whom I knew were victims of state divestment and neglect. In this way, this study has provided me with an opportunity to examine a question that I never could quite seem to find an adequate answer to as a K-12 teacher.

Both of these experiences do not invalidate my research; however, it is fair to say that they played a meaningful role in shaping my study, and will continue to influence the decisions that I make as I conduct my research. Thus, it is critical that I acknowledge and account for these influences as I continue to develop this study.

Mixed Methods Design Rationale

This project utilized a mixed methods design for two overarching reasons. First, this design suited the study's desire to objectively measure the relationship between two variables, critical awareness and teacher expectations, in the context of Social Foundations of Education (SFE) courses while also gaining an understanding of how this relationship impacts professional

reflection. The most effective way of addressing the former was through the use of quantitative instruments and data analysis tools that allow for these variables to be measured with a reasonable level of objectivity. As for the latter, qualitative methods were more appropriate, as they provided the proper data collection tools needed to gain a clearer understanding of how participants' critical awareness and teacher expectations influenced their professional reflection regarding student learning difficulties. Qualitative methods also allowed for the identification of important issues and patterns that were not initially anticipated. With this in mind, I determined that a mixed methods design was most appropriate for this study.

The second reason why I utilized a mixed methods design in this research was out of a desire to collect data that went beyond student attitudes. Presently, there is much debate regarding the relationship between participants' self-reported attitudes and their actual behaviors. Jerolmack and Khan (2014) problematize the conventional assumption that a high level of consistency exists between attitudes and behaviors. As I mentioned in the limitations section of Chapter 1, this study was hamstrung in its ability to fully address this issue, as the sample is comprised of pre-service teachers who were not yet student teaching; therefore, their actual classroom behaviors could not be measured. The use of vignettes sought to move this study towards an understanding of what pre-service teachers would do if they were in actually in a classroom, but this solution is admittedly still not perfect. Having said that, the vignettes were still a useful tool as they forced participants to discuss how they would resolve certain situations that might arise in the classroom. In this way, I gained a better idea of how participants' attitudes were linked to certain courses of action.

Before providing more details about the mixed methods design that I employed, I must first discuss the interaction between paradigms in this study.

A Note About Paradigms

Because this study utilized a mixed methods design, each component is guided by a particular research paradigm. Specifically, the quantitative portion of the research is guided by post-positivist assumptions, while the qualitative portion is informed by interpretivist assumptions. Despite the influence of each of these two paradigms, more broadly speaking this study is actually underpinned by the philosophical tenets of pragmatism. Pragmatism is rooted in a Deweyian approach to inquiry that calls for “developing lines of action...that are seen to be most appropriate for studying the phenomenon at hand” (Mertens, 2015, p. 36). In this way, the pragmatic worldview is buttressed by the belief that conducting effective research is more important than staking out a singular metaphysical perspective.

Mertens notes that the pragmatic paradigm neither rejects nor favors the epistemological and ontological assumptions of either post-positivism or constructivism; rather, pragmatism welcomes both perspectives, contending that the two are actually compatible. Morgan (2014) explains the pragmatic philosophy’s acceptance of both paradigms, stating, “On one hand, our experiences in the world are necessarily constrained by the nature of that world; on the other hand, our understanding of the world is inherently limited to our interpretations of our experiences” (p. 1048). Thus, the pragmatic worldview assumes that both perspectives are valid and are therefore valuable approaches to inquiry that can complement one another.

In the next section, I will outline this study’s mixed methods design in greater detail.

Mixed Methods Design

When it comes to mixed methods studies, some researchers elect to utilize a sequential design, with one method’s data informing the other method’s data collection process, while others prefer a parallel design in which both methods are carried out independent of one another.

As Figure 3.1 shows, this study blends the two designs. To begin, quantitative data was collected on the first day of class through the distribution of a survey. These survey responses established a baseline measure of participants' critical awareness and teacher expectations. This data was then used to inform the qualitative method's sample selection, which will henceforth be referred to as the focal sample. A representative focal sample was sought in an effort to find patterns in professional reflection that might exist based on participants' demographic characteristics and their combination of teacher expectations and critical awareness. After this representative focal sample was recruited, first round interviews were conducted within the first two weeks of the class while introductory topics were still being discussed.

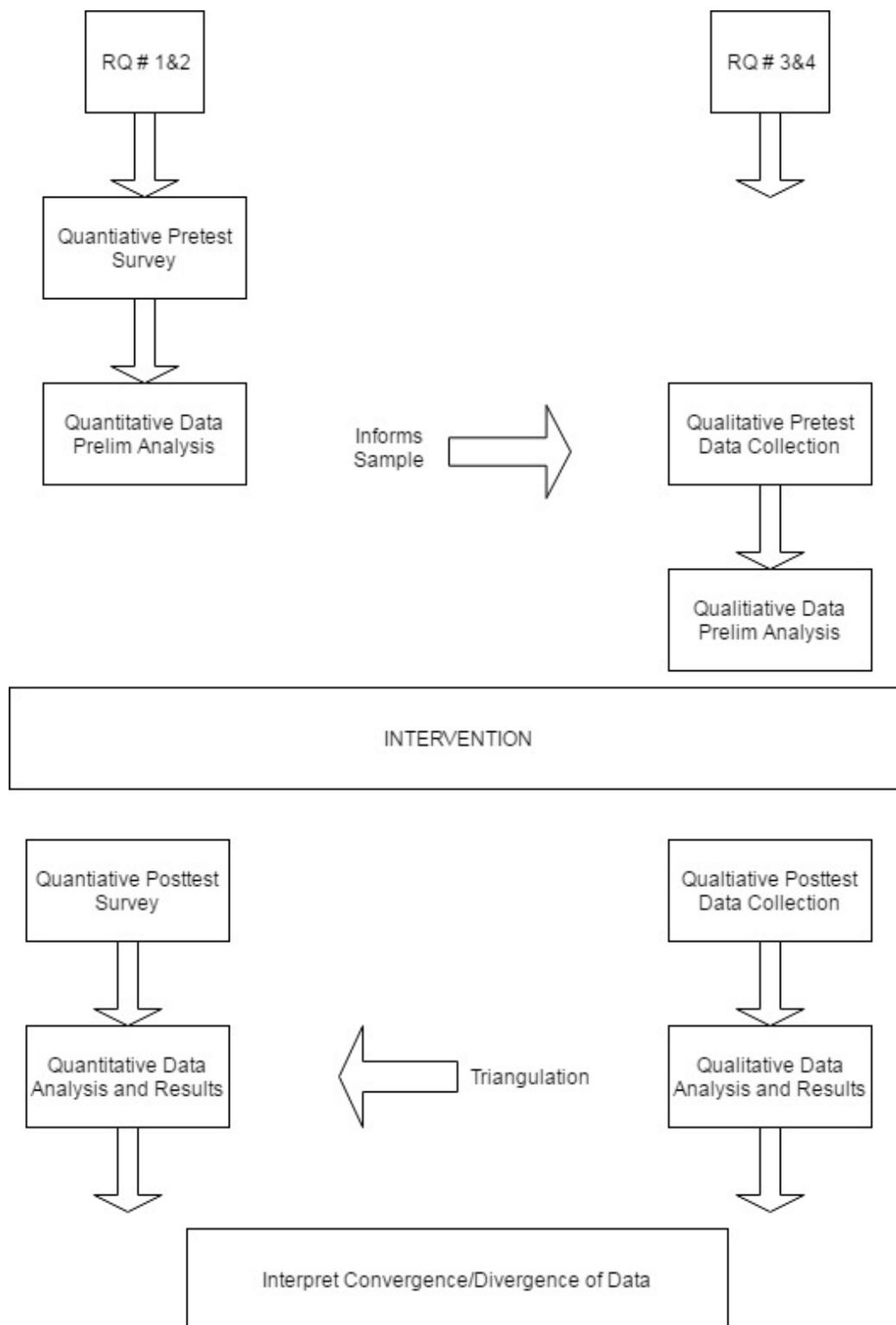


Figure 3.1. *Pretest-Posttest Pragmatic Mixed Methods Design*

I began the second round of data collection during the final weeks of the course. Posttest quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently, with the qualitative focal sample remaining unchanged from pretest to posttest. After the posttest quantitative data was collected, within-subject analyses were run to measure for changes in participants' critical awareness and teacher expectations. Meanwhile, the pretest and posttest qualitative data was coded with a focus on analyzing participants' professional reflection in response to various vignettes. Each focal participant's pretest qualitative data was then compared to their posttest qualitative data, with a particular focus on examining how changes in their reported critical awareness and teacher expectations manifested in their professional reflection. Additionally, changes in participants pretest and posttest critical awareness and teacher expectation scale scores were compared to their interview responses at these two intervals. The purpose of this exercise was to determine whether the interview data confirmed or contradicted changes in participants' critical awareness and teacher expectation scale scores (i.e., data triangulation).

Research Sites

This study was situated within Social Foundations of Education courses at two different universities located in metropolitan Philadelphia. The purpose of conducting this research at two different sites was to enhance this study's rigor. Specifically, the use of multiple research sites allowed me to analyze data across two separate universities, which enhances the generalizability of the findings.

In selecting these two sites, I attempted to control for certain institutional-level factors, including university categorization (e.g., public, private, HBCU). This is of particular importance, as public universities are required to provide a nonpartisan education whereas private institutions are not held to this same standard. Differences in commitment to

nonpartisanship have the potential to meaningfully impact the way that SFE courses are taught across universities; therefore, I decided to select two universities with the same classification. Ultimately, I elected to conduct this research at two public universities due to the access to SFE courses that I was provided with at these two institutions.

A second criterion for site selection was course description. For the sake of consistency, I determined that both universities' SFE courses needed to be fairly similar, with each possessing a social justice bent. In comparing the SFE course descriptions for the two universities in this study, it is clear that the two mirrored one another quite closely. For example, both course descriptions discussed their focus on placing education within the broader context of American society, while also stating an intent to view educational issues through a multidisciplinary lens. Furthermore, each school's course description placed an emphasis on linking education to democracy while also containing themes around fostering a commitment to social justice in pre-service teachers. Thus, the classification and course descriptions for both universities were quite similar.

Table 3.1

Research Site Profiles

School	City University	Suburban University
Type	Public	Public
Undergraduate Enrollment	28,609	14, 221
Location	Urban	Suburban
Enrollment % by Gender	51.2% Female, 48.8% Male	59.5% Female, 40.5% Male
Enrollment % by Race/Ethnicity	White:59.2% Black: 13.9% Hispanic/Latino: 6.5% Asian: 11.3%	White: 78.2% Black: 10.5% Hispanic/Latino:5.4% Asian: 2.2%

SFE Course Description	<p>This course will help students place their work with students in a broader social, political and economic context. It will introduce students to the history of education in the United States and to many of the issues that shape our schools and the ways children, parents, and teachers experience them. The course will focus particularly on the role of schooling in a democracy and the many demands Americans have placed - historically and currently - on the schools. It will also help students understand how issues of class, race, and gender are manifest in classrooms. Finally, it will provide students with an overview of the challenges facing urban schools and contemporary issues in school reform. Teachers will leave this course with a more robust understanding of the state of American education today, and how they as individuals and members of a profession can most effectively and ethically make a difference.</p>	<p>A study of the philosophical, historical and sociological issues related to American education. The course places schools within the context of the larger American society and asks to what degree can and should schools serve as agents for creating a more just and democratic society.</p>
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While the SFE courses these two institutions shared many similarities, there were also some important differences between their course descriptions that must be noted. For instance, City University’s SFE course description made specific mention of examining issues that are germane to urban schools, a distinction which is not made in the SFE course description for Suburban University. This focus on urban education could have uniquely affected pre-service teachers’ shifts in critical awareness and teacher expectations. On the other hand, Suburban University’s course description was more openly ideological. This was evidenced by the course’s stated desire to push students to consider schools’ role as “agents for creating a more just and democratic society.” Since I could not completely control for variability in SFE course goals, content, and instruction, it is important to be aware of these factors that could be responsible for differences in the data between institutions.

Participant Recruitment Procedures

Participants were recruited from various sections of SFE courses taught in the fall of 2017 at City University and Suburban University. In terms of procedure, the instructors of each SFE course introduced me to their students and allowed me to discuss my research. Students who expressed interest in participating in the study were then provided with a consent form. The consent form allowed students to choose between three levels of participation: (1) Participate fully in the survey (i.e., take part in surveys and interviews); (2) Participate in just the survey portion of the study; and (3) Decline to participate. The consent form briefly explained the research project along with the time commitment that participating entailed (taking part in two 45-60 minute interviews). The consent form also outlined the incentives that were provided for each level of participation. For the survey portion of the study, students who completed both the pretest and posttest surveys were entered into a raffle to win a \$200 gift card. For the qualitative portion of the study, students were given \$25 gift cards for each interview they sat for.

Sample

Because this study employed a mixed methods design, I needed to utilize two different sampling techniques to recruit participants. For the quantitative portion of the data collection process, I utilized a nonprobability convenience sampling technique to recruit participants. My initial goal was to recruit at least 72 participants for the survey portion of the study. I arrived at this number by conducting an a priori power analysis, which establishes the minimum sample size needed in order for a study to assume that it will find statistically significant results. Using the G*Power calculator to conduct this power analysis, I set the level of power at .8, the effect size at medium ($d = .5$), and the alpha level at .05. These figures were selected to align with contemporary research standards (Cresswell, 2013). Given these parameters, the G*Power calculator

determined that 46 participants were required in order to produce significant findings. While it is standard practice to set the power at .8, I decided to establish a sample size based on the .95 power level in an effort to further improve the likelihood of producing statistically significant findings. The G*Power calculator revealed that I needed to recruit 72 participants at this increased power level.

To recruit these participants, I distributed the pretest and posttest surveys at three sections of SFE courses at Suburban University and five sections of SFE courses at City University. Overall, 156 SFE students across the two universities completed the pretest survey. Of these 156 participants, 113 completed also completed the posttest survey. These 113 participants comprise the study's treatment group.

Additionally, the survey was distributed to one section of students enrolled in a General Education course at City University. These students – who were not education majors – served as the study's matched comparison group, as I sought to measure how much change the average college student typically experiences in critical awareness and teacher expectations over the course of a single semester. This allowed me to determine whether treatment group participants' changes in awareness and expectations could be attributed to their time spent enrolled in an SFE course. In terms of participation, twenty-eight students from this General Education course completed the pretest survey, 19 of whom also completed posttest surveys. These 19 students comprised the matched comparison group.

In total, the study's sample contained 132 participants, and the participant attrition rate from the pretest survey to the posttest survey was 27.2%. Below, Table 3.2 provides a breakdown of participation and attrition rates for each group of subjects.

Table 3.2

Sample Recruitment and Attrition

	Pretest Sample	Pretest and Posttest Sample	Total Attrition	Attrition Percentage
Treatment	156	113	43	27.6%
Comparison	28	19	9	32.1%
Total	184	132	50	27.2%

Of the 132 participants, 51 were Suburban University students and 81 were City University students, including the 19 subjects in the matched comparison group. In terms of gender, 97 participants identified as female while 35 identified as male. As for racial demographics, 81% of participants identified as white, while 9% identified as Asian and 5% identified as black. A further 3% identified as Hispanic/Latino and the remaining 2% identified as multiracial. The bulk of the participants were freshman (47%) or sophomores (35%) during the Fall 2017 semester, with only a handful classified as juniors (14%) or seniors (4%). In terms of certification concentration, 43% of participants were on the early childhood education certification track, while 20% were on the secondary education certification track. Just 4% of participants were seeking Middle Years certification, while 33% of participants reported majoring in another area altogether. Below, Table 3.3 provides a full demographic breakdown by sample group.

Table 3.3

Survey Sample Demographics

	Treatment n (%)	Comparison n (%)	Total n (%)
Total Population	113 (86%)	19 (14%)	132 (100%)
City Univ.	62 (55%)	19 (100%)	81 (61%)
Suburban Univ.	51 (45%)	0 (0%)	51 (39%)
Male	23 (20%)	12 (63%)	35 (27%)
Female	90 (80%)	7 (37%)	97 (73%)
Asian	8 (7%)	4 (21%)	12 (9%)
Black	4 (3%)	3 (16%)	7 (5%)
Hispanic/Latino	4 (3%)	0 (0%)	4 (3%)
Multiracial	1 (1%)	1 (5%)	2 (2%)
White	96 (85%)	11 (58%)	107 (81%)
Freshman	47 (42%)	15 (79%)	62 (47%)
Sophomore	45 (40%)	1 (5%)	46 (35%)
Junior	17 (15%)	2 (11%)	19 (14%)
Senior	4 (3%)	1 (5%)	5 (4%)
Early	57 (50%)	0 (0%)	57 (43%)
Middle Years	5 (5%)	0 (0%)	5 (4%)
Secondary	25 (22%)	1 (5%)	26 (20%)
Other	26 (23%)	18 (95%)	44 (33%)

As for the sample for the qualitative portion of this study, a cluster sampling technique was employed for selecting participants, as I aimed to recruit five individuals from each of the following four categories: (1) high critical awareness/high teacher expectations; (2) high critical awareness/low teacher expectations; (3) low critical awareness/high teacher expectations; and (4) low critical awareness/low teacher expectations. Participants' placement in one of these four clusters was determined by constructing a frequency distribution in SPSS. Initially, students were considered to possess low expectations or low critical awareness if their scale scores for each respective construct fell in the 25th percentile or below. Conversely, students were considered to

have high expectations or high critical awareness if their scale scores for each of these constructs fell in the 76th percentile or above. I aimed to exclusively invite participants whose scale scores for each construct fell in either the bottom 25th percentile or in the 76th percentile or above. However, due to low response rates, I was forced to expand these parameters for focal group participation. Thus, the cut-off lines were re-set to the 50th percentile (i.e., the 50th percentile and below was considered low, and the 51st percentile and above was considered high).

Survey participants were asked about their willingness to take part in the qualitative portion of the study on the pretest survey. Of the 157 participants in the treatment group who completed the pretest survey, 91 provided me with permission to contact them about sitting for a first-round interview. Five participants from each of the four clusters were randomly selected and invited to take part in the interview process. When a survey participant either declined to sit for an interview or failed to respond to multiple emails, another prospective focal participant was then randomly selected and invited to interview.

In total, 44 participants were invited to take part in the qualitative portion of the study. Twenty-five of these participants were enrolled at City University, and 19 were enrolled at Suburban University. Of these 44 individuals, 20 replied in the affirmative and sat for a first-round interview. Eighteen of these 20 subjects also made themselves available for a second-round interview, while two dropped out of the focal sample. One focal participant dropped the SFE course and was thus no longer eligible to take part in the study, while a second focal participant simply did not respond to multiple requests for a second-round interview. Overall, the focal sample was comprised of 18 total participants. This focal sample remained the same for both the pretest and posttest qualitative data collection so that changes in attitudes and responses

to the interview questions and the vignettes could be documented. Table 3.4 provides a breakdown of focal sample representation by critical awareness/teacher expectation combination.

Table 3.4

Focal Sample by Cluster Groups

Cluster Group	Invited to Participate	Participated 1st Round	Participated 2nd Round
High CA, High Ex	8	5	4
High CA, Low Ex	14	9	8
Low CA, High Ex	9	3	3
Low CA, Low Ex	13	3	3
Total	44	20	18

CA = Critical Awareness
Ex = Teacher Expectations

Of the 18 focal sample participants, 14 were enrolled at City University while 4 attended Suburban University. The sample was also disproportionately white (82% of focal sample participants) and female (89% of focal sample participants). Only one out of the 18 focal participants – a senior from Suburban University – was actively student-teaching. The other 17 participants were not yet seniors and were thus not actively student-teaching. In terms of certification track, the sample contained a healthy mix, as six participants were on an early childhood track and four participants were on a secondary education track. Additionally, six of the participants were majoring in another area. Table 3.5 below provides a more extensive breakdown of the focal sample demographics.

Table 3.5

Focal Sample Demographics

	Treatment n (%)
Total Population	18 (100%)
City University	14 (78%)
Suburban University	4 (22%)
Male	2 (11%)
Female	16 (89%)
Asian	1 (6%)
Black	1 (6%)
Hispanic/Latino	0 (0%)
Multiracial	1 (6%)
White	15 (82%)
Freshman	5 (28%)
Sophomore	9 (50%)
Junior	3 (16%)
Senior	1 (6%)
Early	6 (33%)
Middle Years	2 (11%)
Secondary	4 (23%)
Other	6 (33%)

Data Collection

This section outlines the data collection techniques that I utilized for the qualitative and quantitative portions of this study respectively. The quantitative data collection methods are discussed first, followed by an explanation of the qualitative data collection techniques that I employed in this study.

Survey Instruments

Students who wished to participate in the study received a survey (Appendix A) early in the Fall 2017 semester during an SFE class meeting. This questionnaire was divided into three areas, the

first of which asked participants to disclose certain demographic information, including their race, gender, grade-level (e.g., freshman, sophomore), and education program track. After finishing the demographic portion of the survey, students were asked to complete two scales. The first scale measured participants' expectations for students of color. This scale contained items from Revathy Kumar and Lynne Hamer's (2012) scale titled "Stereotypes about Minority and Culturally Diverse Students." In addition to the items created by Kumar and Hamer, I developed items based on the extant body of teacher expectation literature and the research questions for this study. These homegrown items coupled with Kumar and Hamer's items comprised the teacher expectations scale. The second scale measured participants' critical awareness using Enterline, Cochran-Smith, Ludlow, and Mitescu's (2008) "Learning to Teach for Social Justice-Beliefs" instrument. I also created a single homegrown item that I added to this scale. Both of these scales are discussed in greater detail below.

Kumar & Hamer's Explicit Stereotypes about Minority and Culturally Diverse Students

Kumar's & Hamer's scale served as this study's foundational quantitative tool for measuring participants' teacher expectations for disadvantaged students. This parallels Kumar & Hamer's intended use of the scale, which they state measures pre-service teachers' "prejudicial beliefs and expectations that they may have about minority students" (Kumar & Hamer, 2012, p. 162).

Kumar & Hamer initially created two separate expectation scales: one for measuring teacher beliefs about low-income students, and one for measuring teacher beliefs about students of color (Kumar & Hamer, 2012). However, they found that these scales were highly correlated ($r=.89$) and thus should not be used together in the same study as they essentially measure the same variable (R. Kumar, personal communication, April 6, 2017). With this in mind, I decided to utilize the scale measuring expectations for students of color, as it boasts a higher alpha

coefficient (.83) than the scale measuring expectations for low-income students (.70) (Kumar & Hamer, 2012; Kumar & Lauermann, in press).

It should be noted that Kumar et al. (2015) also created a condensed scale that includes items from both of the scales measuring teacher expectations of students of color and low-income students. This scale's alpha coefficient is .78, and it correlates highly with both of the original scales respectively ($r = .85$ and $.81$). The scale, which contains just three items, measures teacher beliefs about and expectations for 'out-group students.'

Ultimately, I decided to utilize Kumar & Hamer's scale measuring expectations for students of color. There are two reasons for this decision: (1) the alpha coefficient is higher than that of the other two instruments; and (2) this scale will be used in Kumar & Lauermann's upcoming article in the *American Educational Research Journal*, which speaks to its quality. It should be noted that I sought out alternative scales that measure teacher expectations for generic disadvantaged students by conducting a thorough review of teacher expectations literature and contacting prominent academics who study this construct. Unfortunately, Dr. Rhona Weinstein, a leading expert in teacher expectation research, indicated that – to her knowledge – there were not any other reliable scales of this nature, as most extant research and instrumentation focused on in-service teachers' expectations for their actual students. Thus, these scales contained items that were specific to individuals as opposed to groups, which does not make them useful for this study, which was comprised of pre-service teachers who did not yet have any students of their own.

Kumar & Hamer's (2012) scale employs a five-point Likert response format (Not true at all = 1, A little true = 2, Somewhat true = 3, True = 4, Very true = 5). All five of the scale's items inquire about participants' views regarding the educational habits and attitudes of low-

income students or students of color. These statements are reflective of the “false definitions” of reality that Merton warned often serve as the foundation of low expectation construction (1948, p. 195). Further, these items mirror the type of deficit views that Ladson-Billings (2007) posits are commonly adopted by teachers who maintain low expectations for disadvantaged students. Thus, this scale allowed for an adequate measurement of teachers’ expectations for students of color, which had previously been found to correlate highly with teachers’ expectations for low-income students.

However, for a variety of reasons I determined that I wanted to include more items to supplement Kumar & Hamer’s (2012) scale. First, I wanted to ensure that I was collecting an adequate amount of data, and I felt that a 5-item scale was simply too brief. Second, I wanted to add items to the scale that would more directly address the study’s research questions and grounding literature. For instance, I added items that explicitly asked participants about their views on teachers lowering their expectations for disadvantaged students.

Initially, I added 13 items to Kumar and Hamer’s (2012) original 5-item scale. Following the first-round survey, I conducted an initial reliability test for the 18-item scale. The result was .72, which is slightly above the preferred .7 standard. However, a review of the inter-item correlation matrix revealed that three particular items negatively correlated with the other 15 items that comprised the teacher expectations scale. After removing these three ill-fitting items, the scale’s reliability improved to .77. Thus, I decided to permanently remove these three items – all of which I had developed – from the scale, which left me with 15 items total. I also conducted a factor analysis in order to investigate whether any latent variables existed within this larger teacher expectations scale. However, the factor analysis did not produce any compelling relationships among items. The scale’s items can be viewed below in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6

Stereotypes about Minority and Culturally Diverse Students Scale

Item #	Statement
1	Regardless of a student's circumstances, teachers must always maintain high expectations.
2R	Sometimes having empathy for a student means permanently lowering one's expectations for him/her.
3R	It is appropriate for teachers to lower their expectations for students who have a difficult home life.
4R*	As compared to students from other ethnic groups, white students are more likely to be academically successful.
5R*	In general, White students place a higher value on education than do students of color.
6R*	White students work harder in school compared to African American and Latino students.
7R*	Students of color tend to have a more negative attitude toward education because studying in schools rarely pays off with good jobs for them.
8R*	It often seems as if students of color are not interested in school and schoolwork.
9R	Some racial groups are naturally more adept at math and science than others.
10R	Middle class students tend to put more into their schoolwork than low-income students.
11R	One of the main reasons that schools in low-income neighborhoods tend to struggle academically is because the students' parents don't care enough about education.
12	High expectations should be maintained for all students regardless of the family's economic background.
13R	The primary reason that suburban schools tend to outperform urban schools is because they have a better academic culture.
14R	Teachers who move from a wealthy school to an impoverished school should adjust their expectations for their students accordingly.
15R	Low-income students require a different school experience than middle-class students.

a Likert response categories: Not true at all = 1, A little true = 2, Somewhat true = 3, True = 4, Very true = 5.

b R: denotes the categories were reverse scored.

c *: denotes items that were original included in Kumar & Hamer's (2012) scale

Learning to Teach for Social Justice-Beliefs (LTSJ-B)

As for the critical awareness scale, Enterline et al.'s (2008) instrument was selected because it measures critical awareness within the context of teaching. Although the authors refer to this scale as measuring for social justice beliefs, there is significant overlap between their definition of social justice and this study's preferred definition of critical awareness. In defining critical awareness, this study borrows Lopez's (2017) description of the construct:

Critical awareness refers to essential knowledge that mitigates bias and prejudice among teachers. It includes the understanding of the historical context of historically marginalized students; the discrepancy between what is typically validated as knowledge in classrooms and the challenges to those assumptions; and the ways the curriculum in schools serves to replicate the power structure in society (p. 3).

Meanwhile, Enterline et al. define social justice beliefs as:

“...recognition of significant disparities in the distribution of educational opportunities, resources, achievement, and positive outcomes between minority and/or low-income students and their White, middle-class counterparts...coupled with the position that teachers can and should be both educators and advocates who are committed to the democratic ideal and to diminishing existing inequities in school and society by helping to redistribute educational opportunities (p. 270).

While the two definitions vary in their wording, the content is actually quite similar in that they both describe ideal teachers as those who are conscious of structural injustices that are embedded within our education system and disproportionately affect disadvantaged students. Additionally, both definitions note that this awareness must then translate into actions that push back on inequities.

With this in mind, the LTSJ-B was deemed suitable for measuring critical awareness based on this study's definition of the construct. Aragon et al. (2014) similarly used this scale to measure teachers' critical awareness, with a specific focus on teachers' beliefs pertaining to myths about urban schools and their students. Additionally, Lazar and Sharma (2016) employed the LTSJ-B in their mixed methods study of teacher assumptions about urban schools. It should be noted that I considered other scales for measuring critical awareness, including the Beliefs about Diversity scale (Pohan & Aguilar, 2001) and the Common Beliefs Survey; (Kreamelmeyer, 2016). However, their items were either judged to be dated, or their reliability coefficient was not yet established.

The authors of the LTSJ-B initially created twenty-four items based on their review of the literature pertaining to social justice themes and teacher education. The instrument was pilot tested multiple times until the authors finally settled on twelve items. I added a thirteenth item to the scale, as I felt that it would be useful for participants to respond to a statement about the impact that funding has on student achievement. The item correlated well with the original LTSJ-B items and did not harm the scale's reliability score (.73), so I elected to maintain its inclusion. The authors also conducted a factor analysis in an effort to identify latent variables, but none were identified. Thus, they determined the scale to be "conceptually unidimensional" (Ludlow, et al., 2008, p. 201). My own factor analysis produced the same result.

The LTSJ-B utilizes a five-point Likert response structure that ranges from Strongly Disagree = 1 to Strongly Agree = 5. Seven of the items are negatively worded and therefore were reverse coded during data analysis.

Table 3.7

Learning to Teach for Social Justice-Beliefs (LTSB-J)

Item #	Item Statement
1	An important part of learning to be a teacher is examining one's own attitudes and beliefs about race, class, gender, disabilities, and sexual orientation.
2	Issues related to racism and equity should be openly discussed in the classroom.
3R	For the most part, covering multicultural topics is only relevant to certain subject areas, such as social studies and literature
4	Good teaching incorporates diverse cultures and experiences into classroom lessons and discussions
5R	The most important goal in working with immigrant children and English language learners is that they assimilate into American society.
6R	It's reasonable for teachers to have lower classroom expectations for students who don't speak English as their first language.
7	Part of the responsibilities of the teacher is to challenge school arrangements that maintain social inequities.
8	Teachers should teach students to think critically about government positions and actions.
9R	Economically disadvantaged students have more to gain in schools because they bring less into the classroom.
10R	Although teachers have to appreciate diversity, it's not their job to change society.
11R	Whether students succeed in school depends primarily on how hard they work
12R	Realistically, the job of a teacher is to prepare students for the lives they are likely to lead.
13*	Differences in funding largely explain differences in achievement between suburban and urban schools.

a Likert response categories: Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Uncertain = 3, Agree = 4, Strongly Agree = 5.

b R: denotes the categories were reverse scored.

c *: denotes item that was added to the LTSJ-B scale

Participant Interviews

Interviews were conducted at two different intervals throughout this study, and they were carried out at each research site in a quiet, public space. With participants' permission, all interviews were recorded. The first set of interviews took place within two weeks of the first SFE class meeting, and the second set of interviews were conducted during the final week of the course. These interviews were semi-structured in nature, and a protocol was developed for both the pretest and posttest interviews in order to guide the discussion. The interview protocol (Appendix B) for the pretest interviews differed in some ways from the protocol used for the posttest interviews (Appendix C), as the latter contained questions that sought to understand how SFE influenced changes in participants' critical awareness, expectations, and professional reflection. The interview protocols also contained three different vignettes for students to consider and respond to.

Vignettes

Vignettes were embedded within the interview protocol (Appendix D), with each describing a student who is experiencing a learning difficulty in the classroom. The creation of these vignettes and the accompanying interview questions were guided in part by Chubbuck's (2010) theory of professional. Specifically, students were asked to consider the following for each hypothetical situation that they were presented: (1) what do you think is the possible cause(s) of the student's struggles; and (2) what actions would you take to solve this problem. Probing questions were then asked in order to gain a deeper understanding of the participant's theory of action.

Vignettes have been employed before in teacher expectation research (Anderson-Clark, et al., 2008), and a leading teacher expectation scholar recommended that I use them in this study (R. Weinstein, personal communication, March 31, 2017). Whereas prior teacher expectation

research utilized vignettes to uncover differences in how teachers perceive students based on demographic factors such as race and gender, this study assumes that students from marginalized groups are more frequently the victims of low teacher expectations. This assumption is rooted in prior empirical studies that have shown this to be true. Thus, this study does not attempt to use vignettes to highlight differences in teacher expectations between white students and students of color, or middle-class students and low-income students. Instead, vignettes were utilized to uncover how shifts in participants' critical awareness and teacher expectations impacted the way they perceived the causes of and solutions to disadvantaged students' learning issues. Therefore, the vignettes in this study only featured low-income students of color.

The vignettes used in this study were standardized, and students were provided with written copies of each vignette so that they could adequately absorb the content. When students were given the vignette, they were also provided with time to reflect on two key follow-up questions, which asked: (1) what the participant feels is the cause of the student's learning issue; and (2) what actions the participant would take to resolve this learning issue. The vignettes did not focus exclusively on student behavioral issues, as Chubbuck's professional reflection framework explicitly focuses on how teachers address students' academic struggles. However, there is a natural overlap in these two types of issues, so participants did at times interpret certain vignettes through a behavioral lens.

The vignettes for this study were influenced in part by Anderson-Clark et al.'s vignettes, which were created to discover differences in how teachers respond to student issues based on race. Each of this study's three vignettes contained a hypothetical situation in which a student is struggling academically. The vignettes contained identifiers that should have allowed

participants to infer the hypothetical student's race and socioeconomic status. The following is one example of a vignette that was used in this study:

Jaquan is a student at a racially segregated school in Philadelphia in which 100% of the student population qualifies for free or reduced price lunch. Jaquan regularly comes to school without completing his homework, and when asked by his teacher about whether he studied at home to prepare for an important test, Jaquan replies that he didn't.

While other teacher expectation studies have asked participants to complete a questionnaire in response to vignettes, participants in this study were asked to verbally respond so that I could ask probing questions. This also explains why the vignettes were embedded within the interview process.

Data Analysis Plan

Quantitative Data Analysis

As I mentioned above, I collected survey data at pretest and posttest intervals. I then entered the survey data into SPSS. Once the data entry was complete, I began running tests in an effort to answer research question 1. First, I conducted a series of paired samples t-tests in order to determine whether the treatment and matched comparison groups made significant growth in teacher expectations and critical awareness over the course of the semester. Next, I ran a two-way ANOVA to determine whether there were any significant main effects and interactions between certain factors, such as institution, gender, grade-level, and degree. Finally, I conducted an independent samples t-test in order to look more closely at differences in critical awareness and teacher expectations by institution.

Following these analyses for research question 1, I shifted my focus to research question 2. First, I computed change scores for critical awareness and teacher expectations for each

participant. Then, using these change scores, I conducted a bivariate Pearson correlation. This analysis measured the relationship between the study's two dependent variables: critical awareness and teacher expectations

Qualitative Data Analysis

I analyzed the qualitative data with a dual purpose of answering research questions 3 and 4 and confirming the results gleaned from the quantitative analyses pertaining to research questions 1 and 2. After collecting interview data from the 18 focal participants, I transcribed the recorded interviews and uploaded them into Dedoose. Once this preparatory work was complete, I began following a multi-step coding process delineated by Merriam (2009). The process began with the development of *a priori* codes (Appendix E). These codes were developed prior to reviewing interview transcripts, and they were derived from the study's research questions and conceptual framework. Following the creation of these *a priori* codes, the process of open coding took place.

During open coding, I analyzed the first interview transcript without the aid of *a priori* codes in an effort to identify important moments. When one of these moments emerged in the data, I jotted down a descriptive word or phrase in the margins of the transcript. Once I completed this open coding process for the first transcript, I reviewed the various codes jotted in the margins before ultimately condensing them into categories based on a common link. Thus, this transcript produced its own list of categories. This same process was repeated for every transcript until each had been analyzed, at which point I revised the list of categories. In this revision process, some categories were condensed while others were divided into sub-categories, and some were simply eliminated altogether.

Next, I placed each piece of coded under a specific category, with some falling under multiple categories. Once I established codes, they were compared conceptually to the *a priori* codes that have been constructed, with the hopes of making connections through common theoretical links. This will provide another opportunity for codes to be condensed. If any important *a priori* codes had not been theoretically tied to an emergent code, then I reviewed the data once more with these specific *a priori* codes in mind. Once I completed this coding process, I examined categories in order to determine which ones provided answers to the study's research questions or made particularly insightful contributions that previously had not been considered. The data's key themes thus emerged from these categories.

Ensuring validity in qualitative research is always a critical concern, and the nature of this study – a single researcher with a single source of qualitative data – limited the means by which triangulation could take place. However, as I mentioned earlier in this chapter in discussing this study's design, triangulation took place across methods. Additionally, member checks will be used to provide participants with the opportunity to make sure that their views were not misinterpreted. These checks took place upon concluding the second-round interviews.

Limitations

This research acknowledges limitations in two areas. First, this study measures teachers' expectations through surveys and verbal responses to vignettes. This is somewhat problematic, as research has shown that reported attitudes often do not align with actual behaviors (Jerolmack & Khan, 2014). While the use of vignettes in this study aims to mitigate this issue, this data collection technique still relies on participants' verbal responses, which simply is not the same as conducting naturalistic observations of actual behaviors. Unfortunately, SFE is typically one of the first courses education majors take; therefore, most students enrolled in the course are usually

multiple semesters away from student-teaching. Thus, including classroom observations in this study's data collection plan was simply not feasible.

A second limitation of this research is its relatively small scale, especially when one considers just how ubiquitous SFE courses are. This is particularly important to note, as there are a multitude of ways that SFE courses can be taught. Accounting for every different approach is not possible, and this research does not claim its findings to be generalizable. However, in drawing students from teacher education programs at two different universities, this study does believe that its findings have the potential to start revealing patterns, and are thus transferable to teacher educators at other higher education institutions.

Summary

This study utilized a pragmatic mixed methods design in order to answer its two overarching lines of inquiry. The first line of inquiry, which considered the relationship between teacher expectations and critical awareness and their changes over the life of an SFE course, was measured through the analysis of survey data. Specifically, I conducted a bivariate Pearson correlation, a two-way ANOVA, and a series of paired and independent samples t-tests in order to investigate: (1) whether significant changes occurred in participants critical awareness and teacher expectations; and (2) whether a significant relationship emerged between these two variables. The second line of inquiry, which inquired about how these changes manifested in the participants' professional reflection, was investigated through the use of interviews and vignettes. A thorough coding process was employed to analyze this qualitative data, and ultimately key themes from the interview process were highlighted.

CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS

To better understand the impact that Social Foundation of Education (SFE) courses have on the development of pre-service teachers, I conducted mixed methods research at two mid-Atlantic universities during the Fall 2017 semester. Specifically, I examined the impact that SFE courses have on pre-service teachers' critical awareness and teacher expectations. Additionally, I sought to identify how changes in pre-service teachers' awareness and expectations manifested in their professional reflection. As I mentioned in the methods above, investigating these two lines of inquiry required me to utilize two different types of research methods. Thus, this chapter will be broken into three sections: Quantitative Analysis, Qualitative Analysis, and Mixed Methods Analysis.

The first section of this chapter will describe the results of the quantitative tests that were run in order to answer this study's first two research questions. Then, the second section will provide a summary of key findings from the qualitative analysis that was conducted to address this study's third and fourth research questions. Since I am employing a sequential mixed methods design for this study, the Qualitative Analysis section will at times refer back to the findings outline in the Quantitative Analysis section. This arrangement of these two sections is not random; rather, I am foregrounding the quantitative findings as these results helped inform much of my qualitative analysis.

Based on this study's qualitative and quantitative findings, I will argue throughout this chapter that SFE courses with a social justice bent are successful in raising pre-service teachers' critical awareness but are largely unsuccessful in raising pre-service teachers' expectations for disadvantaged students. In the qualitative section of this chapter, I will provide more nuance

around what enabled some groups of students to make gains in teacher expectations while others did not. But first, I will begin by reviewing this study's quantitative results.

Quantitative Analyses

Paired Samples T-Tests

My quantitative analysis begins with an exploration of this study's first research question: To what extent do Social Foundations of Education courses create changes in pre-service teachers' critical awareness and teacher expectations? For this research question, I only considered the survey responses of treatment group subjects (i.e., participants enrolled in an SFE course). Table 4.1 provides the treatment group's pretest and posttest mean scores for both critical awareness and teacher expectations. Participants on average scored 2.43 points higher on the critical awareness scale and 0.24 points higher on the teacher expectations scale.

Table 4.1

Treatment Group Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences								t	Df	Sig.
	Pretest		Posttest		95% Confidence Interval						
	M	SD	M	SD	N	Lower	Upper				
CritAware	47.35	6.33	49.79	6.98	113	-3.32	-1.54	-5.43	112	.000**	
Expectation	55.31	7.62	55.55	7.26	113	-1.55	1.07	-.362	112	.718	

a * = significant at .05 level

b ** = significant at .01 level

Next, I conducted a paired samples t-test for each variable (Table 4.1) to determine whether significant changes in critical awareness and teacher expectations occurred within students over the course of the semester. The results show that there was a significant change in participants' critical awareness from pretest to posttest at the .01 level. Conversely, there was not a significant change in participants' teacher expectations during this same timeframe.

As I mentioned previously in Chapter Three of this study, in addition to collecting data from students enrolled in SFE courses across two universities, I also recruited subjects from one

general education course for the quantitative portion of this project. I surveyed these students to establish how much change in critical awareness and teacher expectation the average college student experiences over the course of a typical semester. Initially, 28 students from this general education course completed the pretest survey; however, only 19 of these participants also completed the posttest survey. Table 4.2 shows the pretest and posttest mean scores of this matched comparison group for the critical awareness and teacher expectations variables, as well as the results of a paired samples t-test for each variable.

Table 4.2

Matched Comparison Group Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences								T	df	Sig.
	Pretest		Posttest		95% Confidence Interval						
	M	SD	M	SD	n	Lower	Upper				
CritAware	43.89	4.79	44.11	5.76	19	-2.40	-1.98	-0.20	18	.842	
Expectation	52.68	5.88	49.95	5.67	19	0.18	5.30	2.25	18	.037*	

a * = significant at .05 level

b ** = significant at .01 level

A review of the mean scores shows that the matched comparison group experienced a slight increase in critical awareness (+0.21) and a precipitous drop in teacher expectations (-2.74) over the course of the semester, the latter of which was significant at the .05 level. The results of the matched comparison group's t-tests provide two compelling findings: (1) The significant changes in critical awareness that the treatment group experienced were not simply a product of general college life and are more likely attributed to their time enrolled in an SFE course; and (2) While the treatment group did not produce significant gains in teacher expectation, they also did not experience a significant decrease in this area, unlike the matched comparison group participants who were not enrolled in an SFE course. The fact that the treatment group did not also experience a steep decline in teacher expectations could be interpreted as a positive result

for the class. However, because there is such a great disparity between the sample sizes of the two groups, it is hard to draw any truly definitive conclusions from comparing them.

Two-Way ANOVAs

With the first research question answered, I next conducted secondary analyses in an effort to glean additional findings of interest from the pretest-posttest survey data. Specifically, I examined whether differences in critical awareness and teacher expectation mean scores differed between schools. Beginning with critical awareness, a look at the mean scores compiled in Table 4.3 shows that City University participants on average scored four points higher than their Suburban University counterparts on the pretest scale. Additionally, the average change in critical awareness scale score for City University participants was 3.23, compared to Suburban University, whose participants gained an average of 1.47 points across the semester. This created a 5.76-point gap in posttest mean scores for critical awareness between the two schools.

Table 4.3

Descriptive Statistics: Critical Awareness

Dependent Variable: Critical Awareness

Time	School	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Pretest	City	49.1613	5.92077	62
	Suburb	45.1569	6.16887	51
	Total	47.3540	6.33150	113
Posttest	City	52.3871	6.32807	62
	Suburb	46.6275	6.45278	51
	Total	49.7876	6.97758	113

In order to further explore this seemingly marked difference in critical awareness, I conducted a two-way ANOVA (Table 4.4) to determine whether there were significant differences in critical awareness by school and whether any differences by school significantly interacted with the factor of time.

Table 4.4
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects: Critical Awareness
 Dependent Variable: Critical Awareness

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Time	308.59	1	308.59	8.00	.005**	.035
School	1333.88	1	1333.88	34.57	.000**	.135
Time * School	43.10	1	43.10	1.12	.292	.005
Error	8565.76	222	38.59			

a * = significant at .05 level

b ** significant at .01 level

As Table 4.4 shows, there was a significant main effect for both time and school at the .01 level.

However, the interaction between these two factors as it relates to critical awareness was not significant. Thus, we can glean that City University's mean critical awareness scores are significantly higher than Suburban University's at both the pretest and posttest intervals, but the participants from City University did not experience significantly more growth over the course of the semester than their Suburban University peers. It is also worth pointing out that separate paired samples t-tests for each school found that treatment group participants from both universities experienced significant gains in critical awareness over the course of the semester.³

The ordinal interaction displayed in Chart 4.1 illustrates how City University's mean critical awareness score started out higher than Suburban University's at the pretest interval and remained higher at the posttest interval.

³ City University's collective change in critical awareness was significant at the .01 level ($p=.001$) while Suburban University's collective change in critical awareness was significant at the .05 level ($p=.031$)

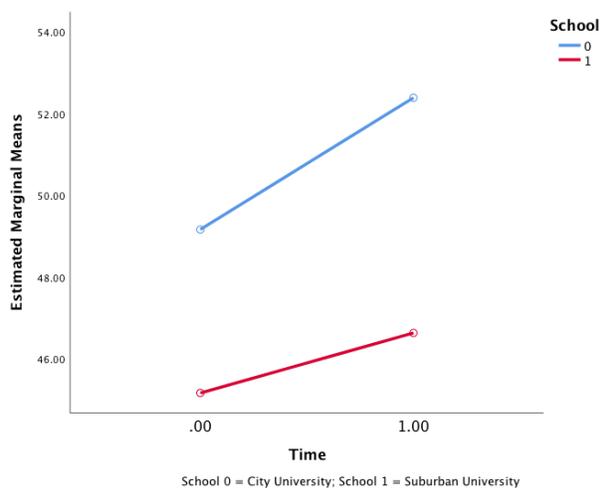


Figure 4.1. *Critical Awareness Line Chart: School by Time*

Based on this finding, I decided to explore how pretest critical awareness scale scores differed between grade-levels across schools by running independent samples t-tests for freshman and sophomores. I did not include juniors and seniors in this analysis because their sample sizes were too low. In conducting these tests, I found that City University freshman (n=30) scored 6.84 points higher on the pretest critical awareness scale than Suburban University freshman (n=17). This difference was significant at the .01 level ($p=.000$). As for sophomores, City University participants (n=21) scored 2.84 points higher on the pretest than Suburban University freshman (n=24), but this difference was not statistically significant ($p=.170$).

Moving on to teacher expectations, a review of the posttest mean scores by school (Table 4.5) shows that the average scores of participants from the two institutions were within approximately one point of one another at both intervals. A look at changes in mean scale score from pretest to posttest reveals that City University's mean teacher expectations scale score increased 1.15 points whereas Suburban University's actually declined 0.86 points. A deeper look at participant scale scores by institution helps to explain this difference. While there were certainly Suburban University subjects who made sizable increases in their teacher expectation

scale scores – one participant increased by 15 points – nine of the ten subjects who experienced gains of ten points or more hailed from City University. Conversely, of the ten participants whose scale scores dropped by ten points or more from pretest to posttest, half were enrolled at Suburban University. With this in mind, one can see how City University’s mean teacher expectation scale score went from one point lower than Suburban University’s at the pretest interval to one point higher at posttest.

Table 4.5

Descriptive Statistics: Teacher Expectations

Dependent Variable: Expectation

Time	School	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Pretest	City	54.8871	7.55549	62
	Suburb	55.8235	7.75037	51
	Total	55.3097	7.62407	113
Posttest	City	56.0323	6.95646	62
	Suburb	54.9608	7.64973	51
	Total	55.5487	7.26414	113

Despite these divergent results, Table 4.6 shows that there was not a significant main effect for school or time respectively, nor was there a significant interaction between school and time.

Thus, there are no statistically significant differences in levels of teacher expectation for all treatment group participants, nor in changes in level of teacher expectation across institutional lines.

Table 4.6

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects: Teacher Expectations

Dependent Variable: Expectation

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
School	.26	1	.26	.01	.946	.000
Time	1.12	1	1.17	.02	.888	.000
School * Time	56.41	1	56.41	1.01	.315	.005
Error	12363.48	222	55.69			

a * = significant at .05 level

b ** significant at .01 level

Correlation Analysis

Next, I sought to answer this study's second research question: To what extent does an increase in critical awareness conflict with/overlap with an increase in teacher expectations? To address this question, I computed a change score for each participant by subtracting the pretest scale scores from the posttest scale scores for both variables. Then, I conducted a Pearson correlation to measure whether a significant relationship exists between critical awareness and teacher expectations in the context of SFE courses. Once again, for this analysis I only included treatment group participants. The correlation analysis found that there was not a statistically significant relationship between participants' changes in critical awareness and teacher expectations ($r=.132$; $p=.163$).

Quantitative Analysis Summary

In this section, I conducted a variety of quantitative analyses in order to address two of this study's research questions. First, I ran a series of paired samples t-tests to determine whether treatment group participants (those enrolled in an SFE course) made significant gains in critical awareness and teacher expectations over the course of a semester-long SFE class. The results showed that students made significant gains in critical awareness but not in teacher expectations. Conversely, the matched comparison group, which consisted of 19 college students who were not enrolled in an SFE course, experienced a significant decrease in teacher expectations and a slight but insignificant increase in critical awareness. Secondary analyses found that the treatment group's gains in critical awareness were due to significant increases experienced by students from both institutions over the course of the semester. Additionally, City University students – particularly freshman – possessed higher levels of critical awareness than Suburban

University's students; however, there was not a significant difference in the rate of change experienced by participants across the two institutions. Finally, I concluded my quantitative analysis by conducting a Pearson correlation to determine whether a relationship existed between changes in critical awareness and changes in teacher expectation within the context of SFE courses. The correlation analysis found no significant relationship between the two.

Qualitative Analysis

The quantitative portion of this chapter considered whether SFE courses create changes in pre-service teachers' critical awareness and teacher expectations and if a relationship exists between the two variables. The survey data showed that as a collective, the 113 treatment group participants experienced significant growth in critical awareness but not in teacher expectations. Yet, individually, some participants did make significant gains in teacher expectations. In this section, I aim to understand what allowed some students to make gains in teacher expectations while others remained stagnant – or even decreased – by conducting a qualitative analysis of the interview data collected from this study's 18 focal participants. Additionally, I utilize the interview data to investigate this third and fourth research questions, which ask: (3) How do changes in critical awareness and teacher expectations manifest in pre-service teachers' professional reflection on student learning difficulties?; and (4) What connections exist between teachers' different positions (e.g., High Awareness/Low Expectations) and their professional reflection?

Before beginning my qualitative analysis, I first needed to analyze the pretest and posttest survey data. The reasoning behind this baseline quantitative analysis differed for each of the two research questions that this section will focus on. For instance, prior to considering how changes in awareness and expectation manifest in participants' professional reflection, I first had to

compare the pretest and posttest scale scores of each individual participant to identify subjects who experienced shifts across the course of the semester. Similarly, before investigating whether any connections exist between participants' professional reflection and the various combinations of awareness and expectation that each subject possesses, I was first required to analyze the participants' scale scores in order to sort them into different groups (e.g., High Awareness/Low Expectations). This process of sorting participants based on the quantitative results better positioned me to identify themes in the interview data. I reference these quantitative results throughout this section.

I conducted first- and second-round interviews with all 18 focal subjects at the start and end of the Fall 2017 semester. Of the 18 focal participants, 14 were enrolled at City University while the other four attended Suburban University. Seventeen of the 18 participants identified as female. In terms of race, 15 focal subjects identified as white, while the other three participants identified as Asian, black, and multi-racial respectively. As for certification track, six participants were on an early childhood track, four participants were on a secondary education track, and two participants were on a middle years track. The remaining six participants were majoring in other areas related to education, such as art education, or were undeclared. All 18 focal participants expressed that they were at least considering a career in education, which is why they were enrolled in an SFE course.

In this section, I continue to contend that SFE courses do not inherently raise expectations in pre-service teachers. This argument is supported by the findings from the quantitative analysis. However, I also posit that students who enter SFE courses with high critical awareness are more willing to shift their expectations from low to high than their peers who enter SFE courses with low critical awareness. Additionally, I assert that SFE classes are

more successful in raising pre-service teachers' expectations for disadvantaged students when course instructors explicitly and consistently emphasize the need to maintain high expectations for all students, regardless of their background. While making this case, I also show how participants who fall into certain groups (e.g., High Awareness/Low Expectations) share distinct characteristics in the ways that they: (1) experience shifts in expectations; (2) conceive of what setting high expectations means; and (3) engage in professional reflection.

I begin my qualitative analysis by highlighting common patterns in how a group of structurally oriented participants experienced growth in expectation over the course of the semester. Next, I consider the role that SFE courses played in fostering this growth. After that, I explain why some participants experienced a positive shift in expectations while others did not. Finally, I end this chapter by highlighting one particular way in which differences in awareness and expectation manifest in participants' professional reflection.

Shifting Expectations in Structurally Oriented Preservice Teachers

As a whole, participants from City University experienced a slight increase in teacher expectations from the start of the semester to the end of the semester according to the survey data collected for this study. For some of the study's 18 focal participants, this shift was further confirmed in analyzing their first- and second-round interview data. However, while an increase in expectations manifested in my discussions with many of the 18 focal subjects, not all of these participants traveled along the same path en route to achieving this result.

One group of focal participants in particular tended to experience growth in teacher expectations: structurally oriented pre-service teachers (High Critical Awareness/Low Expectations). One participant named Jessie, a transgender woman in her second year at City University, exemplified what taking a structural orientation toward teaching looks like. Jessie,

who is a secondary education major, scored in the top quartile of all participants on the pretest critical awareness scale while scoring in the bottom quartile on the pretest teacher expectations scale. Jessie's tendency to view education entirely through a structural lens was on display when I asked her how much of a role hard work plays in students' academic success. Jessie responded:

Like 15% maybe. Low. A student's capacity to put in hard work is determined by other stuff that is out of the student's control. Like if you're a typical student from a rich white family, you'll probably not have to put in a lot of work to do good in school, or at least it won't feel like a lot of work because of how capable they are...And if you come from a poor family and it's strictly tied to your race and other identifiers, that will also impede you from doing work.

These comments reveal both an understanding of the impact that structural factors have in terms of affecting academic outcomes, as well as a belief that these societal forces overwhelmingly influence student success. This position also seemed to inform Jessie's view that teachers should alter their expectations for students depending on their racial and socioeconomic backgrounds.

At the start of the semester, I asked Jessie whether teachers should push disadvantaged students as hard as their well-off peers. She replied:

No, I don't think they should push them as hard. For me it's like, if I push a student with a hard home life a little bit, and then I push a student who does nothing but sit home all day a lot, that's the same push because they're experiencing it in their own subjective ways. So I wouldn't feel like I was giving one student slack because they're not having an easier life.

From this quote, it is clear that at the start of the semester Jessie felt that lowering expectations for students who face hardships was a fair and empathetic course of action. In her view, this was merely an act that leveled the playing field for disadvantaged students. She wasn't alone in holding this belief.

Another participant with high critical awareness named George – a white, secondary education major in his second year at City University – experienced a positive shift in expectations over the course of the semester akin to Jessie's. George, too, was in the top quartile

of participants in regards to pretest critical awareness, and his social consciousness was on display during our first-round interview. When I asked George why achievement gaps exist along racial lines, he explained that systemic racism was to blame:

Ya know, black people have always been seen as inferior because of the color of their skin, and it's obviously false. Biologically there's no difference between the brain of a black man and the brain of a white man. It's just systematic racism and oppression that has kept people of color from being able to progress.

This high level of awareness had a negative effect on George's views regarding setting high expectations for disadvantaged students. When I asked him how teachers should manage their expectations for disadvantaged students during our first-round interview, he replied, "Don't expect the most out of them. Don't expect a lot." This view aligned with George's pretest teacher expectations scale score, which placed him in the bottom third of all participants.

As structurally oriented pre-service teachers, Jessie and George both possessed a very real compassion for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. This compassion appeared to be rooted in each participant's understanding of systemic injustice in both the school system and society. Their awareness then informed their shared view that it is unjust to expect students who are forced to overcome harrowing obstacles to do as well in school as their privileged peers. Thus, both Jessie and George felt that the right course of action was to lower the bar for students who face structural hurdles.

However, this view changed by the end of the semester, as both participants drastically altered their views on setting expectations for disadvantaged students. This shift was evidenced both in their scores on the posttest teacher expectations scale and in statements they made during their respective posttest interviews. For example, Jessie's teacher expectations scale score

jumped from the 17th percentile pretest to the 81st percentile posttest.⁴ This leap manifested during Jessie's second-round interview when I asked her about how teachers should set expectations for disadvantaged students. She replied:

That's something you asked me about last interview, and I didn't have a good answer to. One of our readings talked about the different types of hopes that we should have for students, and it addressed how a lot of the teachers who teach at schools that serve low-income students of color in the city - those teachers don't have high expectations of their youth. So as they're teaching they acknowledge that their students are suffering from different hardships that make it harder to learn or just succeed in school, and as a result they just don't have any kind of hope that their students will do it regardless. And the point of the article was that you shouldn't do that. You should still have high expectations basically is what the article said with these students. So if I ever had hesitations, that article actually helped me build ideas about it.

From Jessie's response, we can glean that she experienced a significant shift over the course of the semester in her perspective on setting high expectations for disadvantaged students. Jessie acknowledged that it is not uncommon for well-meaning teachers to fall into the same trap of setting low expectations for disadvantaged students that she initially did. Her comments make it clear though that by the end of the semester she had adopted a newfound belief in the need to set high expectations for all students. Additionally, Jessie explicitly attributed her change in expectation to a reading that was assigned in her SFE course. This link between SFE course content and shifts in expectation are further explored later in this chapter.

Much like Jessie, George too made significant growth in terms of teacher expectation.⁵ In fact, his teacher expectations scale score moved from the bottom third of all participants pretest to the top third of all participants posttest. His second-round interview highlighted this marked shift in his view on expectation setting:

⁴ Jessie's pretest teacher expectations scale score was 48, while her posttest teacher expectations scale score was 62.

⁵ George's pretest teacher expectations scale score was 51, which placed him in the 29th percentile of all participants. His posttest teacher expectations scale score was 60, which placed him in the 73rd percentile of all participants.

In a way I thought maybe I should lower my expectations. Like, “Man, they come from such a disadvantage. They’re basically miles behind the starting line, and the rich kids are getting a huge head start.” But if you don’t have those high expectations for them, if you don’t push those kids who are way behind the starting line, you are hindering them as well. If you don’t have those high expectations for them, if you don’t believe in them. You’re screwing them. You’re making that come true. You’re making them not follow through on their goals. And you’re part of the problem.

In this response, George’s shift from a position of low expectations to a position of high expectations is quite clear. Furthermore, George articulated why he feels setting high expectations is so important. In the excerpt above, George discussed how he used to fall into the “you-poor-dear” trap that Ladson-Billings (2002) warned of due to his initial belief that lowering expectations for disadvantaged students was an empathetic gesture. By the end of the semester though, George asserted that lowering expectations for certain groups of students was actually increasing extant opportunity gaps, which he found problematic.

Jesse and George serve as evidence that pre-service teachers who enter SFE courses with high critical awareness are willing to re-think their support of low expectations and commit to setting high expectations for disadvantaged students. It is also important to point out that this change occurred because their SFE instructors explicitly called for teachers to set a high bar for all students and assigned course readings that further reinforced this sentiment. The next section explores two more focal participants who experienced growth in expectations over the course of the semester, albeit from a different starting point.

Clarifying Uncertainty

Not all structurally oriented educators explicitly expressed a belief in setting low expectations for disadvantaged students. Two focal participants from City University, Alexa and Courtney, also scored low on the pretest teacher expectations scale and ultimately experienced a significant shift in expectations across the course of the semester. In fact, Alexa’s pretest teacher expectation

scale score placed her in the 9th percentile of all participants, while Courtney was in the 43rd percentile. However, contrary to George and Jessie who started the semester with firm beliefs in the need to lower the bar for disadvantaged students, Alexa and Courtney's pre-semester views can best be characterized as confused. For example, in her first-round interview Alexa struggled to articulate a clear philosophy on how expectations should be set for disadvantaged students.

Joe: If a teacher moves from a wealthy school to a poor school, should they adjust their expectations for their students in any way?

Alexa: I think they should change them a little, but not in terms of what the students can accomplish but in how motivated the students will be to do whatever tasks you give them. Because I think there will be more of a lack of motivation just because there will be other things that are on their minds.

Joe: Does that mean lowering your expectations in terms of how much you push these students in class?

Alexa: Yea, but like I wouldn't want to lower the bar so much that I feel like they won't be able to succeed.

Alexa's preconceived notions about students who attend schools in low-income areas manifested in the above exchange. On the one hand, she showed that she is a critically-aware individual by pointing out that poor students are likely to face certain obstacles that may weigh on them.

However, she also concluded that (1) these students will have motivation issues due to their lack of financial stability; and (2) the solution to this lack of motivation is to lower the bar for these students to some extent. In this way, Alexa serves as an example of a pre-service teacher who is at-risk of subscribing to the sort of stereotypes about disadvantaged students that enable self-fulfilling prophecies to play out. Even though she places the blame for these motivation issues on societal issues instead of on disadvantaged students and their families, the outcome – lowered expectations – is the ultimately the same.

Courtney mirrored Alexa in that she, too, possessed a high level of critical awareness while simultaneously scoring low on the teacher expectations scale at the start of the semester.⁶ In her first-round interview, Courtney also struggled to establish a clear stance on setting expectations for disadvantaged students. When I asked her how expectations for these students should be set, she said, “They shouldn’t be completely lowered,” which indicated both a belief that they should be lowered somewhat as well as a lack of certainty about how much of a decrease in expectation is appropriate. Courtney, like Alexa, had difficulty articulating a clear philosophy on setting expectations for students, and she certainly did not endorse setting high expectations for disadvantaged students.

However, the second-round interviews with both participants revealed that each experienced a positive shift in their expectations for disadvantaged students, which matched the gains they made on the teacher expectation scale. Further, over the course of the semester, both Courtney and Alexa displayed a more fleshed out philosophy regarding setting expectations. In Alexa’s second-round interview, she conceded that she was initially “100% unclear” about how to set expectations for disadvantaged students prior to taking an SFE course. The sophomore education minor elaborated on this lack of clarity:

I thought - I mean, I had opinions but like I’m someone that like if I have an opinion, but I don’t have evidence, my opinion is invalid. So I think that - I thought originally - and I think I kind of remember this from my last interview too - I thought originally that you kind of had to lower your expectations a little bit to you know cater to the individual needs of your students.

But by the end of the course, Alexa asserted that her thinking on setting expectations changed dramatically:

⁶ Courtney’s pretest critical awareness scale score was in the 91st percentile of all participants, Alexa’s was in the 81st.

Definitely the idea of keeping expectations high for all your students was something that stood out to me and something that I think tied everything together. Because all the things that we learned about poverty and stuff, basically the main idea is that you can't lower your expectations because then you're just making it so that these students will fail, and that's not helping them in any way.

This statement from Alexa not only highlights a shift in how she thinks about expectations, but, like George's comments, it shows a recognition of the fact that teacher expectations can directly impact students' academic outcomes. In fact, by noting that lowered expectations will lead to failing grades, Alexa displayed an understanding of how self-fulfilling prophecies work. Further, Alexa's teacher expectation scale score confirms this finding, as she moved from the 9th percentile of all participants at pretest to the 87th percentile at posttest.⁷

Likewise, by the end of the semester, Courtney came to a very similar realization regarding expectation setting, saying:

It's incredibly important to keep expectations high for disadvantaged students, because if you have lower expectations it just contributes to them feeling like they aren't worthy of higher expectations or can't get to that point or are just lesser in some respect when they aren't.

In explaining the importance of setting high expectations for all students, Courtney, too, touched on the foundational concepts that comprise Merton's theory of self-fulfilling prophecies.

Specifically, she displayed an awareness of how teacher expectations can cause students to adjust their own perceptions of what they are capable of accomplishing, even when these views are inconsistent with reality. Like Alexa, Courtney's shift in teacher expectations was also reflected in her survey data, as she jumped from the 43rd percentile at pretest to the 93rd percentile at posttest.

⁷ Alexa's pretest teacher expectations scale score was 45, and her posttest score was 64. Courtney's pretest teacher expectations scale score was 54, and her posttest score was 66.

Alexa and Courtney's path to high expectations differed slightly from George and Jessie's in the sense that the latter two participants explicitly supported setting low expectations for students from non-dominant groups during the first-round interview, whereas the former two participants supported lowering expectations to an extent but largely struggled to commit to a clear philosophy of any sort at that time. Yet, by the end of the semester, all four subjects explicitly stated that teachers need to maintain high expectations for all students. Together, these participants serve as evidence that SFE courses are capable of raising expectations in pre-service teachers who already possess high critical awareness upon enrolling in the class.

SFE's Impact on Raising Expectations

Many of the students in the focal sample who experienced a shift from low expectations to high expectations explicitly credited their SFE course for helping them to evolve in this area. The participants who started the semester with high expectations and low awareness went out of their way to cite the course's impact. For instance, Courtney explained, "I wouldn't have known the correct answer or what's better for the students before the class. I could have made assumptions, but the class really made it clear to me that high expectations are important to have..."

Jessie also attributed her shift toward high expectations to the SFE course she took, and she even cited a specific article that her professor at City University assigned: "There was actually a reading that we did that covered this question [about setting expectations] pretty directly, which actually helped me answer that for myself. The article was something like, 'Roses through Concrete.'"

Similarly, Alexa, who took SFE at City University with a different professor than Jesse, attributed her growth in expectations to a specific reading from the class:

I remember the Lisa Delpit article we read about 'Warm Demanders' - and being a warm

demanding and demanding things from your students but providing them with the support necessary for them to actually achieve those things that you're demanding. And it's definitely stuck in my head.

Lindsay, a sophomore art education major at City University, noted that expectations were “constantly brought up” in the discussion section (held once weekly) of her SFE course. Lindsay fell into the High Critical Awareness/High Teacher Expectations group at both the pretest and posttest intervals and even managed to raise her critical awareness over the course of the class without experiencing any drop in her level of expectation.⁸ The course's emphasis on establishing this theme of high expectations for all students likely contributed to this result.

Hideki, a freshman middle years education major at City University, made small gains in expectation across the course of the semester. While he did not explicitly credit the SFE course for spurring this shift, he did confirm that teacher expectations were routinely discussed in his SFE course. In fact, when I asked him to list some of the course's major themes, he responded by saying, “We talked about having high expectations for everyone because that would give them the most potential to learn. Stuff like that. The professor wanted to instill in our minds that we have to have high expectations for everyone we teach.”

Even students at City University who did not raise their expectations across the course of the semester acknowledged that their SFE class dedicated significant time to discussing this topic. For instance, when I asked Maggie, a student in the bottom 3rd percentile among all participants in posttest expectations, how much time was spent in her class discussing teacher expectations, she replied, “Quite a bit.”

⁸ Lindsay's pretest and posttest teacher expectation scale scores were both in the 77th percentile, while her critical awareness scale score was in the 81st percentile pretest and the 91st percentile posttest.

Similarly, Jenny, a second-year early childhood education major, experienced a steep drop in teacher expectations from pretest (77th percentile) to posttest (36th percentile).⁹ Despite this decline, she recalled the copious amount of the time her instructor spent discussing teacher expectations:

We had like one full lecture and recitation on [teacher expectations], but I feel like we always went back to it every once and a while too. Like there's a lot recitations where we went back to like main topics that we talked about, and I feel like we did talk about that a lot.

This begs the question: Why did some participants experience gains in expectation while other participants, who were not only enrolled in the exact same class but also acknowledged that teacher expectations were covered at length, did not? I investigate this inconsistency further later in this chapter.

Finally, there is the curious case of Wendy, a student at City University, who stated that teacher expectation “wasn’t a topic” in her SFE class. This runs counter to what her SFE classmate, Jessie, said above. In fact, Jessie cited a specific reading that was assigned for the class that explicitly addresses teacher expectations. Why Wendy did not recall this reading and subsequent class discussion is unknown. Was she absent on this day? Did she not do the reading? Was she simply unmoved by the content? These are all possibilities.

It also appears that some SFE teachers do not incorporate content or facilitate discussions around teacher expectations in their course at all. Unlike the students from City University, the participants from Suburban University saw their collective mean score on the teacher expectations scale drop slightly over the course of the semester. This decrease makes more sense upon analyzing the data collected from my interviews with Suburban University participants. For

⁹ Jenny’s pretest teacher expectations scale score was 61, and her posttest score was 53.

example, Connie, a second-year early childhood education major at Suburban University, stated that her professor never addressed expectations, saying, “We didn’t really talk about that.”

A second Suburban University participant named Carmela said that setting high expectations “may have come up a little at the beginning of the class.” However, the senior early childhood education major was unable to recall a specific conversation, lecture, or course reading that addressed this topic.

Similarly, Annie, who like Connie is a second-year early childhood education major at Suburban University, said, “[Setting high expectations] wasn’t talked about directly, but I feel like you can kind of get out of it though that you shouldn’t set them any differently and just kind of like accepting other people and other cultures.” While Annie posits that pre-service teachers should be able to infer that they should set high expectations for all students from course content that encourages celebrating student diversity, the quantitative data collected in this study suggests that this is not actually the case. This finding is particularly glaring given that Annie’s teacher expectation scale score decreased by nine points from pretest to posttest, which moved her from the 95th percentile of all participants to the 67th percentile. Thus, whatever message she was inferring around expectation setting from her SFE course actually set her back in this area.

It does not appear to be a coincidence that City University’s students as a collective experienced an increase in teacher expectations over the course of the semester whereas Suburban University’s students experienced a small decrease. The interview data shows that City University’s SFE instructors made a point of stressing the importance of establishing high expectations, while this topic went seemingly unmentioned in Suburban University’s SFE classes.

These findings further bolster the argument that SFE courses are capable of raising teacher expectations but that this growth is not a natural byproduct of awareness raising course content. Rather, growth in expectations is fostered through course discussions and readings that emphasize the importance of setting high expectations. This finding is supported by the results of the Pearson correlation, which found that there was not a statistically significant relationship between critical awareness and teacher expectations.

Yet, even when SFE instructors stress the need for high expectations, some pre-service teachers still fail to internalize this message. In the next section, I explore why the same SFE courses produced differing outcomes by looking more deeply at how various focal participants at City University – where SFE instructors regularly called for high expectations – processed this message. In doing so, I also consider how these outcomes differ based on one’s combination of awareness and expectation.

Same Class Content, Different Expectations

As I outlined in the section above, some students who enrolled in City University’s SFE courses experienced a positive shift in teacher expectations over the course of the semester. Many of these students explicitly credited their SFE course for this shift, and some were even able to cite specific readings that sparked their transformation. Yet, there were other focal participants who did not make gains in this area despite sitting in the same classes. In fact, some of these students – such as Maggie – even acknowledged that their SFE instructor emphasized the need for teachers to maintain high expectations for all students, yet they still produced low scores on the teacher expectations scale. This finding raises a new question: How come some students raised their expectations for disadvantaged students while others did not?

To begin, it seems that participants who did raise their level of expectation were better able to differentiate between accommodation and expectation. Lindsey provides an excellent example of this, saying, “We would talk about things such as English Language Learners. We would be discussing how to cater to their needs, and it was always brought back to, ‘Well, is what you’re doing lowering expectations for students? How do you do these things without lowering expectations for students?’” In this statement, Lindsey demonstrated a strong understanding of the difference between accommodation and expectation. She also showed an awareness of the fact that teachers need to consider the implications that specific types of accommodations may have on their expectations for the students they are supporting. Therefore, if an accommodation is in essence lowering the bar for a student, it is not an appropriate solution.

Alexa, too, displayed an understanding of the nuances between accommodation and expectation, stating, “This class taught me that you need to maybe provide [disadvantaged students] with additional support, but still maintain expectations that are just as high for the other students.”

Additionally, Courtney exhibited an ability to differentiate between the two concepts, explaining, “Some students might need extra support in order to meet the higher expectations. You can’t just have the high expectations without offering the extra support, which makes sense to me, and it’s been explicitly stated in class.”

George expressed a similar sentiment, saying, “I think you need to be more aware of the obstacles [disadvantaged students] face definitely, because the kids who come from low-income families face more obstacles. As an educator, you can have those high expectations but you need to be more aware.”

Lindsey, Alexa, Courtney, and George each showcased an ability to discern the difference between accommodation and expectation. All four participants spoke of these concepts, accommodation and expectation, as separate entities rather than as a unified construct. Thus, they could envision a way in which teachers can differentiate material for students without lowering the bar for them. Additionally, it is important to note that all four of these participants finished the course in the High Awareness/High Expectations group. Therefore, it seems that this ability to differentiate between accommodation and expectation is a common trait of students who fall into this category.

Conversely, other focal group participants – particularly those who did not experience a rise in expectations over the course of the semester – seemed to conflate the two concepts. For instance, Wendy, a structurally oriented participant with low pretest teacher expectations, still experienced a significant dip in teacher expectations from pretest to posttest.¹⁰ In her second-round interview, the junior art major explained her thoughts on how teachers should construct their expectations for students:

The whole idea with expectations, I relate it to how people are different. People learn different. You can't just have this one expectation for everyone to fill when they don't learn the same way, they don't retain information the same way, they don't act the same way, they aren't the same.

Wendy's lowered expectations appear to be the product of her blurring the lines between differentiation and expectation. And she was not alone in making this mistake. Maggie shared a similar view of teacher expectations in her second-round interview, saying:

You have to understand that children come from different backgrounds. As a teacher you have to have all the same expectations for children, but sometimes children come from harder backgrounds, so you can't have all the same expectations to like Sally who has

¹⁰ Wendy's pretest teacher expectations scale score was 48 (16th percentile), and her posttest score was 42 (3rd percentile).

two parents who have to great jobs, compared to Johnny who has a single mom and works late hours, and now he can't get help with schoolwork and stuff like that.

Initially, Maggie expressed that teachers need to “have all the same expectations for children”; however, she quickly qualified that statement by asserting that you cannot actually have the same expectations for kids with different family backgrounds.

Carol, a freshman secondary education major at City University, employed a similar logic in thinking about the subject. When I asked her how teachers should manage expectations for disadvantaged students, she said, “Definitely lower [expectations] a little bit. We always made the point that it shouldn't just be one expectation for everyone. That individualized education is a little bit better than generalized.”

Like Wendy and Maggie, Carol too conflated differentiation with expectation. This pattern is of particular interest given that all three of these participants scored in the bottom 50th percentile on the teacher expectation scale. In fact, both Wendy and Maggie scored approximately two standard deviations lower than the treatment group mean on the posttest teacher expectation scale. This shows that there is a real risk in calling for expectations to be set on a case-by-case basis, namely that teachers will be more likely to lower their expectations for disadvantaged students under the misguided notion that they are accommodating these children. Further, these results underscore the argument that SFE classes do not inherently raise the expectations of pre-service teachers, even when significant time is dedicated to the subject.

High Expectations for All

In general, it appears that delivering a consistent message of maintaining high expectations for all students is the most effective practice in fostering high expectations in pre-service teachers. For instance, Claire, a City University student who maintained high expectations across the entirety of the semester, said that her SFE class “talked about having the same expectations for

everybody.” Claire did not put an asterisk on this statement, and she did not call for any exceptions to this practice.

Carmela, a senior from Suburban University whose teacher expectations were in the top third of all participants at both the pretest and posttest intervals, also expressed this sentiment. When I asked her about setting expectations for disadvantaged students during our first-round interview, she stated, “Expectations I think should be set across the board for all of your students. Just set high expectations for everyone.” During our second-round interview, I asked her the same question, and her response showed that her stance had not changed over the course of the semester.

You should have high expectations for your students, and it’s important that even if you’re teaching in a low-income neighborhood you still have those expectations for those students. So, I would definitely keep them the same as what other students’ would be. Keep them at a higher – like hold them to the same standard that I would hold anyone to, because I feel like if your teacher is there setting goals for you then you should try to – ya know a student knows when a teacher looks at them a certain way and doesn’t have the same expectations. So, I think if you have the same expectations across the board for everybody, everybody has the opportunity to feel the same and want to reach those goals.

This is a particularly insightful statement from Carmela, as she not only expresses a belief in setting high expectations for all students, but she also articulates why this is so critical in stating that students are aware of the expectations that their teachers have for them. In fact, prior research has found this to be true (Tyler & Boelter, 2008; Weinstein, 2002). Thus, Carmela acknowledges that from an efficacy standpoint students are looking for their teachers to set a high bar for them, as these students will then take these cues and internalize them.

Carmela was not the only participant to make this connection. Similarly, Aniyah, a City University student who also scored high on both the pretest and posttest teacher expectations scale, articulated a philosophy that encourages teachers to maintain high expectations for all

students “no matter what” based on the knowledge that students will internalize their teachers’ views of them:¹¹

[The SFE course] kind of made me think like I don’t want to lower my expectations because some kids may take that as I’m working with them but some may take it as me trying to say that they’re stupid, ya know, that they’re not as smart as the rest of their peers. You definitely have to keep the expectations the same for your kids no matter what.

Aniyah, like Carmela, displayed an understanding of the idea that teachers can significantly influence their students’ self-efficacy. Therefore, she concluded that the only way to keep students from making negative internal value judgments about their ability to achieve is by maintaining high expectations for all students.

Perhaps most instructive is the case of Courtney, who started the course in the 44th percentile in terms of teacher expectations but completed the course in the 93rd percentile. In her first-round interview, Courtney said that expectations should be “tailored to every student,” thus espousing a view shared by other focal participants who scored low on the teacher expectation scale. However, by the end of the semester, Courtney’s teacher expectation scale score had increased considerably, and her statements during her second-round interview reflected the same language used by other participants with high awareness. For instance, when we met toward the end of the semester, Courtney said, “It’s incredibly important to keep expectations high for disadvantaged students, because if you have lower expectations it just contributes to them feeling like they aren’t worthy of higher expectations.” This echoes the same sentiment expressed by Claire, Carmela, and Aniyah: high expectations must be established and maintained for all students.

¹¹ Claire’s pretest teacher expectations scale score was in the 81st percentile, and her posttest score was 84th percentile. Aniyah’s pretest teacher expectations scale score was in the 98th percentile, and her posttest score was 87th percentile.

It appears that encouraging teachers to set expectations on a case-by-case basis is an approach that will ultimately leave some students behind. The focal participants who scored the lowest on the teacher expectations scale tended to support this approach, whereas higher scoring focal participants adopted a ‘high-expectations-for-all’ mentality. This shows that leaving expectation setting up to the subjective judgment of teachers can lead educators to fall back on unfair stereotypes, which ultimately wind up holding disadvantaged students back even further. Additionally, it is worth noting that all of these focal participants who embraced the ‘high expectations for all’ mantra not only owned high expectations but also possessed high critical awareness as well.

Throughout this section, I’ve argued that given the right circumstances, SFE courses are capable of raising pre-service teachers’ expectations. Above, I discussed reasons as to why some subjects made gains while others did not. Yet, there is still the case of Jenny, the City University student who experienced a marked decrease in expectations from pretest to posttest. In the next section, I investigate this phenomenon.

A Unique Case: From High Expectations to Low Expectations

A fair number of this study’s participants experienced a minor decrease in teacher expectations over the course of the semester. Many of these participants were enrolled in courses at Suburban University, where focal participants reported that teacher expectations were not discussed. Others whose scores dipped were students from City University who either already possessed low expectations or who saw their very high expectations drop slightly. Yet, one student’s decline in expectations stood out above the rest, due to both the precipitous nature of the fall as well as the reasons behind it.

I am referring to Jenny, the City University student who experienced a significant drop in expectation over the course of the semester despite acknowledging that her SFE course “talked about [expectations] a lot.” In her first-round interview during the nascent stages of the semester, Jenny expressed a firm belief in the need to maintain high expectations for all students.

Joe: How should teachers manage their expectations for students who have tough home lives?

Jenny: I think they should expect the same as what they would expect of someone who has a great home life. Because in the classroom I feel like your home life and everything should be left at the doorway, and you’re all equal inside the door.

Joe: What about teachers who are moving from a wealthy school to a poor school? Should they adjust their expectations?

Jenny: I don’t think you should adjust it like dramatically. I really don’t think you should adjust it at all.

Yet, by the end of the course, Jenny’s teacher expectations scale score had fallen from the 76th percentile of all participants to the 33rd percentile. How could such a dramatic shift have occurred when Jenny herself noted that expectations were routinely discussed throughout the course?

During her second-round interview, Jenny mentioned that she had been providing afterschool tutoring for students at a low-income, racially segregated high school in Philadelphia during that same semester in order to fulfill a fieldwork requirement for another education course she was enrolled in. The following exchange took place after Jenny mentioned that she was frustrated with having to “pry the work” out of the students she was providing support to:

Joe: What do you mean you have to pry the work out of them?

Jenny: I mean like, one day I can go into class and I’ll look at a student, and he’ll sit there and get all of his work done and then they get the laptops after. And then I’ll go in the next week and the kid can care less about the work that he’s doing. And will just not even sit down at his desk the whole time. So what is so different from week-to-week that he suddenly doesn’t care about his work? It makes me sad to see it, because it’s like, “You were so good last week. Why are you not doing your work this week?”

Joe: So what do you do?

Jenny: I mean mostly that’s not me. The teachers kind of look at me and are like, “This is how

good they're going to be. They're not going to get any better than that." And they kind of like don't try to get them to do their work. They're just like, "This is as good as they're gonna get."

Joe: What do you think of that?

Jenny: I think they could do a little more. But part of me thinks it's wishful thinking of them to do that. One of the teachers, I said to him, "Does it bother you that they are on their phones all the time?" And he said, "Honestly, at the beginning of the school year I would've said yes, but at this point I've come to the realization that they're not going to put their phones away, and what I get out of them is what I get out of them." So that was like, okay.

It seems that this negative fieldwork experience held an outsized influence over Jenny's views on how to set expectations for disadvantaged students. Jenny's high expectations failed to hold up when she encountered professional educators who advised her that lowering standards was an inevitable practice when working in a difficult learning environment. Unfortunately, most of the other focal participants did not take part in fieldwork (or, possibly, did not mention that they were doing so) during the duration of this study; thus, I cannot determine whether Jenny's experience fits within a certain pattern or if it is simply an anomaly.

Throughout my qualitative analysis, I have made the case that, under the right conditions, SFE courses can raise pre-service teachers' expectations. My data further suggest that messages about treating students as individuals can be misinterpreted by students as a call for lowering standards. To end my qualitative analysis, I will look at one final pattern that emerged in examining the professional reflection of a particular group of participants who did not raise their expectations over the course of the semester: individually oriented pre-service teachers.

Individually Oriented Teachers: A Negative View of Parents

During my review of the pretest and posttest interview data, I searched for common links between participants who possessed the same combination of awareness and expectation. Specifically, I sought to identify whether any patterns in participants' professional reflection existed based on these combinations. In analyzing the interview data of the four focal

participants who comprised the Low Critical Awareness/Low Teacher Expectations posttest group, I uncovered a common practice in their professional reflection.

Subjects with this combination tended to employ an individual orientation in analyzing the student learning difficulties described in the vignettes that they considered during their interviews. Chubbuck (2010) notes that individually oriented teachers tend to view their students through a deficit lens, choosing to focus almost entirely on their pupils' perceived flaws without giving equal attention to the strengths these children possess. Individually oriented teachers are also quick to adopt stereotypes in order to make sense of a situation, and are therefore susceptible to falling into the trap of perpetuating self-fulfilling prophecies. Thus, they lack the awareness needed to identify systemic injustices that might be contributing to their students' struggles, choosing instead to blame academic struggles on students and their families.

For the individually oriented participants in this study, this position was especially prevalent in their views toward working with the parents of disadvantaged students. During the pretest and posttest interviews, I presented students with various vignettes, all of which described a student who was experiencing some sort of learning difficulty. I intentionally used language that would allow participants to make inferences about the hypothetical student's race and socioeconomic status. In dissecting one particular vignette, the individually oriented participants conveyed strikingly negative views of the hypothetical student's parents. The vignette reads:

Jaquan is a student at a racially segregated school in Philadelphia in which 100% of the student population qualifies for free or reduced price lunch. Jaquan regularly comes to school without completing his homework, and when asked by his teacher about whether he studied at home to prepare for an important test, Jaquan replies that he didn't.

In response to this vignette, all four of the individually oriented participants expressed a negative view of Jaquan's parents' ability to provide support in rectifying this issue during their second-round interviews. For instance, in addressing this situation, a Suburban University student named

Kristin speculated that Jaquan's parents "might not be around to push him." When I asked whether she should contact them, she replied, "I mean, if you could, I guess you could reach out to his parents if they're available and see like if there's anything that they can do to motivate him more or anything like that." She continued by expressing doubt that this would be a useful course of action, alleging that low-income parents "get really defensive and stuff," thus making it difficult to work with them in solving issues such as this. Kristin did not elaborate on how she developed this opinion of low-income parents, and there are certainly no details in the vignette that would have led her to reasonably infer that Jaquan's parents are defensive and unwilling to listen to negative feedback about their son. Thus, it seems that Kristin drew on a stereotype to inform the action she would take to remedy this issue, which is characteristic of individually oriented teachers.

In her second-round interview, Jenny initially fell back on the same stereotype that Kristin drew from, before ultimately making even uglier assumptions about Jaquan's parents.

Joe: Who do you think can provide support in solving this issue?

Jenny: Maybe just like a guidance counselor or a principal or something like that. Cause if the reason is that they don't have a good home life, telling their parents might get them offended or something like that. And then you don't know, the kid might get like beat for something like that. I don't know if I would necessarily say something to the parents. But the principal or someone like that.

Once again, there is no information in the vignette that suggests that Jaquan's parents would be difficult to talk to about his issues at school, let alone that they are physically abusive; yet, Jenny made this leap based on preconceived notions about parents who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Andrea, a freshman at City University whose pretest and posttest expectations scores placed her in the third percentile of the sample, expressed skepticism in regards to how much assistance Jaquan's parents could provide.

Joe: Who do you think can provide support in solving this issue?

Andrea: It's never just the teacher's job because, the parents aren't involved obviously, but the counselor could be involved and the other teachers could be involved. The other students are involved. I think that it's not just the teacher's issue and it's not just the student's issue. I would probably get the counselor involved and tell them what's going on. I would probably maybe pick a buddy for him - like if he's in elementary school - and maybe they can talk to each other and do homework together.

In fact, Andrea held such a negative view of Jaquan's parents that she actually felt that enlisting Jaquan's classmates to lend him support would be a better course of action than simply reaching out to his mother and father.

While the other participants exhibited an individual orientation in explaining *how* they would go about solving Jaquan's learning issue, Carol's penchant for employing this perspective emerged in her analysis of *why* Jaquan failed to complete his homework.

I think there could be lots of reasons why he's acting like this. I mean – I always draw it back to the family and think that there must be something going on at home. Maybe his parents have made comments like that he better go to school so that he can get his free lunch because kids always seem to want to wiggle out of work. So if they think that they're just going to school to get a meal, they might feel like, "Why should I waste my time doing this work that isn't fun."

In examining this vignette, Carol surmised that Jaquan's parents may warn him that he won't get fed a proper lunch unless he goes to school where he will receive a free meal. Thus, Carol imagines that Jaquan's parents would – at best – treat education as a secondary reason for attending school. This belief that low-income parents of color do not place the same value on getting an education as middle-class white parents is an excellent example of how unfounded assumptions can lead to self-fulfilling prophecies. Additionally, this excerpt highlights Carol's willingness to lean on the type of deficit language that Ladson-Billings' (2007) argues only further widens achievement gaps.

After Carol explained why she felt Jaquan was failing to complete his homework, I followed up by asking her how she would address this issue. Having already expressed a low

opinion of Jaquan's parents, it is no surprise that Carol did not consider them to be an integral source of support in handling this challenge.

Joe: Who could provide the teacher with support in solving this issue?

Carol: Probably a friend. Assuming he has friends. Maybe even if I were a teacher I would talk to one of his friends if I knew who his friends were. And be like, "You're doing your work. Why don't you try to convince your friend to do his work too. Like show him how much better you feel when you're prepared and you accomplish something."

Like Andrea, Carol contended that Jaquan's friends are more likely to be of use in addressing this learning issue than his parents. Once again, there is no information in this vignette that would lead Carol or Andrea to make an evidenced-based decision about Jaquan's parents ability to provide support. Rather, both participants relied on stereotypes to make unfounded judgments about Jaquan's parents.

In analyzing this vignette, all four of the individually oriented focal participants set low expectations for Jaquan's parents based on stereotypes. Each participant came to the conclusion that Jaquan's parents were less than ideal partners for tackling the issue at hand. Two participants presumed that Jaquan's parents would lack the necessary temperament to support the teacher, while two others asserted that Jaquan's friends would be of greater assistance than his parents. As is the case with all self-fulfilling prophecies, these low expectations were rooted in unfounded assumptions.

In making these statements, the individually oriented participants – all of whom identified as white – appeared to view the parents of this disadvantaged student through a deficit lens. Additionally, because this vignette was embedded with signifiers that allowed participants to infer the child's race and socio-economic background, it is possible that these negative views were informed by deficit views of entire cultural and ethnic groups.

Qualitative Analysis Summary

A review of the qualitative data revealed that participants did exhibit certain traits and beliefs based on their combination of critical awareness and teacher expectations. For instance, participants with low critical awareness and low teacher expectations were more likely to allow stereotypes to inform their professional reflection. Additionally, the data highlighted the fact that teachers who possessed low expectations often conflated expectation with accommodation and differentiation. Furthermore, the data revealed that pre-service teachers with high critical awareness were particularly open to their SFE instructor's calls to shift their expectations from low to high. Finally, the data showed that SFE courses have more success in raising teacher expectations when they stress high expectations for all students.

Mixed Methods Analysis

In this section, I will consider the quantitative and qualitative findings together in order to determine whether the various quantitative and qualitative results discussed in the above two sections confirm or complicate one another. In order to do so in an organized fashion, I will look at the results for each research question individually. However, this analysis will only pertain to the study's first two research questions, as the quantitative data cannot confirm the findings specific to research questions three and four.

Research Question 1: To what extent do Social Foundations of Education courses create changes in pre-service teachers' critical awareness and teacher expectations?

To begin, I will consider the results around changes in pre-service teachers' critical awareness in order to determine whether the quantitative and qualitative findings align. The quantitative data found that treatment group participants as a collective made significant gains in critical awareness over the course of the semester. This positive shift in critical awareness was

significant at the .01 level. Further analyses found that subjects from both educational institutions experienced significant increases in critical awareness. City University's gains were greater and were significant at the .01 level, while Suburban University's more modest gains were significant at the .05 level.

A review of the interview data further confirms that students from both institutions did in fact experience growth in critical awareness from pre-semester to post-semester. For instance, Maggie, a junior at City University, scored 13 points higher on the posttest critical awareness scale, which vaulted her from the 16th percentile of all participants to the 76th percentile. These gains were confirmed in comparing her pretest and posttest interview responses. When I asked Maggie at the start of the semester why achievement gaps exist along racial lines, she stated that Latino students and their families "don't have the work ethic at home" to overcome language gaps. Yet, when I asked her the same question during her posttest interview, her reply indicated that her views had evolved significantly:

I think a lot of it has to do with things like redlining and stuff. Ya know, [students of color] don't have the same opportunities because they've been secluded. Like, I compared my high school to [a poor urban school], and they don't have a lot of what we had.

In Maggie's pretest interview, she blamed Latino students for the presence of achievement gaps along racial lines and pointed toward a stereotype to support her view. However, during her posttest interview, she placed the blame for these disparities on the structural issues that she learned about in her SFE course. This response is particularly telling as it not only showcases Maggie's increased critical awareness, but it also shows that SFE course content and assignments directly impacted her views on why achievement gaps exist along racial lines.

Even participants whose low expectations remained low in comparison to the treatment group as a whole still managed to make gains in critical awareness. For instance, Kristin, a junior

at Suburban University, increased her critical awareness scale score four points from pretest to posttest. Kristin's pretest scale score placed her in the 7th percentile of all participants, so this four-point gain did not move her too far in comparison to her peers; however, this increase is worth noting because it was larger than the treatment group's mean critical awareness change score of 2.43. While Kristin still possessed low critical awareness, there were some discernible differences between her pretest and posttest interview responses. When I asked Kristin at the start of the semester why achievement gaps exist, she said, "Low-income neighborhoods don't focus enough on school. They're worried about other things like crime." In this response, Kristin is placing the blame for achievement gaps on low-income communities. Yet, during her posttest interview, Kristin's understanding of the root causes of achievement gaps clearly shifted. When I asked her the same question, she replied, "I guess it depends on the resources people have and stuff. Lower-income students might not have as many resources or like if their parents aren't around to push them and help them." In this response, Kristin revealed an increased understanding of how structural forces impact educational outcomes. Again, it should be noted that Kristin's critical awareness remained low compared to her peers, and as I explained in the section above, she was still prone to leaning on stereotypes in her professional reflection. Yet, the quantitative and qualitative data both show that she experienced growth in critical awareness from pretest to posttest.

Overall, treatment group participants made significant gains in critical awareness from pretest to posttest. Meaningful growth was achieved by subjects from both institutions featured in this study. This development was first captured by the critical awareness scale scores of all participants and was then confirmed by analyzing the interview data of focal group participants.

Next, I considered the results regarding changes in pre-service teachers' expectations for disadvantaged students in order to determine whether the qualitative and quantitative findings are in agreement. The quantitative data revealed that treatment group participants did not make significant gains in teacher expectations, as the posttest mean scale score for this variable was just 0.24 points higher than the pretest mean. A deeper look at the survey data revealed that City University participants made slight gains in teacher expectations while Suburban University subjects experienced a decrease in this area, albeit one that was not statistically significant. The interview data – to an extent – highlighted these differences in teacher expectation change by institution.

For example, two of the four focal participants from Suburban University experienced decreases in teacher expectation from pretest to posttest. Kristin, for instance, saw her scale score drop seven points. This decline in expectation manifested in her interview data when talking about the role that parents of disadvantaged children can play in helping to address student learning difficulties. Initially, in analyzing the vignettes, Kristin repeatedly stated that teachers should work with students to find solutions to their learning difficulties, including carving out time afterschool to work together. Additionally, when I asked Kristin if teachers should lower their expectations for students with tough home lives, she stated, "I don't think teachers should go easier on them, but I think they should be offered more help." However, by the end of the semester, Kristin seemed to have experienced a shift in her view on expectation setting. In analyzing the vignette about Jaquan, she said, "If there's something serious going on at home, I think you should lower your expectations." In comparing these two quotes, one can see a shift in Kristin's views on setting expectations that dovetails with her decreased score on the teacher expectations scale.

Like Kristin, Annie also experienced a sharp decline in her teacher expectations scale score over the course of the semester. In fact, her score dropped nine points from pretest to posttest. Only ten other participants experienced a greater decrease. Yet, in looking at Annie's interview data, there is not a discernible change in her attitude toward expectation setting from the first-round interview to the second-round interview. This might be due to the fact that Annie's expectations were incredibly high to begin with, as her pretest teacher expectation scale score placed her in the 96th percentile of all participants. Despite dropping nine points on the posttest scale, she still placed in the 68th percentile. Unfortunately, the qualitative data does not provide evidence that confirms this drop or explains why this steep decline occurred.

Suburban University's other two focal participants, Carmela and Connie, maintained similar scale scores from pretest to posttest, as both subjects' scores shifted by only two points. Their interview data reflected this stability. For example, Carmela maintained an unwavering belief in setting high expectations for all students at both intervals. Her views on expectation setting were highlighted in the Qualitative Analysis section above. Altogether, Suburban University participants experienced a decrease in teacher expectations according to the survey data, a finding which was partially confirmed by the interview data.

Unlike the Suburban University subjects, City University participants' teacher expectation scale scores ticked up from pretest to posttest, albeit not significantly. Many of these students were featured prominently in the Qualitative Analysis section, as I outlined how Jessie, George, Courtney, and Alexa's significant growth in teacher expectations was spurred by their SFE course.¹² In particular, these students came to realize that lowering expectations for disadvantaged students only further exacerbates achievement gaps. Motivated by this knowledge,

¹² Alexa's posttest teacher expectations scale score was 19 points higher than her pretest score. This was the largest increase of all 113 participants.

they abandoned their belief in setting low expectations and instead adopted a ‘high expectations for all’ stance. Thus, the qualitative data confirmed the growth in teacher expectations for these four participants that the quantitative results initially revealed.

On the other hand, the quantitative data found that some City University students experienced steep declines in teacher expectations from pretest to posttest. These shifts were also confirmed by the qualitative data. For instance, Jenny’s eight-point dip in teacher expectations was explained by a negative field work experience in which the professional educators she was working with encouraged her to set low standards for disadvantaged students. Meanwhile, Wendy’s and Maggie’s respective declining scale scores were explained by their refusal to support a ‘high expectations for all’ stance, as these two participants chose instead to adopt an approach that called for expectations to be set on a case-by-case basis. This failure to commit to setting high expectations for all students in the interview data correlated with declines in teacher expectation scale scores.

Overall, as it pertains to research question 1, the qualitative data largely confirmed the survey results. Participants who experienced gains in critical awareness and/or teacher expectations were often able to display these changes in their interview responses. The same is true for subjects who experienced declines in one or both of these two areas.

Research Question 2: To what extent does an increase in critical awareness conflict with/overlap with an increase in teacher expectations?

To address research question 2, I conducted a Pearson correlation and found that there was not a statistically significant relationship between changes in critical awareness and changes in teacher expectations ($r=.132$; $p=.163$). The interview data confirmed that there was not a clear cut relationship between these two variables. The focal sample serves as a microcosm of this result.

Some focal group participants, such as Jessie, George, Courtney, and Alexa, made sizable gains in both critical awareness and teacher expectations over the course of the semester. These gains manifested in their scale scores and was confirmed by their interview responses, which were quoted at length in the Qualitative Analysis section. In the interest of not repeating the same excerpts from above for all four participants, Alexa will serve as the example for this group.

Alexa's pretest survey showed that she possessed above average critical awareness, which was confirmed by her first-round interview. In discussing achievement gaps, she noted that poverty played a role in creating disparities before shifting the blame onto low-income schools and communities, saying, "The community doesn't value education because maybe the schools aren't putting forth an image that education should be valued. So, I feel like somewhere internally the schools need to change." Yet, the second-round interview revealed that Alexa had clearly experienced a shift in critical awareness over the course of the semester, as she displayed a newfound ability to critically examine the role that social structures have played in creating and sustaining achievement gaps.

Definitely it stems from the opportunity gap I think. And I think the reason that students – again, it's all very cyclical – the reason that students, er because students aren't getting the resources they need at home or at school because of the opportunity gap, their teachers aren't as skilled or the teachers aren't sticking around because of the conditions, and then the kids aren't learning anything.

In this quote, Alexa showcased a heightened critical awareness compared to the views she expressed in her first-round interview. She no longer placed the blame for achievement gaps on impoverished communities; instead, she acknowledged that gaps in opportunity have primarily created disparities in achievement. This shift matches the six-point gain she made in critical awareness from pretest to posttest.

Similarly, Alexa experienced marked growth in teacher expectations, as evidenced by her 19-point scale score increase. Alexa stated that she was initially “100% unclear” about how to set expectations for students. However, her second-round interview confirmed that she had in fact adopted a belief in setting high expectations for all students. When I asked Alexa about how expectations should be set for disadvantaged students, she replied, “You can’t lower your expectations because then you’re just making it so that these students will fail, and that’s not helping them in any way.” This firm stance reflects the gains she made on the teacher expectations scale.

While the four aforementioned students made simultaneous gains in critical awareness and teacher expectations, this was not the case for many other participants. For example, Maggie, Kristin, and Wendy all bucked this trend, as each of these three participants experienced increases on the critical awareness scale but decreases on the teacher expectations scale. These shifts were confirmed in analyzing their interview data, much of which was described in the Qualitative Analysis section. To avoid being overly repetitive, Maggie will serve as the example for this group.

During Maggie’s first-round interview she espoused a belief that teachers need to “have all the same expectations for children”; however, during the second-round interview, she said, “You can’t have all the same expectations to like Sally who has two parents who have to great jobs, compared to Johnny who has a single mom and works late hours.” This shift in mindset was accompanied by a ten-point decrease on the teacher expectations scale, thus confirming this result.

Yet, while Maggie’s expectations dropped, her critical awareness increased. As I noted above, Maggie had initially blamed gaps in achievement by race on English Language Learners,

claiming that these students and their parents lacked the necessary work ethic. But by the end of the semester, Maggie attributed these gaps to structural issues, such as segregated schools. This display of increased awareness aligned with the 13-point critical awareness scale score leap she made from pretest to posttest.

The cases of Alexa and Maggie highlight the fact that shifts in scale scores often manifested in the interview data, thus validating the results of each. In fact, the Qualitative Analysis section showed that this alignment between both types of data occurred for the majority of focal participants. These results also confirm that there is not a statistically significant relationship between changes in critical awareness and changes in teacher expectations. While several participants, like Alexa, experienced growth in both critical awareness and teacher expectations over the course of the semester, there were also many individuals, such as Maggie, who made gains in one area but experienced a decrease in the other. Thus, the qualitative data provides confirmatory evidence in support of the quantitative finding that there is not a significant relationship between changes in critical awareness and changes in teacher expectations.

Mixed Methods Analysis Summary

In conclusion, the qualitative data collected for this study largely confirmed the quantitative findings pertaining to research questions 1 and 2. Scale score shifts in critical awareness and teacher expectations were typically evident in focal participants' interview data. Thus, the qualitative data confirmed the quantitative results for research questions 1 and 2.

Data Analysis Summary

In this chapter, I utilized a mixed methods design in order to address each of this study's four research questions. For research questions 1 and 2, I analyzed survey data by running descriptive

and correlational analyses. For the research questions 3 and 4, I conducted *a priori* and open coding to analyze interview data while using the quantitative findings as a guide for sorting students into groups.

For the quantitative portion of the data analysis, paired samples t-tests were employed to determine whether participants made gains in critical awareness and teacher expectations from pre-class to post-class. The results showed that subjects made significant gains in critical awareness but not in teacher expectations. A breakdown of changes in expectation by institution revealed that City University subjects on average made gains – albeit, not significant – in teacher expectations while Suburban University participants’ scores collectively dropped in this area. These results highlight the fact that SFE courses are capable of increasing pre-service teachers’ expectations for disadvantaged students, but this result is only achieved when: (1) participants possess high critical awareness; and (2) instructors regularly remind pre-service teachers of the need to set high expectations for all students. As for research question 2, a Pearson correlation was also conducted to investigate whether changes in critical awareness overlap with changes in teacher expectations. The analysis did not find a significant relationship between participants’ change scores for the two variables.

For the qualitative analysis, pretest and posttest interview data was coded and analyzed in an effort to determine whether patterns existed in participants’ professional reflection based on their combinations of critical awareness and teacher expectations. This analysis found that participants with high expectations were more likely to endorse a ‘high expectations for all’ approach, while subjects with low expectations tended to support setting expectations on a case-by-case basis. Furthermore, focal participants who started the semester with high critical awareness and low teacher expectations experienced increases in expectations when they

realized that setting a low bar only exacerbates the opportunity gap. Meanwhile, focal subjects who maintained low critical awareness and low teacher expectations throughout the year regularly relied on stereotypes in their professional reflection. Finally, participants who experienced growth in teacher expectations explicitly confirmed that their SFE course was responsible for this shift.

To end this chapter, the mixed methods analysis section aimed to synthesize the quantitative and qualitative findings in an effort to determine whether the results of each confirmed or contradicted one another. In doing so, I found that the findings for both largely aligned, as participants' shifts in critical awareness and teacher expectations were typically captured by both their scale scores and their interview responses.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I will begin by re-stating the purpose of this study and summarizing the results. Next, I will discuss the implications of these results as it pertains to both research and practice. Finally, I will make recommendations for both practice and future research.

Purpose of the Study

As I stated in chapter one, I endeavored to conduct this research for a couple of reasons. First, I wanted to answer the call for more empirical research that examines the value of non-methodological teacher education coursework. Second, I wished to learn more about the role that Social Foundation of Education (SFE) courses play in the development of pre-service teachers. Influenced by the extant body of SFE literature as well as my own experiences both as an SFE instructor and a K-12 teacher, I decided to focus my research on how the course affects pre-service teachers' levels of critical awareness and teacher expectations. Specifically, this study was guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent do Social Foundations of Education courses create changes in pre-service teachers' critical awareness and teacher expectations?
2. To what extent does an increase in critical awareness conflict with/overlap with an increase in teacher expectations?
3. How do changes in critical awareness and teacher expectations manifest in pre-service teachers' professional reflection on student learning difficulties?
4. What connections exist between teachers' different positions on these issues and their professional reflection?

Methodology

To adequately address the four research questions listed above, I employed a mixed methods design. For research questions 1 and 2, I utilized descriptive and correlational quantitative analyses – including paired samples t-tests, bivariate correlations, and two-way ANOVAs – to analyze pretest and posttest survey data. To explore research questions 3 and 4, I conducted semi-structured interviews, during which participants were asked to consider three vignettes. The total sample consisted of 132 individuals. Of this group, 113 subjects served as the treatment group. These participants were enrolled in an SFE course across two different universities. A further 19 participants comprised the matched comparison group. These students were not enrolled in an SFE course. All 132 of these subjects completed both the pretest and posttest survey. Of these 113 treatment group members, 18 served as focal subjects, which required them to sit for pretest and posttest interviews.

Summary of Findings

In this section, I provide a summary of findings for each individual research question.

Research Question 1: To what extent do Social Foundations of Education courses create changes in pre-service teachers' critical awareness and teacher expectations?

Participants in this study's treatment group – those enrolled in an SFE course – on average scored 2.43 points higher on the posttest critical awareness scale when compared to their pretest critical awareness score. This difference in means was significant at the .01 level. Additionally, an analysis of the critical awareness scores by institution found that on average, students from both schools experienced significant growth in critical awareness from pretest to posttest. City University's students' critical awareness jumped an average of 3.23 points over the course of the semester, a change that was significant at the .01 level. Suburban University's students' critical

awareness grew an average of 1.47 points, a change that was significant at the .05 level. Meanwhile, the matched comparison group, which consisted of 19 students who were not enrolled in an SFE course, scored just 0.21 points higher from pretest to posttest – an amount that was not statistically significant – which indicates that the gains made by the treatment group can be attributed to their participation in an SFE course and are not the product of general college life experiences. Thus, SFE courses are capable of creating significant, positive changes in pre-service teachers' critical awareness.

As for teacher expectations, the treatment group's mean score increased just 0.24 points over the course of the semester. While this very modest gain was not statistically significant, it is worth noting that the matched comparison group scored 2.73 points lower on the teacher expectations scale, a decrease that was significant at the .05 level. Therefore, SFE courses at least maintained pre-service teachers' expectations for disadvantaged students, as opposed to lowering them.

Yet, this finding is not so cut and dry, as a deeper look at the teacher expectations data found that Suburban University's mean teacher expectations scale score declined 0.86 points whereas City University's increased 1.15 points. The difference in change by institution failed to meet the threshold required for statistical significance, but the interview data underscored the notion that this difference is not random and is actually rooted in differences in how SFE courses operated at the two schools. Specifically, City University focal participants indicated that their SFE instructors spent significant time discussing the importance of maintaining high expectations and even assigned course readings that emphasized this message. Contrarily, Suburban University participants stated in their interviews that teacher expectations were not really discussed in their SFE courses. Therefore, SFE courses are capable of raising pre-service

teachers' expectations, but this is only achieved when instructors clearly and repeatedly make it known that teachers need to set high expectations for all students, including those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Research Question 2: To what extent does an increase in critical awareness conflict with/overlap with an increase in teacher expectations?

A Pearson correlation found that there was not a statistically significant relationship between changes in critical awareness and changes in teacher expectations ($r=.132$; $p=.163$). Thus, an increase in critical awareness is not inherently accompanied by an increase in teacher expectations, and vice versa. Additionally, it is important to note that an increase in critical awareness is not inherently accompanied by a decrease in teacher expectations. Based on my prior experience teaching SFE courses, I was concerned that a significant number of pre-service teachers might be leaving the class with lowered expectations due to the nature of the course content; however, the quantitative data indicates that this is not so.

Research Question 3: How do changes in critical awareness and teacher expectations manifest in pre-service teachers' professional reflection on student learning difficulties?

In coding the data from my interviews with this study's 18 focal participants, I found that positive changes in teachers' expectations manifested in pre-service teachers' professional reflection in two ways. First, participants who made meaningful gains in teacher expectations came to adopt a clear philosophy on setting expectations for disadvantaged students.

Specifically, they supported a 'high expectations for all' stance that they previously did not subscribe to. In endorsing this view, pre-service teachers who experienced significant growth in teacher expectations insisted on developing solutions to student learning difficulties that maintained high expectations for the disadvantaged student experiencing struggles, whereas they

previously expressed a willingness to lower the bar for that child. Second, those who experienced growth in teacher expectations became less dependent on adopting the structural orientation in their professional reflection. These participants came to realize that while it is important to recognize that various obstacles can impede student learning, teachers cannot become fatalistic in the face of these challenges. Thus, in addition to employing a structural lens, participants learned to view students as individuals with agency and unique abilities.

Research Question 4: What connections exist between teachers' different positions on these issues and their professional reflection?

Several connections emerged from my analysis of the interview data. First, participants with high critical awareness and high teacher expectations tended to espouse a belief in the need for teachers to maintain high expectations for all students no matter what. This differed from participants with low expectations and low awareness, as these individuals called for teachers to set expectations on an individual basis. Second, pre-service teachers with high critical awareness and high teacher expectations were more comfortable striking a healthy balance between the structural and individual orientations when considering student learning difficulties. In analyzing the vignettes, these participants identified hurdles that prevented students from producing quality work and sought to develop solutions that accommodated disadvantaged students without lowering the bar for them. Third, subjects with low critical awareness and low teacher expectations tended to conflate accommodation/differentiation and expectations. Thus, in analyzing the vignettes, many of these participants proposed solutions that merely asked less of the child who was experiencing a learning difficulty. Fourth, individuals with low critical awareness and low teacher expectations often relied on unfounded stereotypes when considering who might be able to provide support to the struggling students described in the vignettes. In

particular, these participants assumed that the parents of disadvantaged students lacked the necessary temperament to provide adequate assistance, believing that these parents would become angry upon hearing negative feedback about their child and might even physically harm their child as a result of receiving this information.

Implications

SFE Courses' Effect on Critical Awareness

If there's one clear-cut finding that emerged from this research, it is that SFE courses that endeavor to raise pre-service teachers' critical awareness are capable of doing so. This is something that has long been touted by SFE scholars (Hartlep et al., 2015; Butin, 2005); however, prior to this study there had been little empirical evidence supporting this claim. Extant research has found that teacher preparation coursework is capable of developing critical awareness in pre-service teachers, but these studies were not specifically situated in SFE courses (Kreamelmeyer et al., 2016; Endo, 2015; Kolano & King, 2015; Curry, 2013; Milner, 2006; Capella-Santana, 2003). This study is solely rooted in SFE courses; thus, there is little question that the SFE courses at City University and Suburban University were responsible for this growth in critical awareness. Confidence in this finding is further elevated by the fact that students from the matched comparison group did not make significant gains in critical awareness during this same timeframe.

Additionally, most of the aforementioned studies that found that teacher preparation coursework is capable of raising critical awareness can be characterized as practitioner research, which – while useful – possesses some clear issues with regards to rigor and researcher bias. This study is not hampered by these same issues. While this project certainly has its limitations, I employed reliable survey instruments developed by reputable education scholars in a manner that

ensured a high level of objectivity. Thus, it is harder for critics of SFE and education coursework in general to dismiss these findings on account of a lack of rigor or questions around researcher bias.

It is also important to note that this finding regarding gains in critical awareness pertains to SFE courses that explicitly possess a social justice bent. Both universities' SFE course descriptions emphasized a desire to foster a commitment to social justice in pre-service teachers who take the class. However, as Neumann (2009) points out, not all SFE courses share this characteristic. Therefore, it is important to distinguish the type of SFE course from which this result was obtained.

It is also worth noting that SFE research has often focused more on investigating pedagogy as opposed to exploring what pre-service teachers are getting out of the class (Miretzky, 2010; Minnici & Hill, 2007; Sevier, 2005; Hardee et al., 2012; Evans-Winters, 2011). This study bucks this trend by focusing entirely on how students respond to the course content. Thus, this research helps SFE scholars better understand what pre-service teachers are taking away from the course.

Fostering High Expectations in Pre-Service Teachers

In my review of scholarly literature for this study, I did not encounter any research that considered the role that coursework – let alone SFE courses – plays in shaping preservice teachers' expectations. Therefore, this study is the first to examine this relationship. While participants did not make significant gains in teacher expectations collectively, this study still produced findings that have implications regarding the relationship between SFE courses and teacher expectations.

For instance, City University participants' teacher expectation scale scores ticked upward over the course of the semester, whereas the subjects from Suburban University experienced a decrease. While these differences were not quite statistically significant, the qualitative data provided some insight as to why the scale scores of the participants from these two institutions trended in different directions. Namely, City University's SFE instructors devoted significant class time to discussing the importance of maintaining high expectations for all students. Participants from City University reported that their SFE instructors regularly discussed the need to maintain high expectations and assigned course readings that directly dealt with the subject. Conversely, Suburban University participants stated that their SFE instructor did not explicitly discuss this topic over the course of the semester and that none of the course readings addressed teacher expectations. This explains why City University subjects experienced a boost in teacher expectations while their Suburban University peers did not. Thus, while participants did not make gains in teacher expectations as a collective, this study shows that teacher preparation coursework – specifically, SFE courses – can raise individual's expectations for disadvantaged students.

The Roots of Low Expectations

In examining the interview data of the focal participants with low teacher expectations, it became clear that the nature of participants' low expectations varied greatly depending on the individual's level of critical awareness. For pre-service teachers with high critical awareness, low expectations were often the product of feelings of empathy. These pre-service teachers felt that disadvantaged students face many structural hurdles that make the path to academic success much more difficult compared to their peers who do not have to encounter the same obstacles. As a way of rectifying this situation, some high awareness/low expectation participants chose to

adopt low standards, a mindset which Ladson-Billings (2002) refers to as ‘you-poor-dear syndrome.’ In taking this stance, these future practitioners made the conscious decision to lower the bar for the disadvantaged students described in the vignettes. Ladson-Billings refers to this practice as granting students “permission to fail” (p. 110).

Pre-service teachers are susceptible to implementing this practice if they develop critical awareness without also understanding the need to maintain high expectations for all. Future educators with high critical awareness and low teacher expectations are prone to falling back on fatalistic views of the education system based on their cognizance of how structural inequality is reproduced in our education system. High awareness teachers with low expectations often make statements that begin with “How can we expect students to learn when...” Given the ample research on the importance of teachers having high expectations (e.g., Lopez, 2017; van den Bergh et al., 2013; Good & Nichols, 2001) this seems like a problematic pattern.

However, pre-service teachers with low expectations are not necessarily unwilling to change their mindset. In fact, my interviews with high awareness/low expectation participants found that these pre-service teachers are quite open to messages around the need to set high expectations for all students, and are thus willing to change their thinking. This makes sense, given that high awareness teachers who set low expectations tend to do so from a place of empathy. Therefore, when these pre-service teachers are made aware of the fact that their low expectations only further impede disadvantaged students’ learning, they are willing to correct their approach. This pattern emerged in my interviews with four City University participants who started the semester with high critical awareness and low teacher expectations. Once their SFE instructor made it clear that setting low expectations further widens opportunity gaps, all four

participants adopted a belief in setting high expectations for all students, including those who are disadvantaged.

On the other hand, there are pre-service teachers who possess both low expectations and low critical awareness. For these individuals, their low expectations are often rooted in well-worn racist and classist stereotypes. In analyzing the interview data, I found that participants who maintained low critical awareness and low teacher expectations throughout the course allowed these stereotypes to heavily influence their professional reflection despite the fact that the SFE courses at both City University and Suburban University dedicated significant time to debunking these unfounded narratives.

I cannot say definitively that helping students to abandon their belief in stereotypes will subsequently translate into an increase in teacher expectations. After all, I did not find a significant correlation between changes in critical awareness and changes in teacher expectation. However, the interview data certainly showed a link between an adherence to stereotypes and low teacher expectations. I offer suggestions for how SFE instructors can handle this issue in the ‘Recommendations for Practice’ section below.

The Relationship between Teacher Expectations and Critical Awareness

The second research question that guided this study considered whether a relationship exists between changes in pre-service teachers’ levels of teacher expectation and critical awareness in the context of SFE courses. A Pearson correlation revealed that there is no significant relationship between the two variables. This finding is of particular interest because my review of the literature found that education scholars had not previously investigated potential relationships between these two variables in any setting within teacher education, let alone in the context of SFE courses. Thus, I do not have any prior research to compare this Pearson

correlation result to. Still, this finding shows that critical awareness and teacher expectations are two entirely different variables that need to be treated as separate entities. Below, I will discuss further what this finding means for SFE instructors.

SFE Courses Have Mainstream Value

One of the major findings from this study is that SFE courses can foster high expectations in pre-service teachers. This is particularly compelling because a plethora of prior research has found that teacher expectations can significantly affect student achievement (Lopez, 2017; van den Bergh et al., 2013; Good & Nichols, 2001). As I discussed in chapter one, there is currently a considerable amount of pushback against non-methodological coursework such as SFE. Critics of traditional teacher preparation programs argue that these courses add little value to the development of pre-service teachers and merely add to the burden of achieving certification. This, detractors say, makes it even more difficult to recruit talented individuals to take up the profession.

Proponents of SFE have long argued that the course does contribute to the development of effective pre-service teachers; however, empirical evidence of this contribution was often thin and not rooted in areas of teaching and learning that contemporary business-minded education reformers find compelling. By showing that SFE courses can increase pre-service teachers' expectations – which, as I mentioned above, is linked to student achievement – this study provides evidence that the class does have value in an area that is very meaningful to all education stakeholders. Hopefully, SFE scholars will continue building on this foundation and will explore additional, non-ideologically-driven ways in which the course contributes to the development of pre-service teachers.

Recommendations for Practice

Raising Pre-Service Teachers' Expectations in SFE Courses

The quantitative analyses I conducted for this study found that SFE courses are successful in raising pre-service teachers' critical awareness; however, there was no significant relationship between changes in critical awareness and changes in teacher expectations. This means that SFE instructors cannot assume that by raising their students' awareness they will also increase their expectations. Instead, they will need to treat critical awareness and teacher expectations as two unique constructs, with each deserving a significant amount of attention.

In fact, the qualitative results show that it is incumbent upon SFE instructors to discuss the importance of maintaining high expectations for all students throughout their SFE course. Students are not going to derive this message implicitly from awareness raising content. Additionally, SFE practitioners need to make a point of assigning readings that directly address why it is important to maintain high expectations for all students. Several participants were able to point to specific texts that helped raise their expectations. Thus, readings appear to be successful tools in this regard. Together, these results show that SFE courses are capable of raising pre-service teachers' expectations; however, this result is only achieved when instructors make a concerted effort to do so by discussing high expectations in class and assigning readings on the topic.

It is also worth noting that while City University participants as a whole made slight gains in teacher expectations, not all individuals experienced growth in this area, and some City University subjects even saw their expectations dip significantly. In fact, one City University participant said that her class did not address teacher expectations, contrary to what her classmates reported. While the student may be at fault for this discrepancy – perhaps she

frequently cut class and/or did not complete the course readings – this emphasizes why SFE instructors need to frequently reiterate the need to maintain high expectations for all students. If instructors treat teacher expectations as a one-off topic that only requires discussion once or twice over the course of a semester, students may fail to grasp the ‘high expectations for all’ message. Instead, instructors need to constantly revisit why maintaining high expectations is so critical.

As I noted above, some participants’ low expectations were rooted in stereotypical views of disadvantaged students and their families. The obvious recommendation is that SFE instructors need to spend more time tackling these unfounded views. However, my research found that SFE instructors at both City University and Suburban University did in fact devote significant class time to discrediting stereotypes, and while the majority of participants at both schools experienced growth in critical awareness over the course of the semester, there were still some subjects who failed to make gains in this area. SFE instructors need to consider how they can reach these individuals who are not responding positively to awareness-raising course content. In this regard, one thing that stood out is the fact that both institutions’ SFE courses spent more time analyzing inequity at the macro-level. In order to disabuse students of stereotypical views, it may be beneficial to include more micro-level examples (i.e., human anecdotes) of how inequity affects students and communities. Perhaps an approach that leans more heavily on pathos will resonate with these harder-to-reach pre-service teachers.

Identifying the Root of Low Expectations

As I mentioned above, pre-service teachers may enter an SFE course possessing low expectations for disadvantaged students, but the logic undergirding these expectations can differ significantly. With this in mind, it is critical that SFE instructors understand why some of the

pre-service teachers in their class believe in setting a lower bar for disadvantaged students, as the approach to raising pre-service teachers' expectations should vary based on what is informing their belief in low expectations. For pre-service teachers who possess high critical awareness, SFE instructors can simply explain how setting low expectations for disadvantaged students further widens the opportunity gap. For pre-service teachers who possess low critical awareness, SFE instructors will need to work with these individuals to eradicate their reliance on stereotypical views. This study found that the latter is particularly difficult. Therefore, SFE instructors may need to be persistent and creative in this effort.

Delivering a Clear Message on High Expectations

This study found that students who espoused a 'high expectations for all' mantra tended to score highest on the teacher expectations scale and managed to strike a healthy balance between the individual and structural orientations in their professional reflection. For SFE instructors, this message needs to be disseminated directly and emphatically. Instructors need to avoid discussing the idea of setting expectations on a student-by-student basis. Even when SFE instructors accompany support for individualized expectations with a disclaimer that a high bar needs to be maintained, they are – whether intentionally or not – encouraging pre-service teachers to use their personal judgment in determining where the bar should be set for students. This is problematic, as subjectivity may allow implicit bias and outright stereotyping to influence the level at which expectations are set for individual students. Biases aside, this message is also problematic because it only further widens gaps in both opportunity and achievement. Teachers who set a higher bar for higher performing students are merely creating a situation in which lower performing students continue to fall behind their peers. With this in mind, SFE instructors need to consistently and unflinchingly articulate a message of 'high expectations for all.'

Distinguishing between Expectation and Accommodation/Differentiation

Many of the focal participants who maintained low expectations over the course of the semester appeared to conflate expectation and accommodation/differentiation. These participants expressed a belief that expectations should be set on a case-by-case basis, thus supporting the idea of lowering the bar for students who are experiencing learning difficulties as opposed to making accommodations or differentiating their instruction. With this in mind, SFE instructors – and education faculty in general – need to clearly delineate between expectation and accommodation/differentiation. Further, these instructors must also emphasize that high expectations need to be maintained when educators make accommodations and provide differentiated instruction to struggling students.

Critical Awareness and Campus Location

In looking at the quantitative data, one of the findings that jumped out is in regards to the differences in mean critical awareness between the two universities featured in this study. Namely, City University participants possessed significantly higher levels of critical awareness pretest and posttest when compared to Suburban University students, particularly in looking at freshman participants. This finding is of interest because the pretest differences are not in any way a byproduct of the SFE courses; rather, they are indicative of the level of critical awareness that students show up to campus possessing.

SFE instructors at universities located in suburban areas would be wise to keep this critical awareness gap in mind when they think about how they work with their students. Specifically, course instructors should keep in mind that students who elect to attend suburban universities may arrive on campus with less baseline knowledge around structural inequality when compared to students who choose to enroll in urban universities. This might affect the type

of content that SFE instructors at suburban universities teach their students, as well as the means through which they disseminate this information.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study produced several interesting findings in regards to the role that SFE courses play in the development of pre-service teachers' critical awareness and expectations for disadvantaged students. However, there is still much that remains unknown about the relationship between SFE, critical awareness, and teacher expectations that requires future exploration. To begin, this research was situated inside of lectures halls on two college campuses, not in K-12 classrooms. This was intentional, because I wished to learn whether SFE courses create changes in pre-service teachers' levels of critical awareness and teacher expectations. However, since this research was not situated in actual classrooms, it is unknown whether high expectations developed in SFE courses are durable when teachers come directly in contact with students who are contending with the challenging structural hurdles that pre-service teachers learn about in SFE classes. One participant in this study, Jenny, serves as evidence that a negative experience in the field can outweigh a semester's worth of lessons around the importance of setting high expectations. While this finding is worrisome, it is important to note that Jenny represents a single instance. In order to determine whether Jenny's case is part of a larger trend or is simply an anomaly, it is necessary to follow pre-service teachers who experience a rise in teacher expectations into the classroom. Observing pre-service teachers in their work with disadvantaged students during student-teaching would shed light on whether high expectations that are developed in SFE courses are actually durable in practice.

Additionally, the matched comparison group (those who were not enrolled an SFE course) produced a particularly interesting finding with regards to teacher expectations that

deserves further exploration. Specifically, the 19 students who comprised this group experienced a significant decline in teacher expectations over the course of the semester, whereas the 113 treatment group students collectively made a slight yet insignificant gain in this area. The difference in sample size between the two groups is much too large to glean definitive results from any comparisons of them; yet, this result raises questions as to why students who are not education majors would experience a decline in expectation, and whether SFE having a neutral impact on teacher expectations – as this study found – should actually be considered a positive result.

Finally, more research is needed that considers how SFE courses improve the effectiveness of pre-service teachers in areas that are compelling to contemporary education reformers. If SFE courses are going to survive this current wave of teacher preparation reform, scholars who support the course are going to need to identify more ways that SFE creates ‘high-performing teachers’ based on criteria that reformers find meaningful. SFE scholars should conduct more research that explores whether further substantive links between SFE, effective teaching, and K-12 student academic achievement can be found.

Conclusion

This study produced several key findings with regards to SFE’s impact on the development of pre-service teachers, particularly in the areas of critical awareness and teacher expectations. In general, the results of this study show that SFE courses can play a positive role in grooming future educators to successfully work with disadvantaged students. Questions still linger with regards to how durable gains in teacher expectation are once pre-service teachers actually begin their work in classrooms, and this is something that needs to be investigated further in future research. However, this study proves that under the right conditions, SFE courses are able to

further pre-service teachers understanding of the myriad ways in which society and schools are inextricably linked while also increasing their expectations for disadvantaged students.

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APPENDIX A
SFE SURVEY

Contact Information

Please fill out your contact information if you would like to be eligible to win the prizes associated with participating in this study. You will only be contacted under two circumstances: (a) If you agree to participate in the survey portion of this study; and (b) If you win one of this study's prizes. Email will be the preferred form of communication for this study. The researcher will only use your phone number if he cannot reach you via email, or if an urgent matter comes up (e.g., postponing an interview). Your information will not be shared with anyone.

Name: _____

Email: _____ **Phone:** _____

Does the researcher have permission to contact you to participate in an interview for this study?

Yes _____

No _____

Demographic Questions

Please answer the following demographic questions:

Gender

Male _____

Female _____

Other _____

Race/Ethnicity

Asian _____

Black/African American _____

White _____

Hispanic/Latino _____

Native American/American Indian _____

Multiracial _____

Academic Classification

Freshman _____

Sophomore _____

Junior _____

Senior _____

Post-baccalaureate _____

Degree Program

Early Childhood Education _____

Middle Grades _____

Secondary Education _____

Other (Please specify)

Survey Items: *Please respond to each item by circling your level of agreement:*

- Middle-class students tend to put more into their schoolwork than low-income students.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Uncertain

Agree

Strongly Agree

- Issues related to racism and equity should be openly discussed in the classroom.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Uncertain

Agree

Strongly Agree

3. The most important goal in working with immigrant children and English language learners is that they assimilate into American society.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

4. As compared to students from other ethnic groups, White students are more likely to be academically successful.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

5. In general, White students place a higher value on education than do students of color.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

6. Regardless of a student's circumstances, teachers must always maintain high expectations.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

7. Differences in funding largely explain the differences in achievement between suburban and urban schools.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

8. White students work harder in school compared to African American and Latino students.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

9. Sometimes having empathy for a student means permanently lowering one's expectations for him/her.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

10. Students of color tend to have a more negative attitude toward education because studying in schools rarely pays off with good jobs for them.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

11. One of the main reasons that schools in low-income neighborhoods tend to struggle academically is because the students' parents don't care enough about education.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

12. It often seems as if students of color are not interested in school and schoolwork.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

13. Realistically, the job of a teacher is to prepare students for the lives they are likely to lead.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

14. College is not for everyone.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

15. Part of the responsibilities of the teacher is to challenge school arrangements that maintain social inequities.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

16. Teachers should teach students to think critically about government positions and actions.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

17. An important part of learning to be a teacher is examining one's own attitudes and beliefs about race, class, gender, disabilities, and sexual orientation.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

18. Good teaching incorporates diverse cultures and experiences into classroom lessons and discussions.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

19. It is appropriate for teachers to lower their expectations for students who have a difficult home life.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

20. High expectations should be maintained for all students regardless of the family's economic background.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

21. The primary reason that suburban schools tend to outperform urban schools is because they have a better academic culture.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

22. Integrating schools racially is important so that white students can set a good example for students of color.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

23. Whether students succeed in school depends primarily on how hard they work.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

24. Economically disadvantaged students have more to gain in schools because they bring less into the classroom.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

25. Although teachers have to appreciate diversity, it's not their job to change society.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

26. Teachers who move from a wealthy school to an impoverished school should adjust their expectations for their students accordingly.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

27. Low-income students require a different school experience than middle-class students.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

28. It's reasonable for teachers to have lower classroom expectations for students who don't speak English as their first language.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

29. Education is valued equally across all cultures.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

30. For the most part, covering multicultural topics is only relevant to certain subject areas, such as social studies and literature.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

31. Some racial groups are naturally more adept at math and science than others.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

APPENDIX B
FIRST-ROUND INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Section A: Background Information

- 1) Which teacher education program track are you on, and what year are you in at this university?
 - a. Have you attended any other colleges or universities besides Temple?
 - b. If an education minor, do you plan on teaching?
- 2) What made you want to become a teacher?

Section B: Views on Teaching

- 3) What type of school would you like to teach at once you've completed your teacher education program?
- 4) What influenced your decision to want to teach at this type of school?
- 5) Have you considered working in other types of schools?
 - a. Why or why not?

Section C: Professional Reflection on Student Struggles

- 6) Why do you think that there are achievement gaps in the United States between low-income students and wealthier students?
- 7) Why do you think that there are achievement gaps in the United States between white and Asian students and black and Latino students?
- 8) What do you think needs to happen in order for these gaps to be closed?
 - a. Is it realistic to think that we can close these gaps entirely?
 - i. Why or why not?
- 9) Please read the following vignette about a student who is experiencing difficulty learning.

Vignette 1

- a. What do you think is the cause of this student's learning difficulty?
 - i. Why do you think this?
- b. What actions would you take to solve this issue?
 - i. Why would you take this course of action?
- 10) Do you have any other ideas that you can think of for solving this issue?
 - a. If the student in this situation attended a wealthier school, would you handle the issue differently?
- 11) How frequently do you think teachers encounter issues like this in the classroom?
 - a. Do you think these issues are more prevalent in certain schools?
 - i. Why or why not?
- 12) When teachers encounter these sorts of issues, what should they keep in mind?
- 13) In your view, who else can provide support in helping to overcome these issues?
- 14) Please read the following vignette about a student who is experiencing difficulty learning.

Vignette 2

- a. What do you think is the cause of this student's learning difficulty?
 - i. Why do you think this?
 - b. What actions would you take to solve this issue?
 - i. Why would you take this course of action?
- 15) Do you have any other ideas that you can think of for solving this issue?
- a. If the student in this situation attended a wealthier school, would you handle the issue differently?
- 16) How frequently do you think teachers encounter issues like this in the classroom?
- a. Do you think these issues are more prevalent in certain schools?
 - i. Why or why not?
- 17) When teachers encounter these sorts of issues, what should they keep in mind?
- 18) In your view, who else can provide support in helping to overcome these issues?
- 19) Please read the following vignette about a student who is experiencing difficulty learning.

Vignette 3

- a. What do you think is the cause of this student's learning difficulty?
 - i. Why do you think this?
 - b. What actions would you take to solve this issue?
 - i. Why would you take this course of action?
- 20) Do you have any other ideas that you can think of for solving this issue?
- a. If the student in this situation attended a wealthier school, would you handle the issue differently?
- 21) How frequently do you think teachers encounter issues like this in the classroom?
- a. Do you think these issues are more prevalent in certain schools?
 - i. Why or why not?
- 22) When teachers encounter these sorts of issues, what should they keep in mind?
- 23) In your view, who else can provide support in helping to overcome these issues?

Section D: Teacher Expectations Questions

- 24) How should teachers handle their expectations for students who have really tough home lives?
- a. Should they push them as hard as everyone else?
- 25) When a teacher moves from a wealthy school to a poor school should they change their expectations for the students they are working with?
- a. How so?
 - b. Why?
- 26) Given what you know about society, do you think some students have obstacles in their life that are too great to overcome academically?
- a. Can you give examples?
 - b. What makes them too difficult to overcome?

APPENDIX C
SECOND-ROUND INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Section A: SFE Questions

- 1) Describe your views on the SFE course you took this semester.
- 2) What were some topics you discussed in the course that resonated with you?
- 3) What were some of the course's prominent themes?
- 4) How much time did the course devote to discussing teacher expectations?
- 5) How has this course influenced your thinking about setting expectations for students, particularly those who are disadvantaged?

Section B: Views on Teaching

- 6) What type of school would you like to teach at once you've completed your teacher education program?
- 7) What influenced your decision to want to teach at this type of school?
 - a. Did your SFE class influence your thinking on this?
- 8) Have you considered working in other types of schools?
 - a. Why or why not?

Section C: Professional Reflection on Student Struggles

- 9) Why do you think that there are achievement gaps in the United States between low-income students and wealthier students?
 - a. To what extent did the SFE class influence your thinking on this?
- 10) Why do you think that there are achievement gaps in the United States between white and Asian students and black and Latino students?
 - a. To what extent did the SFE class influence your thinking on this?
- 11) What do you think needs to happen in order for these gaps to be closed?
 - a. To what extent did the SFE class influence your thinking on this?
 - b. Is it realistic to think that we can close these gaps entirely?
 - i. Why or why not?
- 12) Please read the following vignette about a student who is experiencing difficulty learning.

Vignette 1

- a. What do you think is the cause of this student's learning difficulty?
 - i. Why do you think this?
 - ii. To what extent did the SFE class influence your thinking on this?
- b. What actions would you take to solve this issue?
 - i. Why would you take this course of action?
 - ii. To what extent did the SFE class influence your thinking on this?
- 13) Do you have any other ideas that you can think of for solving this issue?
 - a. If the student in this situation attended a wealthier school, would you handle the issue differently?
- 14) How frequently do you think teachers encounter issues like this in the classroom?

- a. Do you think these issues are more prevalent in certain schools?
 - i. Why or why not?
- 15) When teachers encounter these sorts of issues, what should they keep in mind?
- 16) In your view, who else can provide support in helping to overcome these issues?
- 17) Please read the following vignette about a student who is experiencing difficulty learning.

Vignette 2

- a. What do you think is the cause of this student's learning difficulty?
 - i. Why do you think this?
 - ii. To what extent did the SFE class influence your thinking on this?
- b. What actions would you take to solve this issue?
 - i. Why would you take this course of action?
 - ii. To what extent did the SFE class influence your thinking on this?
- 18) Do you have any other ideas that you can think of for solving this issue?
 - a. If the student in this situation attended a wealthier school, would you handle the issue differently?
- 19) How frequently do you think teachers encounter issues like this in the classroom?
 - a. Do you think these issues are more prevalent in certain schools?
 - i. Why or why not?
- 20) When teachers encounter these sorts of issues, what should they keep in mind?
- 21) In your view, who else can provide support in helping to overcome these issues?
- 22) Please read the following vignette about a student who is experiencing difficulty learning.

Vignette 3

- a. What do you think is the cause of this student's learning difficulty?
 - i. Why do you think this?
 - ii. To what extent did the SFE class influence your thinking on this?
- b. What actions would you take to solve this issue?
 - i. Why would you take this course of action?
 - ii. To what extent did the SFE class influence your thinking on this?
- 23) Do you have any other ideas that you can think of for solving this issue?
 - a. If the student in this situation attended a wealthier school, would you handle the issue differently?
- 24) How frequently do you think teachers encounter issues like this in the classroom?
 - a. Do you think these issues are more prevalent in certain schools?
 - i. Why or why not?
- 25) When teachers encounter these sorts of issues, what should they keep in mind?
- 26) In your view, who else can provide support in helping to overcome these issues?

Section D: Teacher Expectations Questions

- 27) How should teachers handle their expectations for students who have really tough home lives?
 - a. Should they push them as hard as everyone else?

- b. To what extent did the SFE class influence your thinking on this?
- 28) When a teacher moves from a wealthy school to a poor school should they change their expectations for the students they are working with?
- a. How so?
 - b. To what extent did the SFE class influence your thinking on this?
- 29) Given what you know about society, do you think some students have obstacles in their life that are too great to overcome academically?
- a. Can you give examples?
 - b. If yes, what makes them too difficult to overcome?
 - c. To what extent did the SFE class influence your thinking on this?

APPENDIX D VIGNETTES

Vignette #1

Jaquan is a student at a racially segregated school in Philadelphia in which 100% of the student population qualifies for free or reduced price lunch. Jaquan regularly comes to school without completing his homework, and when asked by his teacher about whether he studied at home to prepare for an important test, Jaquan replies that he didn't.

Vignette #2

Selena is one of the few students in the Lower Merion School District – one of the strongest and wealthiest districts in the state – who qualifies for free or reduced price lunch. Her dad was recently shot and killed. Since she has returned to school following the incident, she has struggled on vocabulary quizzes, consistently producing the lowest scores in the class. Selena often stares off into space when she's supposed to be copying the vocabulary words and definitions from the projection screen into her notebook. On other occasions, she puts her head down.

Vignette #3

Fatima arrived in the United States last year as a refugee fleeing Syria's war and poverty. Her mother, who is worried about Fatima's college prospects, insists that she is an AP-level student in your subject area and wants you to recommend that she be elevated to the AP track next year; however, her grades from her first semester in your class are not on par with what is expected of AP students.

APPENDIX E CODEBOOK

Accommodation/Differentiation

This code will be used when participants discuss making accommodations/differentiating work for students. This code will also be used when participants conflate expectations with making accommodations/differentiating work.

Asset-based Perspective

This code will be utilized when participants discuss hypothetical students' strengths and resources that may be available to them. This includes statements that reflect a positive view of students' community and culture as well.

Critical Awareness - High

This code will be utilized when participants' statements reveal high levels of critical awareness based on the definition employed in this study. Specifically, this code will be used when participants show an understanding of how broader social forces create obstacles in student learning.

Critical Awareness - Low

This code will be utilized when participants' statements reveal low levels of critical awareness based on the definition employed in this study. This code pertains to moments when participants display an ignorance or a rejection of information related to structural inequity, particularly as it pertains to making sense of the cause(s) of student learning difficulties.

Deficit Perspective

This code will be utilized when participants discuss hypothetical students using what Ladson-Billings refers to as a "language of lacking." This code encompasses statements that analyze students through a negative lens without acknowledging student strengths. These negative statements may also place blame for students' struggles on their families, communities, and culture.

False Definition of Reality

This code will be utilized when participants espouse myths about certain student groups (racial, socioeconomic, gender) that are not rooted in empirical evidence. Examples include: "Black students' families don't care as much about education" and "Women don't enter STEM programs because they are not as good at math."

Field Work

This code will be utilized when participants discuss field work experiences.

High Expectations for All

This code will be utilized when participants express a belief in maintaining high expectations for all students.

Hypothetical Behavior

This code will be utilized when participants discuss hypothetical actions that they would take in the classroom to address student learning difficulties.

Individualized Expectations

This code will be utilized when participants express a belief in setting expectations on a case-by-case basis.

Individual Orientation - Demanding Success

This code will be utilized when participants view the cause of/provide solutions to student learning difficulties through an individual lens, but do so in a manner that shows high

expectations. For example, “Jaquan may not care about school, but I’m not going to let him slack off during class.”

Individual Orientation - Permission to Fail

This code will be utilized when participants view the cause of/propose solutions to student learning difficulties through an individual lens, and do so in a manner that shows low expectations. For example, “Jaquan doesn’t care about school, so there’s not much I can do.”

Other Courses

This code will be utilized when students mention the impact of other courses that they are taking.

Parents

This code will be utilized when participants discuss working with the parents of disadvantaged children.

Permission to Fail

This code will be utilized when participants explicitly express a sentiment of low expectations that comes from a place of empathy as opposed to bigotry.

Personal Experience - Student

This code will be utilized when participants discuss how their own personal experiences as a student affected their views.

Personal Experience - Other

This code will be utilized when participants discuss how their own personal experiences outside of school (e.g., work, family life, etc.) affected their views.

Professional Reflection - Cause

This code will be utilized when participants discuss what they believe to be the causes of student learning difficulties.

Professional Reflection - Solution

This code will be utilized when participants discuss what they believe to be the solutions to student learning difficulties.

Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

This code will be utilized when participants cite examples of self-fulfilling prophecies in their statements. For example, if a participant says, “I went to school with lots of poor students. They didn’t care as much about school, and a lot of them failed.”

SFE - Influence

This code will be utilized when participants make statements that attribute their thoughts or actions to their SFE course.

Stereotypes

This code will be utilized when participants lean on stereotypes in discussing disadvantaged students, their parents, and under-resourced schools.

Structural Orientation - Demanding Success

This code will be utilized when participants view the cause of/propose solutions to student learning difficulties through a structural lens, but do so in a manner that shows high expectations. For example, “Maybe Jaquan doesn’t study often because both of his parents work at night, but he still needs to develop strong study habits so that he can be successful in school.”

Structural Orientation - Permission to Fail

This code will be utilized when participants view the cause of/propose solutions to student learning difficulties through a structural lens, but do so in a manner that shows low expectations. For example, “Jaquan probably doesn’t have anyone to help him study at home because of work obligations. I can’t really expect him to succeed academically in a situation like that.”

Teacher Expectations - High

This code will be utilized when participants' statements reveal high levels of teacher expectations based on the definition employed in this study.

Teacher Expectations - Low

This code will be utilized when participants' statements reveal low levels of teacher expectations based on the definitions employed in this study.

Teacher Expectations - Uncertain

This code will be utilized when participants' statements reveal that they are uncertain about how they should be setting expectations for disadvantaged students.