

Representation Matters: Curriculum Interrogation
Through a Culturally Responsive Lens

by

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ABSTRACT

One of the primary research aims of this study was to create a more culturally responsive course curriculum that is inclusive of diverse perspectives to better engage with an increasingly diverse student population. This small-scale study utilized an Action Research (AR) approach. Using Critical Race Theory as the primary guiding theoretical framework with the support of both the Social Cognitive Career Theory and Systems Theory Framework, this study sought to interrogate a major and career explorations curriculum through a culturally responsive lens. The goal of the interrogation was to make changes to the curriculum and implement a more inclusive curriculum. Participants in the study included faculty associates and students of the UNI150 Major and Career Explorations course located within The College at Arizona State University (ASU). Data was collected in the form of surveys, focus groups, student artifacts, lecture observations and analytical memos from the researcher. The AR study included two initial cycles of research and the intervention. The intervention consisted of two phases of data collection and data analysis. A thematic analysis was conducted using codebooks. The study concluded that it was necessary to make changes to the UNI150 curriculum and that modifications like these have the potential to create systemic change. More data is needed to understand the impact of collaborative curriculum redesign and the impact of implementing a culturally responsive curriculum. Implications for future research related to interrogating and implementing a redesigned curriculum through a culturally responsive lens are presented and discussed.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to all the students of color who sat in classrooms, engaged with learning materials, and navigated their academic experiences without ever feeling seen, valued, or heard. We can do better to ensure that all students are prepared for success upon graduation and that all students experience inclusive educational experiences. We must do better.

I dedicate this dissertation to anyone who has ever experienced pushback in their efforts to pursue change. Keep going! Do what you must do, stay the course, ask for help along the way but do not ever let anyone stand in your way. Stay true to your mission, to your goals and to your purpose. As women of color, students of color, as historically underrepresented minorities, it sometimes feels like we must work twice as hard to get to where we want to be, I understand you. Find your community. Find your support system, but never ever waiver in your pursuit to accomplish your dreams. Si Se Puede!

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“I change myself, I change the world.”

- Gloria Anzaldúa

CHAPTER 1

LARGER AND LOCAL CONTEXTS

Students entering higher education institutions reflect our country’s increasingly diverse population. This increase in student diversity has many implications for higher education institutions. Efforts put forth by universities across the country to diversify their student population must be matched with intentional efforts to support the success of the increasing numbers of underrepresented minority (URM) students on campuses. Colleges and universities must find ways to retain, educate, and provide access to equitable educational outcomes for URM students. With the changing demographics in higher education comes the need to assess the way we attend to URM students via the services, programs, guidance, and educational experiences we provide for them.

Unfortunately, in many ways academia is still a place where URM students do not see themselves represented in the course curriculum, and/or in the faculty, staff, and peers they engage with. Efforts to increase representation and promote understanding about why representation matters are critical for universities now more than ever. Creating educational spaces where URM students feel seen and supported includes ensuring course curricula and pedagogy reflects the experiences, knowledge, and needs of diverse student populations.

The problem of practice (PoP) explored in this study centers on the idea that while the undergraduate student population is becoming more diverse, representation of diversity in course curriculum and culturally responsive pedagogies in classrooms is lacking. The goal of

this study was twofold; first, to interrogate and redesign the existing curriculum using a culturally responsive lens, and second, to implement the redesigned curriculum, using culturally responsive pedagogies. By developing coursework and teaching in ways that students of diverse backgrounds can relate to, we create learning environments that foster positive and inclusive educational experiences for all students. Understanding what happens when we implement a more culturally responsive and inclusive curriculum contributes to the development of intentional efforts aimed at increasing student retention and positive occupational outcomes post-graduation.

Larger Context

Understanding the importance of diversity and representation in curriculum starts with understanding the larger context this issue is situated in. This section explores national statistics and literature related to undergraduate and faculty demographics, diversity and equity in the classroom, and the role of identity in undergraduate student success.

Undergraduate Students and Faculty Demographics

Knowing the demographics of the undergraduate student population in the United States is critical to understanding how we serve them. In Fall 2019, Bustamante (2019) reported that 21.9 million undergraduate students were enrolled in colleges and universities across the United States. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES),

The percentage of American college students who are Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Black has been increasing. From fall 1976 to fall 2017, the percentage of Hispanic students rose from 4 percent to 19 percent of all U.S. residents enrolled in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, and the percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander students rose from 2 percent to 7 percent. The percentage of Black students

increased from 10 percent in 1976 to 14 percent in 2017, but the 2017 percentage reflects a decrease since 2011, when Black students made up 15 percent of all enrolled U.S. residents. The percentage of American Indian/Alaska Native students in 2017 (0.7 percent) was about the same as in 1976 (0.7 percent). During the same period, the percentage of White students fell from 84 percent to 56 percent. (2017)

While there has been a significant increase in the diversity of the student population over the years, there are still large gaps between the numbers of students of color and their White counterparts. The racial and ethnic diversity of the faculty population is just as important as the student population on higher education campuses. In Fall 2017, the NCES, reported that 76 % of faculty members in the US were White compared to 24% non-White faculty members. Like students, White faculty make up most of the faculty population. While the student population is growing more diverse, a divide between the percentage of diverse faculty and diverse student populations remains. NCES reported that only 5% of faculty members were Hispanic, compared to that of 20% of undergraduates identifying as Hispanic. Black faculty represented 6% of the total faculty while black undergraduates represented 14% of the total undergraduate population of the United States. With the slow but steady increase in culturally diverse student populations, higher education institutions are making efforts to increase the cultural diversity of faculty and staff. Similarly to URM students, increasing the numbers of diverse faculty is one challenge, supporting their retention, promotion, and representation on campus is another.

There are many obstacles in the way of minority faculty who seek to obtain tenure. Minority faculty who are eligible for tenure are underrepresented which decreases their

ability to advocate for cultural diversity in higher education (Abdul-Raheem, 2016). If higher education is committed to supporting URM students, they must commit to supporting diverse faculty, because research shows a culturally diverse *environment* is beneficial to meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse population of students (Abdul-Raheem, 2016). With a lack of diversity and representation at the faculty level, minority students are often left to feel unseen and unsupported and lack access to faculty they can relate to and faculty that can advocate for them.

The large enrollment gap between URM students and their White peers coupled with the lack of diversity among faculty poses several challenges for the URM student population in US universities and colleges (Graham, 1992; Nguyen & Ryan, 2008). First, there is a lack of faculty understanding on how to engage with students of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This is due in large part to the canon of teaching and learning scholarship representing research conducted in spaces where the students are predominately white. For example, Sarah Graham (1992) found that most students who engaged in student motivation research were predominantly from White, middle-class backgrounds.

Other factors that contribute to the unequal outcomes for URM students include institutional cognitive frames. Cognitive frames are “the rules of reasoning” that govern how people interpret situations and create rules and structures around those interpretations (Bensimon, 2005). Cognitive frames can contribute to significant learning problems such as lack of engagement at higher education institutions that almost always negatively affect URM students. “Individuals whose institutional roles can influence whether students are successful or not need to learn cognitive processes that enable them to think about the situation of URM students and their outcomes through the lens of equity” (Bensimon, 2005,

p. 100). A focus on understanding the diversity of both the institution and the student population are important aspects of viewing success through the lens of equity. An institution can implement programs and task forces to address the lack of diversity at the faculty and staff level but if neither trickle down to the classroom, the students who would potentially benefit the most will not receive said benefits. An example provided by Nguyen & Ryan (2008) states that the classroom environment can significantly undermine students' abilities and disproportionately affects historically URM students, who face unique challenges resulting from feelings of social isolation, low confidence, and stereotype threat.

Diversity and Representation in Curriculum

When culturally responsive pedagogical practices are implemented, both the educator and the student benefit by making learning environments more inclusive. Teachers who use a culturally responsive method in their teaching see culture as a strength which can be used to effectively enhance academic and social achievement (Ladson-Billings, 2009). The implementation of diversity initiatives with intentionality is important not only for URM students but also for educational processes throughout institutions. Milem, Chang, and Antonio (2005) noted that institutions should be attentive of their “tendency to focus on diversity as an end in itself, rather than as an educational process that—when properly implemented—has the potential to enhance many important educational outcomes” (p. 16).

The undergraduate classroom environment gives educators an opportunity to positively impact students' success. In the classroom, students are provided with various learning opportunities via lectures, classroom participation, coursework, and curriculum. Unfortunately, it is here where we see the exclusion of diverse perspectives. Patton (2016) suggests that most curriculum operates with a disposition toward “cannon” knowledge

ensuring Whiteness remains embedded, regardless of subject matter. Higher education has been traditionally dominated by white scholars who have passed down this thinking from generation to generation. While there have been significant changes to higher education diversity and inclusion policies, these issues are still present in classrooms across the country today. Despite the demographic shift in the United States, the academy is still very traditional in terms of representation of White students, curriculum, policies, and campus spaces (Patton, 2016). Creating educational spaces that are more inclusive of diverse student perspectives can create more engaging experiences for all students. Students should have access to a broad range of ideas, occurrences and developments that shape the world and communities they live in. This challenge calls for responding to the question of representation as bodies, as well as knowledge, through our curriculum and classroom pedagogies (Dei, 2016). A total and comprehensive curriculum review is necessary to ensure each course is providing an inclusive education. Curriculum review is essential to create resonance between what is within the academy and its relevance to the real world and real lives outside of the institution (Dei, 2006).

Attending to the teaching gap has been another effort put forth by researchers and administrators to promote student achievement. “A teaching gap plays an influential role in enhancing or reducing the likelihood of an achievement gap in higher education for diverse students” (Yuan, 2017, p. 35). Closing the teaching gap has the potential to close the achievement gap for students from diverse backgrounds. Yuan (2017) states:

As students from various minority backgrounds encounter curriculum that may not be framed in ways that resonate with them, pedagogy that is insensitive to their cultural backgrounds and assumptions, faculty attitudes and expectations that reflect

destructive stereotypes, or other aspects of the learning environment, they may not perform up to their potential, thereby continuing a systematic disparity in performance between them and their white counterparts (p. 35).

With this in mind, it is important that we continue to attend to and put forth effort to provide for all of our students an effective and equitable learning environment. This can be accomplished by including culturally responsive teaching. Culturally responsive teaching, established as a practice by Geneva Gay (2010), is defined as “using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for students.” (p. 147).

Culturally Responsive Teaching and Identity Formation in Undergraduate Students

It is important to encourage URM and undergraduate students to attend to their own identity as a lens with which to view their academic experience. Culturally responsive teaching has been utilized as a tool to accomplish this goal. Gay (2010) wrote, *Culturally Responsive Teaching*, in which she reviewed several culturally responsive curricular programs and pedagogical practices that have proven successful in promoting the academic achievement of African American, Native American, Latino, and Asian American students. In her investigation of various curriculums, she found that students learn content through examples of their own culture and from their peers sharing their cultures. She writes, “Teaching is most effective when ecological factors, such as prior experiences, community settings, cultural backgrounds, and ethnic identities of teachers and students, are included in its implementation” (Gay, 2010, p. 28).

For educators and academic institutions to help students navigate their own identity formation and find success in their academic experience, they must all have equity at the

forefront of that effort. A culturally focused pedagogy provides students with the opportunity to feel more included in the classroom and curriculum, as well as helps educators invest in the promotion of academic equity. Ladson-Billings (1995) created a theoretical framework for culturally relevant pedagogy, which included teachers encouraging academic success and helping students to be culturally conscious. She writes, “Not only must teachers encourage academic success and cultural competence, but they must also help students to recognize, understand, and critique current social inequities” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 476). This intentionality put forth by teachers and educators is one that both enables educators to better connect with their students but also promotes identity formation and cultural awareness in the classroom. The qualitative study conducted by Ladson-Billings’ (1995) of African American students revealed that it was possible to address cultural identity within the school context, and that doing so actually helped to sustain students' academic engagement. The students saw themselves represented in the course and excelled as a result.

Providing students with the opportunity to connect with their culture and identity in the classroom is invaluable to the experience of undergraduate students. Leong (2010) wrote about the value of cultural formation as a tool for career counselors. He writes, “an individual’s sense of self, which is culturally situated, is also implicated in his or her psychosocial environment and level of functioning in it” (Leong, 2010, p. 378). In his effort to utilize a cultural formation approach to career assessment and career counseling, he intentionally included cultural identity as a key component, “Cultural identity as a core C-DAC component involves taking account of cultural differences that may overlay each of the other components and influence individual career development and vocational behavior” (Leong, 2010, p. 379). Leong (2010) noted that conceptions of self can influence how

individuals think about their careers, make career decisions, and perceive their vocational development. Leong, et. al., (2010) went on to describe the need for their vocational counselors to consider how identity provides a context for understanding vocational difficulties. The formation of culture and identity play an important role in both the student experience as well as the career exploration experience. For students to be able to better make decisions moving forward, a strong understanding of who they are, not just their interests, is important. Leong, et. al. (2010) concluded “to ignore cultural factors by restricting career development solely to attaining personal interests and implementing personal values is not only inaccurate but potentially dangerous for those individuals who come from a collectivistic cultural framework where the focus is on an interdependent self-construal” (p. 471).

In summary, the larger context of higher education provides insight into the demographics of undergraduate students and faculty across the country, the role diversity and representation play in the student experience and the efficacy of culturally responsive teaching practices in the classroom. Understanding how this problem is situated nationally informed the structure of this dissertation study.

Local Context

The local context described here first will provide information about where the problem of practice is located, and the situated context will provide information about how the problem and those involved in the research play a role in the investigation of the problem.

Arizona State University

ASU demographic data presents an even more pressing issue of diversity and representation. Over the course of the last 10 years the undergraduate student population has slowly diversified. Percentage and percentage differences of the undergraduate student population, based on race/ethnicity, over the course of the last 10 years are provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Student Enrollment Demographics from 2009 and 2019

	Fall 2009	Total 54,277	Fall 2019	Total 53,286	
	Number	% Of Total Enrollment	Number	% Of Total Enrollment	% Increase/ Decrease
White students	34,589	64%	29,721	56%	-8%
Hispanic/ Latino	8,734	16%	15,740	29%	+13%
Black/ African American Students	2,767	5%	2,630	5%	0%
Asian Students	3,295	6%	4,869	9%	3%
American Indian Students	1,211	2%	797	2%	0%
International Students	1,328	2%	4,787	9%	7%

While we can see that there has been a significant increase in the number of Hispanic/Latino and International undergraduate students as well as a slight decrease in the number of White and American Indian students, White students still currently make up to 56% of the undergraduate student population at ASU and Black/African American and American Indian students make up less than 5% of the student population.

Social and Cultural Climate at ASU

In the summer of 2020, social justice movements took over. Efforts to end the countless events of police brutality on the black community and on communities of color intensified after George Floyd's murder was caught on camera and made public. The nation watched as the Trump administration actively avoided the condemnation of such acts and stood by as the administration made no attempt at calming the families affected by these events or to unite the communities that poured out into the streets chanting, "I Can't Breathe." Not long after, the Trump administration proceeded to threaten the protections of both DACA and International student's enrollment status. This caused a wave of anxiety and heightened sense of insecurity in a community that had been already immensely impacted by the coronavirus pandemic which was approaching its third or fourth month of intensity across the United States. Some students quarantined at home and attended school remotely during all of this while others had to step out of their homes to work because they were classified as essential. The social justice movements presented a need for increased awareness on the part of higher education institutions across the country and a heightened awareness of the needs to support traditionally marginalized students. Dr. Michael Crow, ASU President, sent out a series of emails to the entire ASU community throughout the summer addressing these happenings. In one email addressing the events proceeding the George Floyd murder he stated:

These incidents, and countless others, remind us that we have so much more to do to achieve our common aspiration for social justice in this country. They are also a reminder to turn a mirror on ourselves to identify our own missteps, inadequacies, and deficiencies and to acknowledge our institutional responsibility to do more than

we ever have before in the fight for equality and social justice. (M. Crow, personal communication, September 2nd, 2020)

This acknowledgement that there is so much more work to be done in the effort to achieve equality and social justice was a valuable message of hope and a motivating message in support of members of the ASU community who are doing this work.

Personally, I was appreciative of the acknowledgement as his words came as a hard reminder of the realities of student life at ASU as well as an example that being direct in your messaging and clear about what events had transpired, was the most effective way to connect with the diverse ASU community. Still, I was skeptical that much would occur after the email. Fortunately, not more than a few months after sending that email, Dr. Crow, in working with a diverse faculty and staff advisory board, created “25 Starting Actions” that focus on efforts to advance meaningful change in the fight for equality and social justice at ASU and beyond. One of these actions is to develop fellowships for underserved communities and build a multicultural space. In his email he wrote that the universities need “to acknowledge our institutional responsibility to do more than we ever have before in the fight for equality and social justice.”

Additionally, to attend to the issues that faced international students who were planning to be enrolled in online/remote learning because of the coronavirus pandemic, and whose visa status was also in question, ASU Provost Mark Searle said in an email to the entire ASU community:

Specifically, ASU does not believe the new regulations and procedures proposed by ICE will have a material impact on the university or its international students. Students attending ASU on a F-1 visa in fall 2020 will continue to participate in

immersive, synchronous classroom instruction both in-person and through ASU Sync, our digitally enhanced, synchronous immersive learning modality. (M. Searle, personal communication, July 7th, 2020)

With so much going on and so many cultural, social and community issues to address, ASU has done a lot to ensure the safety and security of their students by reflecting on social justice efforts and acting swiftly to ensure that students of diverse backgrounds have support and are heard. To mirror the efforts being made by the executive leadership team at ASU in implementing and affecting changes that are reflective of diversity, equity and inclusion policies, this study interrogated the curriculum to ensure it aligned with these efforts. Interrogating and revising the curriculum contributed to President Crow's effort of ensuring students are provided with an equitable learning environment.

The Major and Career Exploration Program

The Major and Career Explorations program at ASU offers a series of one credit classes geared towards helping motivate students to confidently select a major and career that reflects their personality and interests. The courses are UNI150, UNI250, and UNI270 and the curriculums are designed to include a variety of personality assessments, career interest assessments, and information related to career exploration, preparedness, and development. The courses are populated with "exploratory students," undergraduate students who have yet to declare their major, have decided to take some time to explore what majors might be best for them and students who have failed out of their major programs and have been required to take the one-unit course to declare another major. Most students are first and second-year students and mirror the ethnic/racial enrollment of the university: students in the courses are predominately White with a few students being from diverse cultural, or ethnic/racial groups.

At the time of this dissertation study, most of the instructors of the courses were Faculty Associates (FA). FAs are part time faculty who possess either a master's or a Doctorate and are employed either in another department at ASU or elsewhere.

UNI 150

The course at the center of this action research study was the UNI150: Major and Career Exploration course within the Major and Career Explorations (MCE) department. The purpose of the course is to “help students with the initial steps of *career exploration* -- learning more about themselves. The goal is to help them identify their *interests, values, and personality* all while researching parallels with various major and career options. Students who have these factors aligned with one another are more likely to be *motivated and successful* in their career paths” (Arizona State University, 2002). The course includes a variety of assessments, reflection assignments, career competency exercises and an informational interview.

UNI150 was originally designed by a vocational psychologist nearly a decade ago and prior to this study, had not been critically analyzed or revised. As we saw above in Table 1, the student demographics at ASU have changed over the last 10 years with less White students and more Hispanic/Latinx students enrolled in undergraduate programs. With careful consideration put forth to design a course wherein students would invest time and effort into understanding their own personal work values, interests, and personality to strengthen their career decision-making skills, it is also important to ensure that this course is inclusive of the diverse perspectives of our changing student demographic. Most notably left out of the course was intentionality encouraging students to understand how their own identity, culture or diversity plays a role in their career decision-making. Aligning with the

call from Dr. Crow to invest in change, I was hopeful that interrogating and redesigning this course through a culturally responsive lens would better support a diverse student population in their major and career exploration.

Through early cycles of research, the syllabus was analyzed for themes related to diversity. I found this was an issue when the diversity assignment was geared more towards an issue that exists outside of the student's immediate context. The modules included diversity as something that exists externally and not one that affects students' lives now or that asks them to reflect on the importance of diversity in their career decision-making process. I witnessed some students struggle to understand how the assignment played a role in the learning outcomes and White students struggle to identify themselves as having a diverse category to include in the assignment. In initial anecdotal conversations with instructors who taught the course, they agreed with the sentiments expressed by students that the assignment was an issue. Some described students not feeling connected to the assignment and feeling that it was unclear and not applicable. Earlier cycles of research confirmed this was a problem and so the cycles of research that followed invested in a deeper analysis of the curriculum.

My Instructor Role

When I taught this course for the first time in the fall 2019 semester, I learned about how valuable and powerful decision-making can be. I saw students struggle to decide which major to choose and saw students become riddled with anxiety over how permanent that decision felt. One student shared with me that she was worried that her parents would not support her decision after she made it and that while they did not have a college degree, they only wanted her to pursue the degrees they felt would provide her with a high paying career.

After completing several assessments and watching them present their ideas in the course, themes emerged that allowed them to develop more confidence in the way they spoke about their interests. Then, students were given tasks to complete an informational interview with someone in their field of interest but someone that was not faculty. The idea then was that students be tasked with the responsibility of being resourceful, looking outside of their immediate context and reaching out to someone unfamiliar to them to gather information about their career, their professional or academic journey. Several students were able to complete this assignment without issue while other students encountered issues with access. One student mentioned that transportation off-campus was challenging for her because she did not have access to a car. Another student struggled to fulfill the requirements of this assignment because she could not afford to travel off-campus or to call a mobile transportation service to take her to the informational interview. Then, there were two students, who identified as Latinas, who said that they wanted to meet with engineers in the field but were nervous to reach out to anyone. They mentioned that they would love to see more Latinas in STEM and that perhaps if they did see more Latinas in engineering positions, that they would feel more comfortable reaching out.

This experience and these interactions made me question the access students have to people and information but also, the impact representation can have on underrepresented students. It is for this reason that I decided to explore this issue in my action research study. It was my goal to strengthen the UNI150 course curriculum and to become a more socially responsible and aware instructor for my current students and future students.

My Background

In addition to being the instructor of the UNI150 course and a doctoral student, I am also a mother of two small children, ages 4 and 7 years old, a wife and a Research Program Manager for the Center for Broadening Participation in STEM. The work I do here is centered on increasing the intentionality with which we serve our Latinx population of students at the community college level. I help faculty, staff, and educators in translating and applying theory and research on culturally responsive education. I support educators in implementing effective practices that are guided by knowledge, skills, and values needed to improve the diversity of the STEM technical workforce. My team uses Communities of Practice to transform STEM education for Latinx students at two-year Hispanic serving institutions. Additionally, we work with rural community colleges to assess their STEM related curriculums to ensure that they are providing relevant and accessible information for students that are traditionally underrepresented in STEM fields. In my role, I created a Culturally Responsive Recruitment and Retention (CRRR) framework (in Appendix F) to ensure the inclusive, intentional, equitable and student-centered practices related to recruitment and retention of diverse students in undergraduate research experiences. I utilized the knowledge and experience I have developed in this position, as a resource to guide my intervention. Learning how to have critical discussions about our URM students with faculty and staff, learning how to look critically at curriculum to ensure it is meeting the needs of all of our students, as well as learning how to implement culturally responsive teaching methods helped support this research study.

Not long ago, I was invited to be a member of a private Facebook group called, “Latinas Completing Doctoral Degrees,” which was created in July 2013 by Dr. Sofia

Bautista Pertuz. The purpose of the group is to create a space where Latinas who are considering pursuing a doctorate, are currently pursuing a doctorate or who have already had a doctorate, can share their struggles and triumphs, and seek out or share resources for success. This social media account jumped from 6,000 followers to approximately 7,000 followers in less than one year. Members of the group are often sharing their gratitude for the existence of the group, their thoughts about Latinas in higher education, and their hope to increase the representation of Latinas in higher education for the younger generation. While navigating the group page I found a flyer for an event called, #DinnerConDoctoras, which is an initiative created by Dr. Lorena Marquez of Cal Poly Pomona to gather this demographic of women together to break bread and share stories of their academia journeys over dinner. I contacted Dr. Marquez to inquire about the initiative and decided to host my own #DinnerConDoctora in Arizona. The turnout was incredible. There were roughly 45 women in the room from all different fields and stages in their academic careers. Around the room, I kept hearing, "I wish I had seen more Latinas in Higher Education when I was in my program at the university." This left such an impression on me that I decided to create my own social media platform on both Instagram and Facebook called, "Academic Mujeres." On these platforms, I share profiles of Latinas in higher education to increase the visible representation of Latinas in higher education and show students that there are more people that look like them out there even though they might not see themselves represented in their immediate programs of study. The overarching goal is to increase representation of women of color in higher education, educate students, share their stories, promote success in interdisciplinary fields and soon, expand the demographic to include more underrepresented groups. Aligning with my goal for my study, it has always been important for me to advocate

for the inclusion of underrepresented groups in academia. Through these experiences and efforts, I continue to work to create spaces wherein underrepresented minoritized individuals can see themselves represented, connect, and feel a sense of belonging.

Along with my current work teaching the UNI 150 course and my position as a Research Program Manager making space for URM students' experiences and cultures in STEM curriculum, as a URM and a woman of color, I have first-hand experience about the need for and value of representation in a college student's university experiences. I first became aware of educational inequality and inequity when I was an undergraduate student pursuing my bachelor's degree in psychology at San Diego State University. I worked three jobs to pay for my college tuition and rarely was able to attend office hours or on-campus activities. I was often the student that sat in the back and never asked questions and was oftentimes the only student of color in the classroom. I remember one experience where I had asked for an extension on an assignment and the professor told me that if I didn't have so many jobs, I could get the assignments in on time. He suggested I ask my parents (divorced by then) for financial assistance or apply for student loans (I was ineligible at the time.) He associated my request for a flexible deadline due to work as a lack of commitment and did not grant me the extension. I will never forget that moment. I was doing all that I could and more, yet it was not working. I felt, "why is it so hard to succeed here when I am doing the best I can?" Between feelings of isolation, Imposter Syndrome, and the need to work multiple jobs to pay my way through college, it took me almost 12 years to acquire my undergraduate degree. When I graduated, my first child was 6 months old. This experience left a lasting impression on me. Why had it taken me so long? I have been a student since I first entered preschool and have lived throughout, in a perpetual state of academic inequity.

Not long after I completed my undergraduate degree, I was given the opportunity to be a Program Manager for a training and mentoring grant funded by the National Institute of Health to manage a group of undergraduate students who are underrepresented in research (Latina/o, Asian, Pacific Islander, African American) and to help integrate them into our public health research as well as train them on professionalism, research methods and ethics. Having had the honor of working with those students for the three years I was able to before the grant ended, has been the catalyst for me to invest in the student experience and to work towards ensuring that all students of color have an equitable experience in higher education. I am still very grateful to have listened to their stories, many of which mirror my own, supported their efforts and to have seen so many of them pursue higher education, medical school, and other doctoral programs.

I know what it feels like to exist as the “other” in the classroom. I know what it feels like to work in academic departments and be the only Woman of Color (WOC) in the meeting room, feeling as if I must temper my responses, reactions, or emotions for fear that I may be perceived as the “sassy Latina.” I know what it feels like to be “othered” for being a student parent after being told that I was “naive” to think I could succeed in my doctoral program having, now, two children. My mother graduated college in the 1970’s, her name is Araceli Bottoms and because people back then couldn’t pronounce her name, she allowed them to just call her “Sally.” I think about her sharing that story with me often when I feel I must speak softly, be even more polite, be even more passive in moments and to learn to “play the game” just so that I may have a shot at the same experience as my White peers or assimilate. It’s strange to feel but there is so much more at stake now. I know I need to break these patterns so that my children have a better shot at a more inclusive learning

environment. Inequity in academia takes on many forms and so too, do the effects.

Personally, I have felt let down, forgotten, held back and have had to learn to be resilient through heartache, confusion and countless tears. I slowly started to attend to these issues and the journey of self-reflection began. Gloria Anzaldua (2004), a Tejana Chicana poet, wrote:

The struggle has always been inner and is played out in outer terrains. Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in society. Nothing happens in the "real" world unless it first happens in the images in our heads.

I realized that to be able to affect change, I needed to change the way I approach my own position in academia. I needed to change the way I interacted, participated, spoke, and included myself in every aspect I had been excluding myself from. The outrage that universities did not seem to care that it was itself becoming a tool of oppression through lack of active effort to support students of color grew over time and still, I knew that even in my outrage, I had to stay the course. "When I demonize them or see them as only and always capable of being enemies, I become part of the problem and not part of the solution" (bell hooks, 2003, p. 75). Learning that my voice and position in academia has power to affect change not just for my students but also so that my children might have a more equitable experience as they pursue higher education has been the guiding force through constant self-reflection and application.

Lastly, as a Mexicana, I have been experiencing curriculum and higher education from both my own personal experience as a student in higher education institutions and as a teacher. I am now teaching a course for students who are much like me and am often asked to use a curriculum that is the same type of curriculum I experienced as a student, one that is

void of inclusivity. I have had students in my UNI150 courses over the years describe to me their experience with certain assignments as being difficult to complete because they are written in a way that does not include their experience, culture, or is otherwise inaccessible. URM students are the minority in the UNI150 courses, these students do not have the same experience in the course as their White peers when engaging with the pre-developed curriculum, (meaning the curriculum was provided to me and I was not able to modify it). URM students have noted to me that they were unable to complete course assignments with confidence because they were not seeing themselves represented in the course curriculum or careers, they were supposed to be exploring. Because of my experience in this course, navigating the tension of teaching a class that has been predesigned and the impact it has had on some students, I have the necessary perspective to investigate this problem of practice.

Problem of Practice

For years, academia has been a place where URM students have had experiences where they did not see themselves represented in the curriculum. The efforts of ASU to invest in advancing the knowledge of diverse perspectives is a critical initiative that should be taken seriously by all members of the ASU community. Meeting the needs of our increasingly diverse student population and increasing the intentionality with which we serve them is something that should be approached with a sense of urgency. The purpose of this study was to interrogate the UNI150 course through a culturally responsive lens and implement a curriculum with inclusive language, inclusive of diverse perspectives and revised to ensure that all students saw themselves represented in the curriculum to promote a more equitable learning environment and positively impact their career exploration process.

Intervention

The intervention included two phases. The first phase included the curriculum interrogation and curriculum redesign. The second phase included implementing the revised curriculum in the UNI150 course. An interrogation of the curriculum was conducted to ensure that it is inclusive of diverse perspectives. This interrogation critically examined all the UNI150 curriculum. Instructors participated in the interrogation by including their perspectives and insight in the redesign during a focus group. Once the curriculum was modified, I implemented it into the UNI150 course. Culturally responsive pedagogy was the framework used to implement all modifications to the course. Modifications to the course included information about diversity, representation, and identity to ensure that the UNI150 course speaks to ASU's growing diverse student population and the population students will interact with as they explore their careers post-graduation.

Research Questions

RQ1: What happens when faculty associates participate in the interrogation of curriculum through a culturally responsive lens?

RQ2: What happens when students experience a redesigned curriculum that includes a culturally responsive curriculum?

Conclusion and Forthcoming Chapters

Moving forward, chapter two of my dissertation includes theoretical perspectives and related literature to support the need to attend to this problem of practice. The theoretical perspectives include Critical Race Theory, Social Cognitive Career Theory and Systems Theory Framework. Chapter 2 includes my reasoning behind why I chose to include these three theories to help inform this study and an overview of the initial cycles of action research I conducted to inform this study.

“I celebrate teaching that enables transgressions, a movement against and beyond boundaries. It is a movement which makes education the practice of freedoms.”

-bell hooks

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Chapter 1 provided the larger context of the issues facing undergraduate students regarding representation and diversity in higher education institutions, and demographic data in higher education at both the student and faculty level. The local context included in Chapter 1 provided insight into the demographic being studied in this action research dissertation.

In this chapter, I explain critical race theory, social cognitive career theory, and systems theory framework, as they relate and apply to my study. The primary framework that guided my dissertation study is critical race theory (CRT). Systems theory and social cognitive career theory (SCCT) each provided supplemental theoretical guidance for the study. First, I describe how I applied critical race theory in the interrogation of the curriculum using a culturally responsive lens. Next, I explain systems theory framework to describe the role of systemic influences in career exploration. Lastly, I describe social cognitive career theory as a lens with which to better understand career exploration for the undergraduate students in this study.

One of the primary purposes for providing a strong theoretical perspective is to provide a better understanding of how to address the problem of practice. The three theoretical frameworks and their related studies helped guide this study by providing a lens

with which to view career exploration, systems students navigate in their career exploration, and the critical need to be more culturally responsive.

Critical Race Theory

In 2020, we saw countless societal shifts after the events following the murder of George Floyd, the Black Lives Matter (#BLM) marches, the lack of empathy expressed by the Trump administration and the effects this all has had on students, predominantly students of color. As it is, students of color are often marginalized and students who are attending PWIs like ASU, have expressed through their own on-campus #BLM protests that they feel their voices and experiences are not being heard and acknowledged. To help shed light on why it is important to increase the intentionality with which we approach career exploration for a diverse student population and be inclusive of the experiences of all students, critical race theory (CRT) was utilized as a critical component of the intervention. CRT offers conceptual tools for interrogating how race and racism have been institutionalized and are maintained (Sleeter, 2017). Tara Yosso (2002) describes CRT, as it applies to curriculum, as having five tenets. Those five tenets are as follows:

(1) acknowledge the central and intersecting roles of racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of subordination in maintaining inequality in curricular structures, processes, and discourses; (2) challenge dominant social and cultural assumptions regarding culture and intelligence, language and capability, objectivity and meritocracy; (3) direct the formal curriculum toward goals of social justice and the hidden curriculum toward Freirean goals of critical consciousness; (4) develop counterdiscourses through storytelling, narratives, chronicles, family histories, scenarios, biographies, and parables that draw on the lived 210 Qualitative Inquiry

21(3) experiences students of color bring to the classroom; and (5) utilize interdisciplinary methods of historical and contemporary analysis to articulate the linkages between educational and societal inequality. (Yosso, p. 98)

For the purposes of my research, I chose to highlight the fourth tenet described as, counterdiscourses or counterstorytelling. It was important for me to ensure that the stories of faculty, the experiences of students and that I too, share my story about the impact of this curriculum and the impact of affecting change to the curriculum. By including CRT as the leading theory for my study, I attempt to contribute to social justice goals in education and to achieve the aforementioned goals of a more equitable classroom environment.

CRT Counterstories

CRT values counterstories by people of color that call into question majoritarian stories (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). When we think about career education, often it is through an occupational outcome lens. Those processes do not look the same for all students, especially students of color. Solórzano & Yosso (2002) argued that using CRT as a framework “offers space to conduct and present research grounded in the experiences and knowledge of people of color” to better understand the experiences of people of color and students of color along the educational continuum (p. 23). Creating a space where students from diverse cultural backgrounds feel seen and have a safe classroom environment to share their experience has the potential to positively contribute to the educational continuum of students. CRT challenges the idea that all educational systems, educational opportunities, and experiences are equal among all races. CRT theorists argue that the power and privileges of the dominant groups of people in American society remain, they are just camouflaged (Ladson-Billings, 2005; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). One of the research aims of this study

was to ensure that all students' voices were heard and that all students' diverse lived experiences and cultures were represented in the course.

CRT in Education

CRT applied in the field of education, offers practitioners an opportunity to rethink traditional educational scholarship. Not only do CRT scholars believe that analysis addressing race and racism is essential in educational inquiry, but that critical race theory scholarship in education should foreground the experiences of students of color not only to uncover racial inequities but to build counternarratives that challenge the dominant racial paradigm (Emerick, 2019). The ideology of higher education institutions is that all academic opportunities are created equal and accessible to all students regardless of racial or ethnic distinctions; CRT provides a necessary critique of that notion. Ortiz and Jani (2010) share that CRT promotes a structural approach to addressing the problems of a diverse society by promoting changes in institutional arrangements while simultaneously recognizing personal experiences.

In examining the role of CRT in higher education, Hiraldo (2010) notes that the “systemic reality works against building a diverse and inclusive higher education environment because it supports the embedded hierarchical racist paradigms that currently exist in our society” (p. 55). Developing more inclusive environments for students seems like it should be intuitive. Unfortunately, time, effort, and willingness to create these environments make that effort challenging. This is also reflected in the lack of inclusivity in the academic curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 1998) which sustains social inequities. To take a closer step towards eradicating racism at higher education institutions we, instructors,

practitioners, and researchers, must work to incorporate dialogues around race throughout the curriculum (Patton et al., 2007).

CRT Related Studies

Changing the narrative using CRT

Christine Sleeter (2017) wrote about three tenets of CRT to review a teacher education program that prepares a predominantly White cohort of teacher candidates to work with an ethnically diverse student population. Sleeter (2017) noted that it is difficult to shift the center of gravity of a program in which the center is defined by White interests, and any proposed change must align with White interests to gain support. I had a similar experience as I began the groundwork to implement my study within my situated context and gain the necessary approval from department leadership. Sleeter (2017) continued to reference that when there are efforts to include multicultural education that it was mainly included to fit the needs of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards, specifically the standard related to Teaching with Multicultural Competence. She went on to utilize CRT as a framework for her interrogation of how race and racism have been institutionalized and maintained in academic spaces. CRT helps examine the value in creating more inclusive spaces and provides a theoretical explanation as to what might make efforts to do so challenging. Challenges experienced at the beginning of the curriculum interrogation of this study reflect some of the difficulties expressed in Sleeter's (2017) study.

CRT as a foundation for Culturally Responsive Teaching

Ladson-Billings (1995) developed Culturally Responsive Teaching to work with minorities to close the achievement gap in education. In her work, she created three foundational points for a culturally responsive teacher to attend to which are: the conception

of self and others, social relations, and conceptions of knowledge. Ladson-Billings suggested that by providing a culturally responsive teaching environment, students experience academic success, build cultural competence, and develop a critical consciousness (Cummings, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2009). For the purposes of this research study, I explored culturally responsive teaching to infuse relevant and diverse perspectives into the course. I engaged faculty associates in conversation that involved discussing culturally responsive pedagogical practices and shared with them knowledge around its benefits. The goal was to acquire evidence to determine the need and interest for redesigning the curriculum in such a way that all students would engage in discussions about career exploration, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and representation in an inclusive way.

Curriculum Redesign

Curriculum and pedagogy are culturally based (Gay, 2002). In a study conducted in the American Southwest, faculty were engaged in a process of redesigning curriculum to explore cultural competence and awareness. One of their leading research questions was, “What happens when faculty engage in a multi-year interdisciplinary study to redesign the preparation of the next generation of educational leaders,” (Williams, 2018, p.50). In this multi-phase qualitative study, they utilized focus groups to examine the faculty’s document analysis of the curriculum and encouraged faculty to engage in an active discussion on the value of creating a more environment for students and what cultural competence meant to them. In this effort, faculty utilized scholarly work that included culturally responsive pedagogy and critical race theory, (LatCRT and IndigenousCRT). “The ultimate goal of the redesign work was to continuously assess, revise, and redesign curriculum and pedagogy that would result in growth/gains in candidates’ cultural competence” (Williams, 2018, p. 52).

The study determined that to create more culturally inclusive faculty, fundamental institutional support for this effort is critical. This study provided evidence to support the value in conducting a focus group to engage faculty associates in the conversation centered on curriculum redesign through a culturally responsive lens. For this action research study, faculty associates were invited to participate in a focus group to gauge their understanding of culturally responsive pedagogical practices and assess their comfort level in utilizing culturally responsive pedagogy in their classrooms.

Social Cognitive Career Theory

In their social cognitive career theory (SCCT), Lent et al. (1994, 1996) conceptualized contextual factors as responsible for shaping the experiences that lead to the development of career interests and choices. For the purposes of this study, the context is the UNI150 course. Lent and Brown (2017) suggested that even perceived barriers can have a significant impact on career development of underrepresented groups. One such perceived barrier can be lack of representation in the career being pursued. Career barrier perceptions have been shown to be related to the level of consideration underrepresented groups give to careers (Rivera, et al., 2007). Additionally, in their research, Lent et. al. (2002) has discussed ways in which SCCT may be used as a framework to research the effects of perceived career barriers. They note that in SCCT, perceived career barriers are explained as negative contextual influences related to adverse learning conditions that can affect career decision making self-efficacy. Using SCCT, this action research study investigated how undergraduate students explored careers wherein they did not see themselves represented and ways in which to mitigate these perceived barriers using SCCT.

SCCT has been studied and researched for over two decades. In an article published in the *Journal of Career Assessment*, Lent, and Brown (2017) who were the first to create SCCT, took a deeper dive into all the research that had been done over the years and to provide both of their, “closing thoughts.” In the article, Lent, and Brown (2017) examine the relevance of SCCT to the career development of a diverse range of people and to encourage research using SCCT to extend the theory to new cultures and to include social justice themes as well as to include “populations that remaining underserved or understudied by vocational psychology” (p. 173). This article essentially ties in what was known about SCCT, what has been discovered and encourages future research to be more inclusive of diverse perspectives. I found that this aligned with the purpose of the study given the intention is to provide a career exploration course that is also more inclusive of diverse perspectives.

Related Studies

SCCT, Social Justice and Sample Appropriateness

Lent and Brown (2017) conducted a review of studies that utilized SCCT. They found that research using SCCT would benefit from: engaging in more multigroup testing to address inquiries across cultures, underserved groups and across social justice themes. In their review of approximately four studies that utilized social class and SCCT in their interventions, Lent and Brown concluded that sample appropriateness was something that needed to be considered. They shared, “Sample appropriateness is based not only on having various important demographic characteristics represented in the sample but also on whether the scores obtained in the sample are representative of the scores in the population to which one wishes to generalize” (Lent & Brown, 2017, p. 174). They went on to conclude that the need to ensure the variables that influence the career lives of marginalized students be taken

into consideration when studying samples “so that preventive interventions and policy efforts can be developed” (Lent & Brown, 2017, p. 175). This was important to note because the sample size for this action research study was quite small. The variables studied were minimal as well, but the process involved in the interrogation of the curriculum is one that can be replicated in similar small departments and with similar groups of students.

Another important review they added came from research conducted by Fouad and Santana (2017) that offered STEM-relevant interventions using SCCT and for women and people of color. Fouad and Santana (2017) concluded that it is necessary for researchers to begin studying the influences of identity intersectionality (i.e., gender, social class, ethnicity) on STEM majors and careers. For Fouad and Santana, they found that SCCT played a critical role in their investigation of underrepresented minorities’ career interests, choice and persistence while pursuing STEM majors. Both their findings and the findings reviewed by Lent and Brown (2017) are helpful in that they provided evidence for the importance of inclusivity in career exploration by sharing the research that utilizes SCCT.

Career Exploration using SCCT.

In Lent and Ireland’s (2018) study about career exploration, they utilized the SCCT Career Self-Management (CSM) model that was designed to complement the earlier models of social cognitive career theory. The purpose for using the CSM model was to show how people attempt to guide their own career progress, regardless of the specific career fields toward which they are drawn (Lent & Brown, 2018). The CSM model conceptualizes support of career decision-making as well. Using CSM in their study, Lent, and Ireland (2018) concluded that those who receive adequate levels of decisional support and who tend to approach career decision-making in an organized manner are likely to acquire more positive

decisional learning experiences. A study testing the CSM incorporated conscientiousness as a personal input (Lent, et. al., 2016) as well, the researchers found that the relationship between conscientiousness and intentions was mediated by SCCT variables which include career counseling. This study highlights the value of including SCCT variables in the process of career decision-making.

SCCT and Diverse Students

SCCT has been used to describe the ways in which contextual support and barriers influence a student's career decision making process. Flores & O'Brien (2002) studied some of the tenets of SCCT with 364 Mexican American women, specifically, contextual barriers that stood in the way of a stronger sense of career decision-making self-efficacy. Career decision-making self-efficacy was described as the degree to which a person feels confident that the decision, they are making in selecting a career path, is strong. This was one of the first studies to use SCCT with this demographic. The study provided support for SCCT as a framework for understanding that few perceived barriers do have a positive effect on career goals. Participants in the study who "anticipated fewer barriers chose prestigious careers," (Flores & O'Brien, 2002, p. 22). Perceived barriers have been described as existing within a range. They can include lack of support and lack of representation in the career of interest. Understanding the impact of fewer perceived career barriers, helped inform the focus of this study. Communicating the value of increased representation in the careers students are exploring was of critical importance.

Systems Theory Framework

To gain a better understanding of exactly how organizational systems play a role in creating a more inclusive major and career exploration curriculum, the Systems Theory

Framework was reviewed. As defined by Arthur and McMahon (2017) “The Systems Theory Framework (STF) is a theoretical foundation that accounts for systems of influence on people’s career development, including individual, social, and environmental/societal contexts” (p. 9). Social context influences mentioned in STF include educational institutions; community groups; family; media; workplace; peers; and employers (McIlveen et. al., 2003).

STF provides a framework for understanding the role external and internal systems play in a person's career development process. STF is “composed of several key interrelated systems, including the intrapersonal system of the individual, the social system and the environmental-societal system all set within the context of time” (McMahon, 2018, p. 231). STF states that people essentially serve as complex systems through acknowledging individuals have the capacity to change over time or through a given process (McMahon, 2005). In addition, content influences, like those provided through curriculum in the classroom, illustrate that people can consist of multiple identities and values contributing to their own career pathways (McMahon, 2011). For the purposes of this research, I reviewed STF to gain insight as to how the student's academic environment influences their career exploration process. The focus for the intervention and the research was both on the individual and the environmental-societal systems to be able to address the way students learn in a Predominately White Institution (PWI) and how their environment informs their experience as they explore careers in the course.

STF has been used over the last decade to contribute to the field of career, career theory, and career development. Researchers like Chan (2019) and Luke & Goodrich (2015) have amplified the use of STF to function as a vehicle to conceptualize and generate innovative practices on career development. Additionally with the research being conducted

by McMahon (2011, 2017) STF has been utilized to meet the needs of culturally responsive applications of career development. The STF can assist career educators with expanding perspectives and context with students while instituting possible areas for change within their stories (Chan, 2019). This is particularly important for diverse student populations that have often felt and/or have been marginalized in their experience in higher education institutions. Chan (2019) shares, “given the scope of influences, practitioners can focus immensely on an individual’s social identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender identity, ability status) to inform the individual client or student’s positioning more cohesively within society (e.g., privilege, oppression)” (p. 12). Applying STF to be able to elevate the voices of the students who often do not feel heard or who do not see themselves represented in the careers they aspire to acquire is necessary to approach with a sense of urgency. Chan (2019) suggests that to be able to elevate these voices and highlight a student's social identity:

Instead of a practitioner asking, “What is your culture?” or “How would you identify culturally?”, it may be more beneficial to ask “How would you identify your racial identity? Ethnicity? Sexuality? Gender identity?” To bolster a clearer sense of intake and contextualization of client and student information, practitioners can also include an area necessary to write in gender pronouns. (p. 12)

This is a suggestion that I applied in Cycle 1 of this action research and used to frame the questions in the survey provided to students in asking them about how they identify. I included inclusive language in the surveys and curricular materials I created for this study.

Related Studies

STF in Focus Groups

In a chapter written by Peter McIlveen (2015) he discusses how he operationalizes STF to develop a semi-structured interview called the Career Systems Interview (CSI). In the interviews conducted by McIlveen (2015) he asks the interviewees to talk about the influences identified in the STF in a reflective manner and to provide an interview that touches on every influence acknowledged in STF. Interviewees are referred to the STF diagram (Patton & McMahon, 2014) that gives them some information about the influences listed and how those influences may contribute to their view of their career. Influences included in the STF and the CSI include environmental-societal influences, social influences, interpersonal and intrapersonal influences. He begins each interview by gradually building rapport with the interviewees and to get to know where they come from because it is a way of connecting with the interviewees and to invest in a more conversational experience. He then begins to share that the framework being used was selected to share with the interviewee that this career development exercise is inclusive of their interpersonal world and the bigger picture of society and the environment (McIlveen, 2014). Once the interviewees have gone through some of the interviews and have a better understanding of STF as it pertains to their career influences, the research team conducting and analyzing the interviews found that the interviewees responded positively to the CSI interviews. Patton and McMahon (2006) noted that STF involves advocacy and systems change on the part of the facilitator and as such, the facilitator should be willing to intervene in any system to enact positive change for those receiving the information. The goal for the focus group in this study was to describe what the data collected in the preliminary stages of the study reflected, to discuss what role the course plays in the student's career exploration and to utilize a similar rapport built to understand

how the curriculum can provide students with a better understanding the systems they interact with.

STF in Career Exploration of Women

In an article written by Megan Hyland Tajili (2014), the STF was used to help women understand the environmental, societal, and personal influences on work-life integration, allowing college women to make decisions with an intentional background of how these systems interact. The STF was used to help college women work on developing the skills in their career exploration that help them encompass all the factors that affect the career decision-making process. Tajili (2014) used two key concepts of STF: process influences and content influences. Process influences are the interactions within and between influences that inform decision-making environment and content influences are the intrapersonal and contextual factors affecting an individual's career decision-making (Patton & McMahon, 2006). Participants in the study were guided through each assessment which included the STF influences. They found that by the end of the session, participants had a visual representation of their systemic influences at the societal, historic, familial, and personal levels and how these systems played a role in their career decision making (Tajili, 2014). Participants in this study were better able to create solutions to systemic influences that might arise and to view these influences as potential pathways instead of potential barriers. Enabling participants to better understand the entire system of influences that contribute to their career decision-making created an opportunity for participants to be more cognizant of the factors that might create or hinder their forward movement in their career development. Overall, the results showed that the STF is inherently multicultural in approach and that the

assessments used with STF in mind uncover the delicate ecosystem of environmental, cultural, and familial influences (Tajili, 2014).

STF in Action Research

Robert Louis Flood (2010) made connections between systems thinking, as it is referred to in STF, and action research (AR). In his article he reviewed how systems thinking is manifested in different social contexts. Of particular interest is his statement about how systems thinking sees organizations as complex systems made up of interrelated parts most usefully studied as a whole (Flood, 2010). He goes on to describe this particular manner of systems thinking as having the primary aim to “ensure survival and then to secure desirable growth” (Flood, 2010, p.271). Much like the organizational context he is referring to, the UNI150 course context as well as ASU, align with this description. The university and the course itself, both have outlined goals that are set to ensure student success. He describes the idea that an entire organizational structure can reflect on how interrelated subsystems can be and can hold greater potential for participation (Flood, 2010). There is value in understanding how the system contributes to efforts to affect change and STF helps explore that.

Summary of Theories

CRT, SCCT, and STF informed the design of my action research study. CRT informed the need to make changes to the UNI150 curriculum and include more representation of diversity in the curriculum. CRT provided the theoretical framework that informed the culturally responsive lens that guided my pedagogical practices as I implemented the redesigned course curriculum. SCCT provided an additional lens for interrogating the course experiences and materials, to identify prescribed barriers and to imagine opportunities for students to see themselves represented in their career exploration journey. STF provided a

way to understand the system at play, the UNI150 course and the organizational context of the course (curriculum, instructors, students, department). Understanding the systems at play surrounding the course enabled me to see in what ways this study could affect change and alternatively, what aspects of the course system this study would not be able to address. In addition to informing the design of this study, these three theories were also used to conduct a deductive analysis of the study data. Finally, the theories provided a backdrop for the discussion of study findings, presented in Chapter 5.

Initial Cycles of Action Research

Action research is cyclical, building on cycles of plan, act, reflect. As such, in the earlier stages of my dissertation coursework, I engaged in cycles of research that helped inform the intervention studied in this dissertation. Prior to designing the intervention, I conducted two cycles of research: Cycle 0, which aimed at conducting reconnaissance in my local setting to determine the relevance of my problem of practice; and Cycle 1, which aimed at gathering more input from those in my local setting to develop aspects of my intervention.

Cycle 0

In Cycle 0, I conducted a content analysis of the UNI150 course syllabi to better understand the description, goals, and outcomes of the course as they relate to career exploration. To begin the content analysis, I first reviewed and coded the content of the syllabus. Then, I sorted codes into categories: concepts, skills, values, and diversity. Final analysis included looking for, determining, the meaning of each category being provided in the UNI150 undergraduate Major and Career Explorations course. The qualitative content analysis of syllabi was conducted to highlight the content as well as the description and objectives for inclusive language. Qualitative content analysis allows for the interpretation of

textual data “through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). Table 2 shows the findings, organized around the categories of concepts, skills, and diversity.

Table 2

Descriptive Categories and Themes of UN1150 Syllabi

Categories	Themes
Concepts	Students will understand <i>concepts</i> and apply skills for selecting a major and career direction: self-assessment, research, interviewing, and decision making.
Skills	At the completion of this course, students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop <i>skills</i> to research the majors or careers they are considering.
Diversity	At the completion of this course, students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand cultural diversity that improves success in the modern workplace. <p>Week 6: Week 6: Early Life Influences, Lifeline, and Diversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity Quiz • Diversity Reflection

Cycle 0 Findings

Concepts. The concepts category covered a broad range of information, assessments used in the career development field, and ambitious learning goals. Concept-related course content reflected five themes: (a) Motivation, (b) Interests and Personality assessments, (c) Career Research, (d) Networking, (e) Early Life Influences, and (f) Decision-making and Goal Setting.

What I found was missing were the ties to the literature or a clear understanding as to why these concepts were chosen and were important for students to learn in this course. Neither concept made any mention of the diverse lived experiences of students and how that might inform their career decision-making.

Skills. Although not as content heavy as concepts, skills, the skills students are expected to acquire related to their major and career decision-making, were also a part of the descriptions and objectives of the course. The goal of the course is to guide students into being able to make stronger major and career decisions by guiding through a series of exercises and assessments that help them zero in on their own personal values and interests.

Diversity. The diversity section first suggests that students will develop “an understanding of cultural diversity that improves success in the modern workplace.” Diversity being seen as something that improves the modern workplace but not as a tool to enhance their own personal experience frames diversity in a way that appears to reference it as something that exists externally. A deeper look into the diversity reflection and quiz asks students about what makes them different and when did they realize they were different. Being different is not the same as being diverse. Additionally, the reflection and the assignment do not attend to how any of this relates to their career decision-making process or provides them with any tools to be able to navigate spaces that are less diverse, strategies to overcome those instances and how those things might affect their career exploration.

Overall, what was lacking in the course was enough connection to diverse student experiences, acknowledgement about the role representation plays in the decision-making process, diversity as an important aspect of the experiences of students now and the importance of including culturally responsive concepts in a course for undergraduate students

living through countless societal shifts. I attended to these ideas in my intervention and study through the interrogation and implementation of a redesigned curriculum. Additionally, in this cycle I practiced artifact collection and analysis, which are tools I used to research my intervention.

Cycle 1

In Cycle 1, I built on my findings from Cycle 0 and surveyed students in UNI150 and interviewed UNI150 instructors to gather student and instructor ideas related to diversity and representation in the UNI150 course. To survey students, I created a survey using Google Forms and addressed ideas related to diversity in the course and whether students felt that there was a need to increase information related to representation in the UNI150 course. I sent the survey to all 40 students enrolled in my Fall 2020 UNI150 course. I wanted to gather the perceptions of the UNI150 students as they neared the end of their UNI150 experience, related to the need to include more information about diversity or representation in the course and whether they believed UNI150 students would benefit from more information about strategies for dealing with the lack of representation in the career decision making process. The survey can be found in Table 3.

Table 3

Initial Cycle of Research Survey

Question	Mark only one
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-
1. There should be more information about diversity in the UNI150 Course.
1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

 2. There should be more information about representation in the UNI150 course.
1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

 3. Students explore careers that they see themselves represented in.
1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

 4. Students avoid exploring a career if they do not see themselves represented in that career.
1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

 5. UNI150 Should include tools and strategies to help underrepresented student populations navigate careers that they do not see themselves represented in.
1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

 6. Seeing yourself represented in the career you are exploring can increase your confidence in pursuing that career path.
1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

- | | |
|---|---|
| 7. Learning about representation as it pertains to career exploration is important for students in UNI150. | 1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree |
| 8. Learning about diversity as it pertains to career exploration is important for students in UNI150. | 1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree |
| 9. When students see someone that looks like them in a career they are exploring, they feel more confident that they too can acquire that type of career. | 1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree |
-

Ten students responded to the survey, while there was a low response rate to the survey, valuable and relevant data were provided. For example, for question 9, 57% responded that they strongly agree that when students see someone that looks like them in a career they are exploring, they feel more confident that they too can acquire that type of career. For questions 8, 72% of students said they agreed that learning about diversity as it pertains to career exploration is important for students in UNI150. Lastly, 100% of students agreed that learning about representation as it pertains to career exploration is important for students in UNI150.

During Cycle 1, I also interviewed 4 instructors, all faculty associates, currently teaching the course. I wanted to talk with instructors to gather their own personal perceptions on the course as well as understand how they perceived students were engaging in the course. The interviews each lasted between 15-20 minutes and consisted of seven questions. The idea was to gather just enough detail to understand instructors' perspectives as well as to inform

the need for the curriculum interrogation. The interview questions addressed how they view the UNI150 curriculum's attendance to the issues of diversity and representation as it pertains to career exploration, if they believed students would benefit from learning about impact a lack of representation on their career exploration path can have on their career decision-making self-efficacy and how comfortable they are now or would be moving forward, discussing diversity and representation with their students. All interviews were conducted and recorded via Zoom. The findings from the interview showed that instructors believed it was necessary to update some assignments in the course, specifically the course section about "Early Life Experiences" which happens to include the lesson on diversity. Instructors, who were all interviewed individually, were in alignment with the question of whether students would benefit from information about representation. Instructors shared some experiences of their students that aligned with the need to be clearer about issues of diversity and representation with regards to career exploration. Only one out of the four instructors expressed confidence in speaking with their students about diversity and representation.

Cycle 1 research informed my intervention by giving me the valuable perspectives of both students and instructors, about the courses needed for a critical review. Students as well as instructors agreed that there is a need to include more information about diversity and representation in the UNI150 course. Additionally, the lack of confidence in instructors to speak about diversity and representation has provided the evidence to support the interventions of focus groups with the instructors and the need to include a critical dialogue about diversity and representation. This cycle also allowed me to gain experience with seeking Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, participant recruitment, survey

development, interview techniques and content analysis which I used to study my intervention.

“There must exist a paradigm, a practical model for social change that includes an understanding of ways to transform consciousness that are linked to efforts to transform structures.”

- bell hooks

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

In this chapter I present the design of my action research study. This action research study was cyclical and built off previous cycles of research, as discussed in Chapter 2. The previous cycles included a review of the UNI150 syllabus to determine the need to dive deeper into the curriculum (Cycle 0) and a survey of students and interviews faculty about their perceptions of the course, with regards to its inclusion of diversity (Cycle 1). These early cycles founded the need for this action research study. to further interrogate the UNI150 curriculum, make changes to the curriculum and implement the modifications with students. This chapter provides information about the action research study that was informed by both the initial cycles of research and the theoretical frameworks. I introduce the setting, the participants, my role as researcher, the intervention of my action research study, the two phases of data collection and data analysis and the timeline for each.

Action Research

Action research (AR) has been used in educational settings as a method for practitioners to improve their own practice and solve problems within their local context (Herr & Anderson, 2005). AR encourages researchers to consider their own positionality within the context of the study being conducted and promotes the ongoing development of

knowledge through its various cycles to better understand the challenges faced in the problem of practice. Often seen in qualitative research, AR involves investigating issues in a context, like a problem of practice, and most often in a classroom or an institution, with the aim of implementing and evaluating change (Banegas & de Castro, 2019). The AR process requires a repetition of a series of steps including situational analyses, planning, the implementation of planned action steps, observation, and reflection (Costello 2003; Kember 2005; Saunders, et al., 2003).

The goal of this AR study was to understand what happens when the UNI150 curriculum is interrogated, redesigned, and implemented through a culturally responsive lens. Each cycle of AR informed the intervention and provided a structured form of reflection and a source of data to transform, change, improve, and contest classroom practices (Banegas & de Castro, 2019). After the first cycle, I had enough evidence to support the need to incorporate the experiences of both the students and faculty associates in the process to better understand how they interacted with the curriculum. Specifically, integrating the experience of faculty associates into the interrogation of the curriculum and implementation of revised curriculum was for me, an effort to increase participation in change efforts from the bottom up. AR seeks transformation and to be able to affect change from the bottom to larger systemic bodies (Somekh & Zeichner 2009).

As an action researcher, it was important for me to include myself in the process to help inform the ongoing inquiry through participation. “The defining trait of AR would be that the teachers’ fundamental beliefs and ideas about education are fully engaged in the research process” (Banegas & de Castro, 2019, p. 3). Through this AR study, I gained

evidence to support a curriculum change and developed support for the use of culturally responsive pedagogical practices.

Setting and Participants

The questions and study design that guided this research are reflective of a constructivist perspective. The goal was to learn through an ongoing process of constructing and making meaning through interactions with the participants in the study (Özkan, Y., & Güler, S. 2018; TalkadSukumar & Metoyer, 2019). This constructivist perspective was utilized to better understand how knowledge was generated, developed and how the perspectives of those involved in the research process impacted my understanding of the problem of practice. To this end, to investigate the problem of practice for this action research study, I conducted the study in spaces and with people directly involved with the UNI150 course.

Setting

This study was situated in the Major and Career Exploration unit of The University College at Arizona State University. The Major and Career Exploration unit is structured around helping students explore and settle on a college major and possible post-degree careers. During the implementation of the study the dean of the University College, Dean Sukhwant Jhuj, shared his thoughts on the University College website about how education has the potential to create through confidence, opportunity and mobility. With his leadership and equity minded approach towards education and the new initiatives that were set forth by President Crow, my effort to attend to increasing representation in the curriculum of UNI150 was in alignment with the University College's aims and critical for the success of all our students. The specific setting for the study was twofold. Phase 1 of the study was a virtual

focus group with the faculty associates. Phase 2 of the study was situated in the redesigned version UNI150, offered in the Spring of 2021.

The Course

The setting of this study was the redesigned version of UNI150, offered in Spring 2021, during the 7-week B session, spanning mid-March to early May. The course was offered as an asynchronous course due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Through this asynchronous modality, students were allowed to attend in person or attend remotely through a virtual platform. In this way, the setting of the course included both a brick-and-mortar space as well as a virtual setting.

The course used Canvas, a learning management system where students and teachers interacted via direct message or discussion boards. Canvas also provided students with access to the course modules, the syllabus, the assignments and was the place where they electronically submitted all their classwork. The following are the Student Learning Outcomes listed in the UNI150 syllabus and available in Appendix D.

Throughout this course, students:

1. Learn about your interests, values, personality, and identity, inform your career and major exploration.
2. Use research skills and learn more about various majors and careers of interest.
3. Evaluate information gathered to increase career decision-making self-efficacy.
4. Center yourself and who you are into the exploration of major and career exploration.
5. Conduct an Informational Interview with a working professional in a field you are considering.
6. Understand the role of diversity and representation in the workforce.

Participants

There were three participant categories in this study: the instructors, the students, and me as a participant-researcher. Each participant category provided a valuable perspective and allowed me to attend to the research questions across both phases of the intervention through different lenses. The different participant categories provided varying forms of knowledge generation across the intervention. I used purposeful sampling for the instructors and the students. Purposeful sampling involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Clark, 2011). As the study was centered on the experiences related to the UNI150 course, it was critical for me to recruit instructors and students that were familiar with the course.

The Faculty Associates

The instructors that were invited to participate in the study were academic professionals hired by the Major and Career Exploration unit who had experience teaching the UNI150 course. My goal was to recruit 4-5 instructors to participate. Using purposeful sampling, I invited faculty associates who had taught the course before. Of the four that agreed to participate, two of the faculty associates had taught the course three semesters (or three times), the other had had taught the course for just one semester. The instructor group included three women and one man. The racial/ethnic demographic was split with two Hispanic identifying faculty associates and two White faculty associates. All four faculty associates had taught in person and virtually. However, each had only acquired experience teaching virtually because of the pandemic.

The Students

The students that were invited to participate in the study were students enrolled in my Spring 2021 UNI150 course. Participation included allowing me to use their coursework as part of the study. While all students in the course experienced the redesigned course curriculum, I only collected and analyzed student artifacts from students that agreed to participate. Using the Canvas communication tools for our course, I invited all students to participate. There were 16 students in the course, of those, 7 consented to study participation. Students were anonymized and labeled as: Students A, Student B, Student E, Student F, Student G and Student H.

Of the 7 student participants, 2 were Hispanic and 5 were White. There were 5 students who identified as female and 2 who identified as males. Most of the student participants were freshmen with only a few sophomores. This demographic, while small, was an accurate representation of the student demographics I had in the course in the Spring 2021 semester.

The Researcher

In this study, I served as the researcher and a participant. I participated in Phase 1 by doing the course interrogation and facilitating critical dialogue with instructors in the focus group. I participated in Phase 2 by teaching the redesigned course. As a participant-researcher my roles were multidimensional and interconnected. It was imperative for me to document my experiences and reflections on the processes (both intervention and research study related) and to acknowledge in my work the positions, biases, and values I brought to the setting/study.

As an instructor, I implemented the redesigned curriculum using culturally responsive pedagogies, teaching strategies not previously used in the course. As the researcher, I worked on the interrogation of the study to ensure that all documents provided to students in the curriculum were reviewed with a critical eye. I documented and reflected on the process of interrogating a curriculum using analytic memos. Throughout, I reflected on my own value system as a woman of color in academia and what experiences I would have appreciated/benefitted from as an undergraduate student.

Intervention: Interrogation, Redesign, and Implementation

The intervention was created to understand the processes of interrogating curricula through a culturally responsive lens, developing a revised and more inclusive curriculum, and implementing a new curriculum. The intervention was conducted in two phases. The *first phase* included the interrogation of the curriculum and a focus group session with UNI150 instructors. The *second phase* included the student-centered piece where I implemented the revised course curriculum. In the *second phase* I implemented the revised curriculum, utilized culturally responsive pedagogies, and collected student artifacts in the form of assignments, discussion posts, and survey data to understand students experiences in the redesigned course related to learning diversity, representation and its impact on career decision making.

Table 4

Intervention Phases

Time frame	Phase (P#)	Participants	Activities
February-March 2021	<i>P1</i> . Interrogation and Redesign	Myself and UNI150 Instructors	Interrogated the UNI150 Curriculum: assignments, modules, and syllabus

			Gather a team of instructors and conduct focus groups. Facilitated critical dialogue regarding course curriculum and culturally relevant pedagogy. Gathered ideas from instructors about the course and redesign possibilities.
			Redesigned the Diversity Section of the course to be inclusive of all of our ideas and align with the learning outcomes for UNI150.
March-May 2021	P2. Implementation	Myself and UNI150 Spring B students	Implemented revised course curriculum (Diversity Section) with students.
			Practiced Culturally Responsive Teaching methods. Gathered data through classroom discussions and student work (artifacts).
			Gathered student input about course revisions/experiences and their understanding about representation in career decision making.

Phase 1: Interrogation and Redesign

Phase 1 included the interrogation of the UNI150 curriculum and the gathering of faculty associates' perspectives on the UNI150 curriculum to inform the redesign of the Diversity Section of the course.

Original UNI150 Course

The UNI150 course was designed to assist undergraduate students in exploring career choices so that they can confidently declare a major and a career path. It is offered to students who have yet to declare a major or who have failed to meet the requirements of their desired

major they had previously been enrolled in. The course is also required for students who are seeking to change their major and for students seeking to return to a previous major. The course was designed by a vocational psychologist a little over 10 years ago when the student population was nowhere near as diverse as it is today. It is important to note that while there had been feedback provided by faculty during our faculty meetings that alluded to the need to make modifications to the diversity module in the course, no such changes were made. Prior to the intervention, the course included information about culture and diversity to fulfill the learning outcomes for students put forth by the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR). There was a section of the course that did reference diversity, but it did so by bracketing it off into a separate section that was out of the context of the UNI150 course. Table 5 shows the original UNI150 curriculum.

Table 5

UNI150 Course Curriculum

Module and Topic	Assignment
Week 1: Introduction, Course Expectation, Purpose of Career, ASU Colleges Research	Start Professional Portfolio
Week 2: Kuder Assessment, ASU Colleges Presentations, Major Research & Exploration	Kuder Assessment results print-out ASU Colleges Presentations
Week 3: Visit Career Services, Informational Interview	Kuder and Major paper

Week 4: Diversity in the Workplace,
Advisor Visit

Discussion Board posting - Informational
Interview Contact Information, Career
Research

Week 5: Values, Personality,
Introduce Innovation Challenge

Diversity Reflection

Week 6: Decision Making &
Motivation, Goal Setting

Informational Interview Reflection
Innovation Challenge Assignment

Week 7: Major and Career Plan
Presentations

Major and Career Plan & Portfolio

Course Interrogation

The interrogation of the curriculum consisted of a critical review of the entire UNI150 course content which included the syllabus, the course modules, and the assignments for the UNI150 course. All content was reviewed through the lens of *Critical Race Theory* and *Culturally Relevant Pedagogy*. Using a modified version of the document analysis checklist in Table 6 I developed in my Cycle 0, I reviewed all course content for appropriate presentation of diversity and representation as it pertains to major and career exploration.

Table 6. Curriculum Document Analysis Checklist

<i>Question</i>	<i>Responses</i>
Whose view(s) is (Are) represented by the curriculum contents?	
Infusion of cultural diversity based on content:	
● Level one: Traditional; diverse perspectives	

- limited to a few sessions
- Level two: Diverse perspectives infused and analysed throughout the course
- Level three: Social realities of the US are included

Does the curriculum content provide a comprehensive truth, inclusive of different perspectives?

So students examine how race, social class, gender, disability, etc, can influence their career decision-making process?

Does the content include perspectives of (or information about) diverse groups?

Do examples used to illustrate key concepts/theories include a variety of groups?

Do activities mentioned in the curriculum integrate additional views?

Do assessments used in the course include a multicultural objective?

To interrogate the curriculum, I created a document analysis checklist, shown above in Table 6, inspired by a study conducted by Jiwan Dhungana (2011). Dhugana's checklist was designed to review existing curricula through the lens of culturally diverse curriculum and instruction (Dhungana, 2011). I slightly modified the checklist to ensure that it was applicable to my study's intentions.

After completing the interrogation of course content, I conducted a focus group with current UNI150 instructors to talk through the course interrogation, seek their input on the critical review and proposed revisions to the UNI150 curriculum.

Instructor Focus Group

Phase 1 also included a focus group with the faculty associates of the UNI150 course via Zoom. During the focus group discussion, we reviewed the existing UNI150 curriculum. The faculty associates were recruited to gain valuable understanding about the curriculum, for them to share their experience teaching the curriculum and to acquire any feedback students might have shared with them about the curriculum. Prior to the focus group I shared, via email, Cycle 1 student survey data, along with preliminary findings, with faculty associates in preparation for our discussion about the curriculum afterwards. During the focus group, we walked through the curriculum week by week, talking about the topics, materials, and assignments. After hearing their ideas about the course and specifically the Diversity module, I presented some early ideas about course modifications based on my interrogation of the course materials. I sought their input, asking for them to provide feedback, ask questions or voice concerns based on their own experiences as instructors of the UNI150 course. Integrating the instructor's perspective into the curriculum interrogation increased the validity of the proposed course changes. According to Nation and Macalister (2010), a curriculum is influenced by three factors: learners, teachers, and the situation, i.e. the local context. I believed that to provide for students a better, more inclusive curriculum and learning environment, the instructor perspective needed to be included. After the focus group with instructors, I finalized the course modifications to be ready to implement the revised course in Spring 2021, session B.

Redesigned UNI150

The first three weeks of the course were geared towards gathering information about university services. The content remained somewhat the same with the only exception being the update to the learning outcomes in the syllabus. There was enough evidence presented in

Cycle 0, Cycle 1, and earlier experiences in Phase 1 (course interrogation and the faculty focus group) to modify the content and assignments in weeks 4-7, as this is when students are asked to dive deeper into their personal connections to their career exploration through assignments related to their values, motivations, career decision-making, self-efficacy, and diversity. The modifications included inclusive language in the Informational Interview assignment, diverse examples in the Diversity in the Workforce assignment, inclusive language in the syllabus and course modules and lastly, more opportunity for students to unpack these assignments in the discussion board posts.

Phase 2: Implementation

Phase 1 outlined what work needed to be done to thoroughly interrogate the curriculum and inform modifications to the redesigned UNI150 course. In Phase 2, the newly redesigned curriculum was implemented. Along with the redesigned content, experiences and assignments described above, during the implementation of the redesigned curriculum I also utilized culturally responsive pedagogies as I taught the course. Student artifacts in the form of discussion posts and assignments were collected. A survey was given to the students that included reflective questions about the UNI150 course. The survey included questions geared towards diversity, representation, career decision-making self-efficacy and the UNI150 course. Additionally, the survey asked students to provide their own demographic information in short form as opposed to in a multiple-choice format.

All class lectures were delivered via ASU Sync which meant that I was implementing the course both in-person and virtually through Zoom. All class lectures were recorded and used as an observation tool. Each class lecture lasted a little less than two hours. Attendance

was pretty good even given that it was on a Friday afternoon and students had just experienced so many shifts in their course delivery because of the pandemic.

Data Collection

The qualitative data collection process and analysis for this research study was a little complicated. The data collection and analysis processes happened concurrently which created a two-phase process for both the data collection and data analysis. I included some traditional forms of qualitative data collection in the form of artifact collection, surveys, observation of the lectures and the focus group. Using a qualitative method allowed me to discover themes from the data collected, analyzed, and interpreted (Creswell, 2014). A thematic analysis approach was chosen to better analyze the data collected. This approach is described as applicable to action research and that “the purpose of this process is to reveal patterns and themes within the data that enables us to understand more clearly why and how events occur as they do” (Stringer, 2007, p. 5). The AR study created an opportunity to develop ideas informed by the data and integrated back into the study to collect additional data and answer the research questions. In this section I will describe the data I collected and the process of collecting that data. In Chapter 4 I will describe how I analyzed the data.

Data Collection Phase 1: Interrogation and Redesign

Phase 1 data collection included artifact analysis, and a focus group with UNI150 instructors.

Artifact Analysis

To interrogate the course curriculum, I conducted an artifact analysis of the UNI150 course materials. The curricular documents included in the interrogation were: four modules (lessons) for each week, a total of four assignments, two discussion board posts, and the one

syllabus for the course. Utilizing the same checklist, I created for Cycle 1, I reviewed all of the course content and materials through a culturally responsive lens with a special focus on language of inclusivity.

Focus Group

During the focus group I wanted to orient the faculty members to the study, its purpose and design, and the proposed plan for implementation of the redesigned course in Spring 2021. Prior to the focus group, I provided instructors with an overview of the outcomes of Cycle 0 and Cycle 1 as well as some preliminary findings from my interrogation of the curriculum. After providing instructors with as much information on the process and purpose, I wanted to gather their experiences teaching the course, their ideas about the course content and whether and if so, which content of the course should be redesigned. I used five prompts/questions to gather their feedback, input, and experience with the UNI150 course. In the focus group I reviewed some of the items that came up about diversity in the course and from the Cycle 1 interviews and to gather an understanding of the instructor's comfort level discussing these topics with their students. I also asked them about their knowledge of culturally responsive pedagogy. This provided me with an understanding of instructors' views about course modifications and a baseline of instructors' knowledge and comfort level with culturally responsive pedagogy of the need to provide instructor training moving forward. Focus group questions are included in Table 7. The focus group with instructors was facilitated and recorded with permission, via Zoom. After the focus group, I downloaded the Zoom video file and transcription for future data analysis.

Table 7

Focus Group Questions

Questions for Focus Group Discussion

1. Tell me a little bit about your experience working with UNI150 Students.
2. Can you tell me what you know about culturally responsive pedagogy?
 - If participants were not informed about CRP I shared what CRP is...
 - “Culture is central to how all learning takes place (Gay, 2010). Culturally responsive pedagogy is a student-centered approach to teaching that includes cultural references and recognizes the importance of students’ cultural backgrounds and experiences in all aspects of learning (Ladson-Billings, 1995).
3. The UNI150 curriculum has assignments, many of which are in Module 6 like the Lifeline assignment, Diversity quiz and the Early Life Influences assignment that introduce the topic of diversity to the students. In what ways do these assignments effectively address diversity? In what ways might they be improved?
4. In a previous study I conducted related to this topic, a few UNI150 instructors and students were surveyed. Some instructors shared students' concerns about not seeing anyone that represented them while trying to complete the informational interview assignment. In the survey, 78% of students agreed that the UNI150 students would benefit from learning more about representation. Ultimately, both felt that representation in the workforce is important when making career decisions. Knowing this, how might we include attention to representation in the workforce and its importance in the course? For example: lessons, assignments, readings?
5. When reflecting course experiences, contexts, and assignments, it’s important to reflect on what we know has worked, or not worked, for students in the past. Please share with me any impactful feedback you received from students related to their experience in this course and/or with regards to the assignments they have submitted in the course.

Data Collection in Phase 2: Implementation

Phase 2 data collection included student artifacts from the UNI150 course observations of the recorded class sessions, and a student survey.

Student Artifacts

I used Canvas, a Learning Management System (LMS), to teach the course, to communicate with students, to house the redesigned curriculum and collect the student artifacts. The collected student artifacts included: one major paper (Diversity in the Workforce), one reflection (Informational Interview) and one discussion board post. While I reviewed assignments and student work in real time as I taught the course, at the end of the course, I downloaded the artifacts from Canvas for further data analysis.

Observations of Class Sessions

As part of the intervention, I recorded four course sessions, across modules 3-7. As the course was offered via an asynchronous modality, I was already using Zoom to broadcast class meetings for students attending remotely. To ‘observe’ each class, I recorded the meetings using Zoom. Each class session was 2 hours long. At the end of the intervention, I downloaded a video and transcript from Zoom for each class session. The recorded class sessions included the PowerPoint slides I used in each class, and a recording of the conversations I had with students and that student had with each other in each class session. While I reviewed this data during the analysis phase, I paid close attention to only coding/utilizing data from students who consented to study participation.

Student Survey

Using Google Forms, I created a survey for my Cycle 1, and for the study intervention, to gather data on students’ career decision self-efficacy and their reflections of other content areas from the UNI150 course. I utilized that same survey in Phase 2 of the intervention. The survey included 9 Likert scale prompts, along with two open-ended response demographic questions. Likert response ranges were between Strongly Disagree (1)

to Strongly Agree (5). The survey questions can be found in Table 8. While the survey was completed by all students in the course as part of the coursework in week seven, I only analyzed the survey responses from the seven student study participants for this research.

Table 8

Student Survey Questions

Diversity, Representation and Career Decision-Making

1. There is a need to increase the representation of diverse faculty or professionals in higher education
 2. Students in UNI150 should be able to confidently list several occupations that they are interested in.
 3. Students UNI150 should be able to decide what they value most in an occupation.
 4. Seeing yourself represented in the career you are exploring can increase your confidence in pursuing that career path.
 5. Learning about diversity and representation as it pertains to career exploration is important for undergraduate students.
 6. When students see themselves represented in their future career this increases their self-efficacy.
 7. Students in UNI150 should be able to identify some reasonable major or career alternatives if they are unable to get their first choice.
 8. Students in UNI150 should be able to identify employers, majors, and career paths that are relevant to their career interests.
 9. Students in UNI150 should be able to strategize ways for navigating the major and career exploration process even when they do not see themselves represented in either.
 10. What gender/gender identity do you identify with?
 11. What is the racial or ethnic group you identify with?
-

Data Collection Across Phase 1 and 2

In both Phase 1 and 2, I created and collected analytic memos. Memo writing is commonly used as the intermediate stage between coding and analysis (Charmaz, 2003). As the data collection and data analysis was somewhat iterative, in my analytic memos I took notes from beginning to the end, across both phases of the intervention.

Analytic Memos

In Phase 1, I took note of the reactions, themes, and feelings that arose in my interrogation of the course curriculum and from the focus group with instructors. Across Phase 2, I took notes on students' submissions of the revised assignments, the conversations we had in-class related to the revised content, my process of implementing the revised curriculum and using culturally responsive pedagogies.

Throughout the data collection I documented significant moments, common themes, and reflections that I used to evaluate the progress of the intervention and need for any adjustments. I also noted aspects of either phase that attend to the theoretical perspective guiding the study. After the intervention was over, I took more memos as I re-watched the videos from the focus group and class sessions. These analytic memos helped me in the analysis process as I reflected upon the conversations I had with both students and faculty and made connections with my own experiences in both contexts.

Data Analysis and Research Question Alignment

Research Questions

- *RQ1*: What happens when faculty associates participate in the interrogation of curriculum through a culturally responsive lens?

- The last question was answered using the interrogation of the UNI150 curriculum and focus group data.
- *RQ2*: What happens when students experience a redesigned curriculum that includes a culturally responsive curriculum?
 - This research question regarding student's experience with the redesigned course was closely connected to the data collected using the surveys, the discussion posts from students, assignments submitted by students in Canvas, the review of the lectures, as well as memos documenting any additional student interactions with regards to the newly redesigned and implemented curriculum.

Data Analysis

As an action researcher I employed data analysis methodologies utilized in qualitative studies. Specifically, I used thematic analysis to analyze the data I collected. Paralleling the two phases of the intervention, I analyzed my data in two phases as well. In the first phase I conducted a preliminary analysis of the data to gather information from Phase 1 and inform the modifications for the implementation in Phase 2. My approach to interrogating the curriculum included the use of a short checklist to review the curriculum and a focus group with the faculty associates. In phase 2, I analyzed the data from those phases using a thematic analysis method. More details about my analysis processes are presented in Chapter 4.

Ethical Considerations

In this intervention I was the researcher and instructor as well as co-worker and recruiter of participants in my class. This multifaceted role put into question how I might mitigate the issue of potential coercion of participants to participate and is something that I

made sure to attend to when applying for IRB approval. In my recruitment efforts I ensured that each consent form, sent via email, will included language that stated that their participation in the study was voluntary, that no harm would be done to them in their participation of the study and additionally for my students, that their decision to participate or not would have no effect on their grade in my course. Action research is both “fundamentally about questioning the status quo and working toward change,” (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 151) and about maintaining ethical relationships with the participants that will be recruited to participate in the process. Creswell and Poth (2016) describe ethical practices of researchers including the acknowledgment of their positionality in the research, and the need to admit that the participants or the researchers and the participants combined are the true owners of the information collected. At the end of each survey and focus group I acknowledged all participants for their participation in the study.

Trustworthiness

Using the constructivist approach was key to providing a lens with which to determine who to study and where to conduct this research study. As TalkadSukumar and Metoyer (2019) note:

Given that the constructivist approach views knowledge not as the objective truth but instead as constructed realities, the goal of replication should likewise be altered to study how these constructed realities can differ and generate ‘a richer and deepened’ understanding of the phenomena and researcher biases instead. (p. 2)

With this in mind, I acknowledge my situatedness in this study and offer thick rich descriptions of participants and their experiences in this study in order to help others see the context for these constructed realities. Additionally, I utilized thematic analysis as the

primary data analysis method because of the cyclical nature of the process, its attention to generating a deeper understanding of the data and the reliability of the analysis process. The thematic analysis presented in Chapter 4 included two different coding processes, codebooks, description of themes and a precise description of how each of the six steps in Braun and Clark's (2006). The six steps taken in the thematic analysis aim to meet trustworthiness criteria.

Research Summary

There were two phases of the study: the first phase was the interrogation of the curriculum, and the second phase was the implementation of the redesigned curriculum. With approval from my committee and IRB, the study began in early Spring 2021 and concluded in late Spring 2021. The data analysis was conducted concurrently with the data collection

“Learning is a process where knowledge is presented to us, then shaped through understanding, discussion and reflection.”

-Paulo Freire

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND ASSERTIONS

While early cycles of action research, cycles 0 and 1, informed the development of the study, the data collected and analyzed for this research was broken into two phases. Phase 1 included a focus group with faculty members teaching UNI150 and an artifact analysis of the UNI150 course curriculum. I analyzed Phase 1 data to create the final intervention materials needed for Phase 2. Phase 2 included implementing the redesigned Diversity Section for UNI150 in the Spring of 2021. Data collection in this phase included recording four class discussion(s) and collecting student artifacts: two discussion boards, the “Diversity in the Workforce” assignment, and the post-course student survey. Finally, data collection included my analytic memos, which I created across both phases of the intervention. Once the intervention was over, I conducted a thematic analysis of all the data, revisiting Phase 1 data and analyzing Phase 2 data. In this chapter, I discuss the data analysis process and present the assertions that came from my analysis work.

Data Analysis Process

Thematic analysis is a methodology for identifying, analyzing, and registering patterns or themes within data (Braun & Clarke 2006). Thematic analysis is often used when trying to identify people’s opinions, experiences, or views on a topic or within a context. For my thematic analysis, I followed an iterative process inspired by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2006). They describe the process as a thorough review in and out of the data,

between the data, the codes from the data being analyzed and the analysis of the data itself.

The thematic analysis process they describe contains six steps:

1. Become familiar with the data
2. Assign codes to the data
3. Search for themes in codes
4. Review the themes derived from codes
5. Define and name themes
6. Write-up of findings

For *Step 1* of my thematic analysis process, I organized and prepped my data for analysis. This included transcribing focus groups and lectures, pulling the discussion posts and student artifacts from Canvas, and uploading it into Dedoose. I read and re-read through all the data to familiarize myself with it.

For *Step 2*, I started by identifying codes derived from the data. “Central to the coding process is ensuring that coding procedures are defined, rigorous, and consistently applied in order to conform with validity and reliability standards associated with qualitative research” (Williams & Moser, 2019, p.47). I assigned deductive codes to the data. I then reviewed the data again to produce inductive codes. With both sets of codes, I created a codebook that included the data source and definition of the codes. Both the inductive and deductive codes helped inform the determination of the themes. “Through focusing on meaning across a data set, thematic analysis allows the researcher to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences” (Braun, V., & Clarke, V. 2012).

In *Steps 3-6* I searched for and determined the themes for my analysis based on the codes, defined each theme, and then used those themes to develop my assertions. Throughout

this process I used analytic memos to help me keep track of thoughts that arose from the analysis process. This process “permits more reflection and meaning-making through analytic memoing” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 55). In the next few pages, a breakdown of each phase of analysis, the codes, the themes, and the assertions that came from the analysis process will be described.

Thematic Analysis

The thematic analysis included data from both Phase 1 and Phase 2 and occurred at the conclusion of Phase 2 data collection.

Phase 1

Phase 1 was a preliminary analysis of the focus group data. I started by transcribing the focus group Zoom recording using Otter.ai. transcription software. Otter.ai. provided some In Vivo codes also referred to as *verbatim coding*, *literal coding*, and *natural coding* (Saldaña, 2016). While I didn’t utilize In Vivo codes in my first round of coding the data, it did provide me with my first glimpse of how the focus group conversation went and the level of engagement of the faculty associates. I read through the transcripts pulling out information related to the students' experience with the course, which assignments stood out the most to the faculty associates, any input they had related to how the students experienced the UNI150 course and what suggestions they had related to the content of the course. After pulling the transcripts from the software I uploaded it into a qualitative data analysis software called Dedoose. From there, I re-read the transcripts several times to familiarize myself better with the data. While doing this, I took analytic memos of thoughts that came up from the focus group and added to some of the researcher notes I had taken while in the focus group.

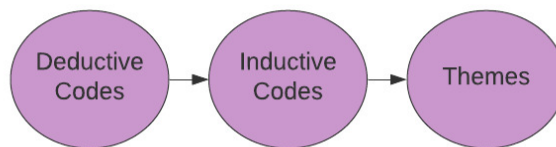
Analytic memos helped contribute to “the quality of your analysis by rigorous reflection on the data” (Saldaña, 2016, p.4). These analytic memos helped provide me with additional insight into the faculty responses. With the information provided by the faculty associates in the data from the focus group, I reviewed the curriculum again and began to make revisions with the intention to create a more culturally responsive curriculum.

Phase 2

Phase 2 began after all the qualitative data from the student surveys, the focus group, lectures, and student artifacts were collected. The remaining data that was collected in the second phase of data collection was entered into the Dedoose qualitative data analysis software program. In the analysis of all the data from both phases of data collection, a combination of deductive coding, inductive coding and thematic analysis process was used. This process is shown in the following Figure 1.

Figure 1

Sample Code and Theme Development Process



Note. The process for developing codes and themes

Deductive Coding

The first cycle of coding began with a deductive coding process which involved the development of a codebook using codes inspired by the theoretical framework outlined in my Chapter 2. Terry et. al. (2017) describes coding reliability approaches in thematic analysis as

often being deductive in beginning with theory and leading into evidence gathering through the coding process. Saldaña (2016) described how some methodologists advise that codes should be determined beforehand to “harmonize with your study’s conceptual framework or paradigm, and to enable an analysis that directly answers your research questions and goals” (p.62). So, in my first cycle, I developed codes based on the theoretical frameworks I used to inform my study. The deductive codes were *career*, *curriculum*, *culturally responsive*, *diversity*, and *representation*. These codes are tied to the Social Cognitive Career Theory, Systems Theory Framework and Critical Race Theory. These codes and theories were selected to help me understand the interplay between career decision making, the power the curriculum holds in a classroom environment and the value of inclusive pedagogical practices. To attend to issues related to reliability, I developed a codebook for my codes. The code book aided in my analysis reliability and was helpful later in the analysis when I developed and conceptualized themes (Clark & Braun, 2020). I created a codebook that included these codes, the reference from data and how I defined each code. “A codebook with a list of codes, a description of the code, and an example of data that matches the code helps with the organization of the data.” (Rogers, 2018, p.890). In basic qualitative studies, there is no agreed upon approach to what a definition should contain, but the following components can be used: description/definition, origin, importance, example, counterexample, and reflection (Maietta et al., 2018). So, I created a table manually and added the deductive codes, excerpts/origin from the data and my interpretation of the meaning/importance of the code in Table 9. The deductive codes were *career*, *curriculum*, *culturally responsive*, *diversity*, and *representation*.

Table 9

Deductive Codebook

Codes	Excerpts	Interpretation (Code definition)
Career	Student A, "I'm in a like, very good place when it comes to like, deciding on my major and possible career choices."	Career exploration is one of the main learning outcomes for the course. Social cognitive career theory is also one of the theoretical frameworks of the study.
Curriculum	FA4: "That's a challenge for this UNI150 course because it is so scripted. It's so scripted, we're required to do what we are required to do however we are required to do it. There's not a lot of wiggle room."	The UNI150 is the focal point of this intervention. It is important to understand how the curriculum is being perceived by both faculty associates and students to better understand the need to revise the curriculum.
Culturally Responsive	FA 3: (In reference to culturally responsive pedagogy), "the focus of the student centered on bringing in their own culture into the curriculum, allowing their experiences to sort of make sense of the curriculum."	Increasing Culturally Responsive Pedagogical practices in the classroom is an ideal outcome for this intervention. Understanding how faculty view these practices, what they understand about CRP and how students respond when CRP is practiced in the classroom.
Diversity	Student A: "Diversity allows you to have a broader spectrum of, you know, thought and understanding. And it's important to have diversity because you need that to have a successful business."	Diversity in this intervention relates to the unique identity differences along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual diversity and orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, or religious beliefs. How students understand this concept and what value they add to it as they explore careers.
Representation	Student G: "Society can only benefit from being exposed to different experiences than their own and having their culture or color or gender represented in a workplace helps future generations see themselves in those professions."	Representation in this intervention relates to the presence of a specific demographic in each setting, specifically as it pertains to the workforce.

Inductive Coding

For the second round of coding a “bottom up” approach was used by creating inductive codes that developed as the data was analyzed. These codes were produced from the data. Several read-throughs of the data were conducted and excerpts that stood out were highlighted each time. While I did that, I was simultaneously adding to my analytic memos describing the thoughts that emerged and reasons why the excerpts stood out to me. Emerging from the data was the data that reflected on how students were centering their own identities into the course work. They started to reflect on how they saw themselves in both the dynamics of the classroom and in the workforce. This made me realize how much bigger the initial concepts I had pre-determined were. “Coding is oriented around the central concept of [seeking] to represent the interplay of subjects’ and researcher’s perceptions of the nature and dimensions of phenomena under study” (Douglas, 2003, p. 48). Both the student’s voices and the faculty associate’s experiences started to emerge from the data. The inductive codes highlighted their perspective, their thoughts related to diversity and representation in the workforce as well as their experience related to their interaction with the UNI150 curriculum. These codes allowed for me to highlight their voice and opinions and better attend to the research aims of the study. I created another table manually, with the inductive codes and excerpts and interpretations of each as seen in Table 10. The deductive codes were *system, identity, perspective, impact, and learning*.

Table 10

Inductive Codebook

Codes	Excerpts	Interpretation (Code definition)
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System	FA4: “I think the diversity module is atrocious and minimizes the impact that diversity has and what it means for our students on an individual level and a systemic level”	Systems, in this case academic systems, play a major role in the facilitation, acquisition and development of new knowledge.
Perspective	Student C: “If you have a lot of diverse individuals, you bring a lot of different perspectives. So, with a lot of different perspectives, you get, like I said, a lot of different ways of coming up with a solution.”	Understanding perspectives of the faculty associates’ views on the curriculum, the modifications, and the implementation in addition to the student’s perspectives on diversity and inclusion efforts in the workforce.
Impact	Student G: “Being diverse in the workplace, as in all aspects of your life, only broadens your understanding and expands how much you can impact the world around you or your group”	Description of what impact diversity and inclusion efforts have in the workforce.
Learning	Student A: “You being in a headspace of being a perpetual learner, right? We’re in institutions of higher learning and sometimes we feel like we’ve arrived at a spot where we feel comfortable with what we know and that what we know is right, period.”	Learning is related to the development of new knowledge about career, diversity, representation, or the systems students are participants of.

After both tables were done, another review of all the data was conducted to get a better understanding of the information that was emerging from the data. Then I began the process of developing themes. “Many qualitative studies result in themes, which are an outcome of the coding process and analytic reflection,” (Rogers, 2018).

Theme Development and Themes

Data within themes should connect in a meaningful way with clear and specific distinctions between each of the themes presented, (Braun & Clarke, 2008). After identifying

and defining all of the codes, what followed were *Steps 3-5* of the thematic analysis process which included searching for themes in the codes, reviewing the themes derived from the codes, defining and naming the themes and developing an interpretation of the themes. “TA with a descriptive purpose is an interpretative activity undertaken by a researcher who is situated in various ways, and who reads data through the lenses of their particular social, cultural, historical, disciplinary, political and ideological positionings” (Braun & Clark, 2020, p.339).

The process began by re-reading the codebooks. While reviewing the codebooks, I determined that there was a need to cluster the codes that were somewhat similar in meaning. Theme development involves examining codes and clustering codes together to develop meaningful patterns that are derived from the data, (Terry, et. al., 2017). Through the process of clustering the codes, I created a thematic map which allowed me to visually sort different codes into themes. These thematic maps I created on paper and with colorful post-its included codes with their descriptions and allowed me to maneuver information more easily from one “theme pile” to another helping me in the interpretation of my codes and search for themes to select. It was helpful for me to do this process manually as opposed to utilizing the software as it allowed me to immerse myself into the data and visually see themes develop from the data, in a more organic way. These “theme piles” helped me move my ideas from one to another, removing items from one pile and into another, and to better conceptualize the process.

In my review of each of the “theme piles” I had created, I determined that some of these themes were not really themes I wanted to pursue, nor did they have enough evidence to support them being a stand-alone theme. I reviewed all the coded data to help me make

this decision. For example, I had identified four main themes: *need for change*, *pedagogy*, *identity*, and *systems*. After more review of the codes and the meaning I was making from the codes to develop the themes I concluded that these themes were too abstract and I needed to better develop themes that spoke to what the data was saying, simply. I made this decision based on the direction the data was going and the weight that was put primarily on the formation of the other three themes. For example, the need for change was a theme that I derived from my analytic memos and interpretation of the data but there were not enough codes or data from students and faculty to support this as a stand-alone theme. The three themes I chose formed a coherent pattern from the data and formed a more accurate representation of the theoretical frameworks chosen. Braun and Clarke (2008) suggest that at this stage it is a good opportunity to review the data again to determine whether the themes work and to code any additional data within themes that might have been missed early on. I found that the themes I had selected were an accurate representation of the data and aligned well with the theoretical frameworks.

The final step in the process of development is to define and name the themes. I found that there were three overarching themes: *curriculum*, *student experience* and *enacting change*. Braun and Clarke (2008) describe the process of refining your themes as identifying the ‘essence’ of what each theme is about and what aspect of the data each theme captures. The data was interpreted based on how the themes addressed my research questions and whether my initial concerns related to the problem of practice were supported. For example, more faculty associates referred specifically to the curriculum in the course, good and bad, than the need for change. I also questioned the experiences of students with the revised course and how the data reflected that engagement. Students reflected on their own

experiences within the context of the course and their own career exploration which solidified the identity theme. Both faculty and students made references to systemic issues related to diversity and process for attending to curricular changes related to diversity, so the systems theme really provided insight into both perspectives. It was important for me to ensure the themes represented the experiences of the faculty associates, the students, and my experience being both the researcher and instructor of the UNI150 course. Each theme highlights these experiences in a way that is supported by the data. For each theme I identified the codes the themes derived from and the description of each theme within a table. Table 11 presents codes associated with each theme, the theme and story each theme tells in relation to the study and research aims.

Table 11

Themes

Codes	Theme	Description
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) Curriculum Learning	Curriculum	This theme is derived from the codes and data collected describing the content of the curriculum. Faculty associates shared their experience with CRP and how much they valued it. They described their experience teaching the UNI150 curriculum and how it was not culturally responsive but how much their own experiences with it led them to believe that this pedagogical shift was important. They described instances wherein students interacting with the UNI150 course that was not culturally responsive might have affected their learning in the course at times. Some describe how ineffective they felt the curriculum was at describing diversity issues. Faculty associates shared their willingness to make pedagogical changes but those were never implemented.
Diversity Representation	Student Experience	This theme came from the experiences students shared and the experiences faculty associates shared about their students. As students engaged with the revised

Perspective		curriculum they reflected on what diversity and representation in the workforce meant to them. They described how their own identities either played a role in how they saw diversity and representation efforts in the workforce or how much they felt it impactful to acknowledge diverse perspectives in the workforce. Students positioned their own identities within the career exploration process acknowledging their diversity as well as their privilege.
Career Impact System	Enacting Change	This theme reflects faculty associates' feelings related to how the department impacted their ability to teach students the UNI150 curriculum in a culturally responsive way and how students viewed the impact systems have on diversity and representation efforts in the workforce and on their exploration of careers. Faculty associates shared the pushback they had received from the department to make modifications to the UNI150 course. This was interpreted as a systemic issue and reflective of how difficult it is to make sure all students see themselves represented in the classroom environment.

As Alhojailan (2012) said, “By using thematic analysis there is the possibility to link the various concepts and opinions of the learners and compare these with the data that has been gathered in different situations at different times during the project” (p. 40). It was important for me to be able to allow for the experiences of participants to be shared explicitly but also to possibly find a link between these different experiences and be supported by the data. *Step 6* of thematic analysis is the write up of the analysis. Braun and Clark (2008) describe the purpose of this final analysis step as important to convey to the reader the merit and validity of your analysis. The interpretation of the data took a significant amount of time as it was both iterative and the perspectives from students and faculty were different. “Interpretation is inherent to the (TA) analytic process” (Braun & Clark, 2020, p.340). In the next section, I illustrate the assertions I extracted from my analysis, assertions that

summarize my research findings with evidence from the data to support each. Each assertion will describe the data source and phase the data was sourced from.

Assertions

This qualitative action research study was cyclical and attempted to determine ways in which to affect change. What change to enact was informed by the data, the analysis, and assertions I derived from the analysis of the data. I present my findings as asserted outcomes or declarative statements derived from the analysis of the data, to make clear what my interpretations of the data were and in relation to the research aims. As a qualitative researcher, I “embrace the temporal nature of a “truth” and the notion that findings are context dependent and are aimed at starting a conversation ((Nolen & Talbert, 2011, p.269). The assertions were informed by the thematic analysis process I used to analyze the data. The themes I derived from the data are reflective of the unique experiences related to the curriculum interrogation and redesign, the students’ experiences in the redesign Diversity section of UNI150, and my and the faculty associates’ experiences teaching the course. In this section I present five assertions. Assertions 1 and 2 are related to Phase 1 of the intervention. Assertion 3 is related to Phase 2 of the intervention. Assertions 4 and 5, speak to the value and the challenges of making curricular changes and encompassing experiences across both phases of the intervention.

Phase 1: Interrogating and Redesigning the Course Curriculum

The initial cycles of this action research, the interrogation of the course syllabus and the student survey about representation and diversity, revealed the need to further interrogate the curriculum and to do so through a culturally responsive lens. Having been an instructor of this course for approximately two years, I had experience teaching the course and

participating in faculty meetings. From my teaching experiences, I knew some of my students of color were negatively affected by some of the verbiage in the curriculum. Conversely, I saw that other students, predominantly white students, were not being stretched by the curriculum to see the value of diversity and representation as it was presented in the course. From participating in faculty meetings, I gathered that other instructors felt the same sense of urgency to address curriculum-related concerns which is what inspired me to want to conduct a focus group as part of this study.

The time frame for the intervention was short and tight. In Phase 1 of the intervention, I needed to conduct the focus group and analyze the data from the focus group to further interrogate the course materials and finalize the curriculum modifications I needed for Phase 2. The data collected and analyzed during Phase 1 (the focus group and artifact analysis of course materials) led to the following two assertions.

Assertion 1: By Interrogating Curriculum Together, We Created a More Culturally Responsive Curriculum

The focus group provided the opportunity to better understand the faculty associates' ideas about the curriculum, their understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy, and their willingness to use CRP about using a culturally responsive lens to make changes to the course.

Faculty Frustration with the Curriculum. My time in faculty meetings allowed me to hear faculty raise concerns about the curriculum, sharing ideas that the curriculum needed to be changed or updated. While not always directly related to changes regarding specific modules or assignments, often, these requests to make modifications to the curriculum were never attended to. Leading up to the focus group, I knew that faculty associates were frustrated and ready to see changes made to the curriculum.

After analyzing the focus group data, it was clear that faculty were frustrated with the UNI150 curriculum. It was evident from what they shared in the focus group that they were frustrated by how rigid the curriculum was and how inflexible the leads were in allowing them to accommodate their students better. Between tending to students who had negative reactions to some of the assignments in the course and being flexible with students who were navigating a global pandemic, the faculty associates were frustrated by their inability to make, what they felt were, necessary changes to the curriculum.

- FA4 said, "I felt the need to reach out to these students (that submitted these assignments) and so there was a lot of likes, almost consoling after, like having to reach out and be like, hey, like I saw you disclose this...It was just really frustrating"
- FA2 said, "Before the pandemic, students were not allowed to meet virtually, at all. It was prohibited. The course was way too rigid and for no reason. That was tough to manage"

Faculty Knowledge of CRP. In the focus group, faculty associates discussed their understanding about and comfort with culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP). The prompts that guided this discussion were:

- Can you tell me what you know about culturally responsive pedagogy?
- Can you tell me about how comfortable you are in teaching culturally responsive pedagogy?

The focus group began with a conversation about CRP. I wanted to see what they already knew and share some literature about CRP. It was important to understand faculty knowledge and comfort with implementing CRP so that I could start thinking about what instructor training might look like if the curriculum changed in this direction. I also wanted to understand what would happen if the suggested curriculum changes were implemented in the department moving forward. It was clear that the faculty associates had knowledge of CRP and felt comfortable with using CRP. Some of the ideas they shared included:

- “The culturally responsive teaching is really tuning in to the individual, and not you know, it's not a one size fits all. Its tuning into the individual,” (FA 4).
- “The focus of the student, centered on bringing in their own culture into the curriculum, allowing their experiences to sort of make sense of the curriculum,” (FA 3).
- “I do know quite a bit about culturally responsive pedagogy. There's none of that in UNI150 and I think it is hella important. And you can quote me on the hella important part” (FA3)
- “Make sure that every student is getting what they need,” and that instructors be “more mindful and intentional in supporting them,” (FA 2).

They knew that CRP was student centered. They also knew that to bring in students' culture, curriculum would need to change, based on which students were taking the class. After hearing how they defined CRP, I shared some ideas from Geneva Gay and Gloria

Ladson-Billings about CRP. Faculty were able to see how their ideas about CRP connected with the literature.

Faculty Willingness to Embrace CRP. Not only did faculty understand CRP, but they were willing to use these approaches to design and implement course content. Along with seeing CRP as valuable, faculty also knew it was necessary when teaching in diverse spaces. As one faculty shared, “ASU is such a diverse university, we’re literally the largest by student volume in the nation. So, to have a course like this, that doesn’t implement any type of cultural pedagogy is pretty embarrassing” (FA3).

After conducting the focus group and analyzing the data, I kept the faculty members' ideas and values in mind as I proceeded with the last part of phase one, which was to interrogate and make changes to the course content. The following assertion bridges the focus conversation with my independent artifact analysis of the course content.

Assertion 2: Diversity-related Curriculum Should be Developed with Intentionality

The focus group in Phase 1 started with a discussion about each faculty associate's experience with the UNI150 students, the UNI150 curriculum in broad terms, and then led into a discussion of modifying the course using a CRP lens. Specifically, the instructors examined and talked about the diversity section of the course. In the original UNI150 course, the Diversity section included one week’s worth of learning. Specifically, a video for students to watch in class by Jane Elliot, “A Class Divided,” and a paper in which students addressed 4 questions about diversity (noted below).

The analysis of the focus group data and the course artifact analysis that I completed revealed that the current course content was ineffective. Faculty associates expressed their concern for how the prompts for the paper were written and about the Jane Elliot video. In

the video, Jane Elliot conducts a lesson on discrimination in a third-grade class. Some of the comments made in the video, from the 1960's wherein students made prejudicial remarks towards their classmates, made some faculty associates feel like the video was out of context. It was important then, that when redesigning the diversity section, I paid close attention to the learning materials and the language of the assignments provided in the course.

Ineffective Diversity-related Curriculum. The faculty associates had strong feelings about the diversity section. In the focus group discussion, they revealed instances wherein they felt conflicted following the employing the provided curriculum related to diversity. Faculty associates expressed how this module was ineffective and was difficult to teach. When we talked about where the source of the difficulty came from, they determined that the difficulty came from this section being placed in the course without connection to the learning outcomes of the course that were centered on major and career exploration. They expressed concern that this section was placed into this curriculum without intentionality. This was a critical component for the interrogation of the curriculum. Some of the comments faculty associates made about the diversity section of the course were:

- “There is nothing worse than a poorly done diversity conversation, it just does more harm,” (FA 1).
- A faculty associate said it would be ideal to have, “more tangible outcomes for the diversity module,” (FA 2).
- “This (diversity) assignment seems so out of context,” (FA 2).

When I went to revise the curriculum, I made sure to update the learning objectives for the course so that there would be alignment with the revisions made. It was important to

ensure that the suggestions the faculty associates made were implemented in the revised curriculum and developed with intentionality.

Words Matter when Discussing Diversity. Phrasing was one major issue the faculty associates shared related to one of the diversity assignments in the diversity section. The phrasing of the assignment put some students in a position where they were reliving life traumas whereas other students were simply submitting the assignment without knowing what they were supposed to be getting out of it. The original diversity assignment prompts were:

1. “When and how did you first become aware of this aspect of your identity/diversity? Is there a particular event, or series of events, that stand out in your mind? Or did you become aware of it in another way?”
2. So far in your life, in what ways has this aspect of your diversity affected you academically or professionally? How has it affected you personally?”
3. How does this aspect of yourself affect your view of/orientation toward your major and future career path? How do other people’s views about your identity affect your thinking about your path? Are you influenced by how other people view you or not? If so, how? If not, why not?”
4. Thinking practically, how do you want to act/what steps do you want to take in your major and career path, considering these issues? What challenges might you face, and how might these challenges strengthen your ability to do the work that you choose in a major or career?”

In my experience teaching these prompts, I knew that the assignment affected students differently. For URM students, the assignment was often “triggering” (this was a comment shared with me by a student) acting as a reminder of negative experiences that were uncomfortable to relive. Some of the experiences URM students would write about included when they experienced racially charged comments, looks or scenarios. The diversity assignment didn’t affect white students in the same way. White students were able to complete the work without being triggered or reminded of negative past experiences. For white students, the assignment was a chance to explore the trajectory of their major and career path and use past experiences to think about that path.

The data from the focus group aligned with my early experiences teaching this course. As one faculty member shared in the focus group, “Hey, write a paper about how your diversity might have negatively impacted you and then like, cool, we’re going to give you a grade, and then we’re going to move on with our content” (FA 4). The faculty members in the focus group felt the diversity section was “poorly done,” (FA1.) They even talked about raising these concerns at faculty meetings, but the content was never changed. On hearing that I had the opportunity to make changes, they encouraged me to create modifications in the diversity section of the course to both the lesson and the assignment.

Phase 2: Implementation of a revised course curriculum

Assertion 3: Students Understand and Value Diversity Differently

In phase 2, the new revised curriculum was implemented into the course. In this phase the data collected included lecture observations, student artifacts and post-course survey data. Since there were only seven students who consented, there were not many responses but six for the survey provided at the end of the 7-week course. Only the last four weeks of lectures

of the 7-week course were approved by IRB for observation and in those weeks, all the student artifacts were collected.

Lectures: Talking About Diversity with Students was Positive. From the lecture observations it was evident that students in the intervention study were much more engaged in the conversation related to diversity. I interpreted this to mean that students benefited from learning that diversity was much more than just a one-dimensional category. It provided us an opportunity in class, to elaborate more on what diversity really meant, what it meant in relation to the workforce and opened the dialogue for more students. This was not a conversation I had been able to have the way the curriculum was structured before.

- Student B shared that they, “thought diversity was related specifically to cultural or racial or ethnic diversity.”
- Student A shared, “Diversity is quite important for companies as well as our entire society”

Student Artifacts: Assignments Geared Towards Diversity in the Workforce were Positive. It was important for me to utilize the information provided through the interrogation of the curriculum and make significant improvements to the curriculum. This assignment and the module were modified to shift the conversation about diversity and have students reflect on what diversity and representation mean to them as they explore careers.

The prompts were:

- How do diversity and inclusion efforts in the workplace impact society?
- What are some reasons for pursuing diversity and inclusion efforts in the workforce?

- Think about your own identity and position yourself in the conversation now. How would working in an environment that is more inclusive and has made concerted efforts to attend to issues of diversity and inclusion, impact you?
- Thinking about the efforts you will make to select a major and career, how important is it to you, that companies invest in these efforts to create environments that are more inclusive and why?

Through the analysis of the student artifacts, I noticed that students were able to make connections to what diversity was and how it relates to the workforce. This was not a connection the students were making the way the assignment was written before. It was a good reflection for them to visualize the career exploration process through this lens and position themselves in the process by considering these things. They were able to see the value in companies' inclusion of diversity and reflect on their own value of a company culture of inclusion.

- Student A shared, “Diversity allows you to have a broader spectrum of, you know, thought and understanding. And it’s important to have diversity to have a successful business.”
- Student A shared, “Diversity makes companies more innovative, provides better opportunities and allows for better services.”

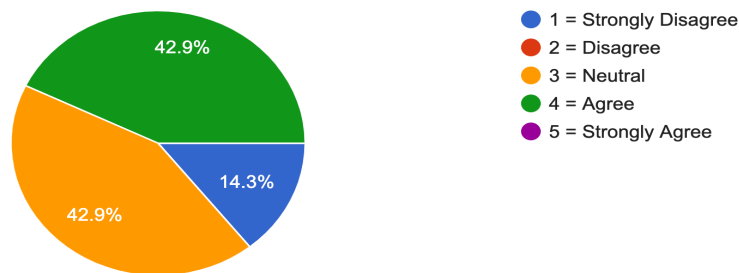
Survey: Response to Include more Diversity Content into Revised Course was Negative. Students participating in the post-course survey in initial cycles of this action research study and in the intervention completed similar surveys with similar questions. The surveys were created to better understand what information, if any, related to diversity and representation, the students thought might be missing. In Figure 2 and Figure 3, there is a

small percentage change that shows that students in the initial cycle of this action research study were more inclined to believe that the UNI150 course needed more information about diversity. This initial survey data confirmed for me that students were not satisfied by the diversity segment in the UNI150 course they took and that changes needed to be made. These changes are reflected in the implementation of the revised UNI150 curriculum. In Figure 3, students were less inclined to agree that the course needed more information about diversity in the UNI150 course. This, I believe, is a result of the increase in diversity information included in the redesign. Still, there were not many responses to the survey which made the responses pretty evenly distributed between: agree, strongly disagree and neutral.

Figure 2

Initial Cycle of Research Survey

There should be more information about diversity in the UNI150 course.
7 responses



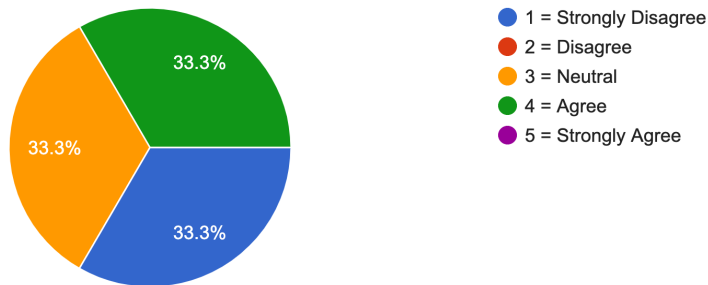
Note. Post-Course Student Survey - Previous Cycle of Research

Figure 3

Intervention Survey

There should be more information about diversity in the UNI150 course.

6 responses



Note. Post-Course Student Survey - Intervention

Assertion 4: Representation Matters for UNI150 Students

In phase 1 and 2, the data collected and analyzed helped inform the interrogation and implementation of the UNI150 curriculum. These two phases revealed what the faculty associates and students felt about the UNI150 and their reflections about the content of the curriculum. The thematic analysis also revealed the value of acknowledging the student's experience as one of the primary themes. As students engaged with the revised curriculum, they positioned their own identities within the career exploration process. This assertion will present findings that reflect the analysis of the data that showed the value of representation as reflected by the faculty associates and the students.

Faculty Associates Know their Students. In the focus group, the faculty associates were asked to share what their experience working with their UNI150 students was like. Most of the faculty associates had at least one year of teaching experience which meant they had taught the course at least twice. They talked about how most of their students were exploring not just careers but also, who they wanted to be. In the focus group a FA1 shared

their reflections about students' identity formation and the value of including more representation in the curriculum,

- In reference to UNI150 students:
 - “They are in a position where they're kind of figuring out who they are and who they want to be.”
- In reference to increasing representation in the workforce:
 - “Show them they can see more people like them in their field”
 - “Invite more women engineers, or engineers of color, or from historically underrepresented groups in specific fields and to share their experiences”

Faculty associates reflected on the value of developing content that was more inclusive for students. One faculty associate shared that they think of the student as the subject of the course and that statement really shifted my own thinking about how I position my students in relation to my own instructional practices. It made me think critically about how I engage the students and encourage them to engage with the course. I made sure to integrate these suggestions faculty associates provided which included more quotes, videos, TedTalks, and resources that included more representation of people of color. Providing students with support for their exploration of various majors and careers as well as more inclusive content in the form of representation.

Students Reflected on Their Own Identity. In addition to providing examples in the course from people of color in the implementation of the redesigned curriculum, I also wanted to ensure that students felt comfortable sharing their own stories. In one of our recorded lectures, with some students in-person and some in the virtual classroom, students

described the impact several different lived experiences had on them. One student shared that the fact that their parents graduated from college, “had a big impact” on them. They understood that they had a privilege of having parents that had gone to college and that this is not always the case for their peers. Students engaged further into a discussion around first-generation and continuing education students. We talked about access to opportunities and how they might differ from one student to another. Students learned about equity in education and engaged in a discussion about how that can impact the trajectory of someone’s educational experience and career acquisition. Leading this discussion, I was proud of how students were able to share experiences from across the cultural and socio-economic spectrum. In the lecture, several students shared that even having someone that looks like you in the field you want to explore, is a privilege.

I shared with the classroom some data points about different demographics of students at ASU (like the ones provided in Chapter 1). One student shared that she wished that it wasn’t true and was shocked to see that ASU’s student demographic was still predominantly White. They reflected on their faculty demographic and realized there were no Latina/Hispanic women in their program at the faculty level. I shared with them that that was my experience in both my undergraduate and master’s experiences as well. Student B shared, “Being a Hispanic woman makes me both a subordinate and a minority, two things that are truly out of my control.” They felt that for them, there was only ONE way to exist as a Hispanic woman. I took this as an opportunity to share that there are Hispanic women/Latinas in various industries, doing various things and not all at the subordinate level. My interpretation of this conversation, one in which the whole class participated in, led me to believe that if there were more representation in the classroom, at the faculty level perhaps

but at least within the curriculum, students might not feel that they are defined by the societal categorizations, which is how I interpreted her description of herself but instead, that they are capable of so much more.

Students talked about the value of seeing people that look like them be successful because it provided them with an example of what they could be. Other students shared how diversity and representation can help everyone learn how to practice inclusivity and acceptance as well. Student G shared, “Diversity is imperative to show to other boys like me (white) specifically as early on as possible.” This student was referring to how little he knew about the experiences other students were sharing in the lecture. This student understood the positionality of their own identity in the conversation and the value of learning more about diversity. These lectures took place over the course of the last four weeks of a seven-week semester and each lecture was more and more engaging. I saw students feeling more confident in sharing their stories and students listening and learning. By increasing representation of culturally diverse examples in the curriculum, engaging with students in a critical discussion around how they themselves are represented within the context of career exploration, I believe students were able to establish a stronger connection to the course.

Assertion 5: Effecting Curriculum Change is Challenging

In Phase 1 and 2, different challenges emerged. The challenge of making curricular changes without departmental support emerged from the faculty associate focus group and the experience of implementing changes with support from the institution provided an interesting contrast to the process. This assertion has two components, one that reflects the lack of support for curricular change and one that reflects what happens when support is granted to be able to make curricular changes. The data that was used to inform this assertion

came predominantly from the researcher memos with supporting data from the focus groups and what is known to be true about the course. This assertion is heavily based on my experience trying to conduct this work.

Systemic Barriers to Change Curriculum. In my personal professional experience navigating the UNI150 curriculum redesign process, I received a lot of pushbacks. In the focus group, when faculty associates described their experience with the pushback they received, I knew it was important to explore. FA4 shared, “The challenge for this UNI150 course because it is so scripted. It’s so scripted, we’re required to do what we are required to do however we are required to do it. There's not a lot of wiggle room.” This rigidity they reflected on in the focus group could be due to basic standardization of all curricular activities. Faculty associates were technically all temporary employees. The rigidity they described could have been a result of the department just trying to ensure that all faculty associates were doing the same thing and without deviation. Still, all the changes being proposed or suggested by the faculty associates were based on evidence collected from their lectures and to benefit the student. Unfortunately, this requirement to stick to the “script” made the faculty associates feel like it was tough to provide authentic instruction. When they made suggestions, those suggestions were not taken seriously. Again, the course had not had any significant changes in over 10 years.

Even when we, faculty associates, shared in the weekly faculty meetings the discomfort students felt in the wording of some of the assignments/modules, these reflections provided were not taken seriously. In the focus group, FA3 shared, “I was reprimanded for deviating from the diversity lesson.” We unpacked this a little and there was a consensus among the group that everyone came to, *no changes would be made regardless of what those*

changes were. This was an important data point because it revealed the systems that support curriculum development and the protections put in place to maintain it intact regardless of cause for change.

Institutional Access to Make Curricular Changes. In the summer 2020, I sent a prospectus for this research study to the head of the department. In my prospectus, a timeline of the study was provided which included a proposal defense in January 2021 and data collection while I taught in Spring 2021. I received no response but taught in the fall semester of 2020 and conversations about the development of new knowledge of my study was shared in some of our weekly meetings. At the end of the semester, when all the faculty associates typically receive their marching orders/the courses they are set to teach the following semester, I had not received mine. I was told that there were no more classes for me to teach. At our very last faculty associates meeting, we were told all faculty associates were to attend mandatory training at the end of the fall semester or risk not teaching in the spring, so I showed up. I shared some preliminary findings with the group as I had conducted Cycle 1 data collection in my Fall 2020 course. It was at that point when everyone understood what I was doing and the implications of not tending to some of what the data reflected.

In the spring of 2021 after defending my proposal and to conduct this research, I had to receive permission from the IRB. Before submitting all the required documentation to IRB, including all of the revised curriculum, I had sent the documentation to the head of the department. It was sent several times and never reviewed by the head of the department. Later, IRB permissions were granted and still, no departmental support was provided in the process. This lack of support almost prevented me from conducting this research study. As I

reviewed my analytic memos and analyzed the focus group discussion related to the process of creating changes to the curriculum, I realized that what stood in the way of being able to provide students with a more equitable learning environment were systemic barriers and lack of support to change at the departmental level.

Curricular Systems and Curricular Changes. Curricular systems emerged from the analysis of the data and reflection of the interrogation process that identified a system that has the power to protect, support and change the curriculum. There needed to be foundational changes to this curricular system to really be able to move UNI150 into a more culturally responsive direction. There was no consensus that changes needed to be made to attend to all the concerns presented to us by the students and that faculty associates had been sharing in the weekly team meetings. All the faculty associates spoke to this challenge. The faculty associates shared how uncomfortable they felt at times themselves, navigating the curriculum content as it was. I took this to mean that they had hoped their suggestions would have been heard, that they could have made some curricular changes and with the support of the department, but they did not feel they had that. This was evident in the data, in my own personal experience within the department and motivated me to push forward with the study despite the discomfort of the pushback received. Students deserve to feel safe in the classroom, faculty associates should be able to feel that they are able to provide for students a safe learning environment.

Pushback and Legitimizing Efforts to Effect Change. At the end of the Spring 2021 semester, the interrogation of the curriculum, the redesign of the curriculum, the implementation of the redesigned curriculum and the data collection had all been completed. As I reflected on the process and reviewed my researcher memos, I realized just how

exhausting the process was. Not because designing and conducting a study is exhausting, I mean, it is, but it was navigating the process to make the changes that was exhausting. I had to constantly work to legitimize the value of the study by providing a prospectus in summer 2020, preliminary data fall 2020, and finally IRB approval early spring 2021. As a woman of color at PWI, this feeling was not new. I knew this feeling well and knew that to conduct this research, to gain the access necessary to be able to affect change at the curricular level, I needed to play the game of constantly going above and beyond to legitimize the work of the department even when there was no persistent sign of support. It was exhausting and revealed a level of gatekeeping I did not anticipate as I embarked upon this research.

Research Questions

Based on the thematic analysis of my data that revealed three major themes which were: curriculum, student experience and enacting change. Five assertions emerged from the themes that included: *by interrogating curriculum together, we created a more culturally responsive curriculum, diversity-related curriculum should be developed with intentionality, students understand and value diversity differently, representation matters for UNI150 students, and affecting curriculum change is challenging*. Each assertion provided evidentiary responses to the research questions. The research questions guiding this small-scale study were carefully selected to be able to highlight the experiences of the faculty associates, the students, and interaction with the curriculum. The research questions that guided this study were:

Research Questions

- *RQ1*: What happens when faculty associates participate in the interrogation of curriculum through a culturally responsive lens?

- *RQ2*: What happens when students experience a redesigned curriculum that includes a culturally responsive curriculum?

RQ1

The faculty associates were a critical component of the interrogation of the curriculum. Together, in the focus group, faculty associates provided suggestions, shared their experience working with the curriculum and the changes they wish they could have implemented to the curriculum. Their suggestions all solidified the need to interrogate the effectiveness of the diversity module in attending to the learning objective but also, in its ability to provide students with the opportunity to learn about the value of diversity and inclusion efforts in the workplace. They provided support in attending to the learning objectives by helping me make the necessary modifications there. The faculty associates appreciated being heard. They wanted to share their suggestions related to the curriculum but never felt that they had had the chance to really. They revealed how challenging it was to present their suggestions about the curriculum to the department and expressed concerns about the rigidity of the course at the expense of the students. We had such a strong rapport already and had been through similar experiences both with the students and with some of the pushback they had received in trying to implement curricular changes. We worked collaboratively to interrogate the curriculum through a culturally responsive lens to implement a curriculum that was inclusive of the lived experiences of all students.

RQ2

The culturally responsive curriculum felt so much more natural, and the students responded so well to it by engaging in positive discussions about diversity in the workforce, representation, and their own identities. Students discussed what they thought diversity was

and what it wasn't. Students also talk about how they view diversity and inclusion efforts made by companies. Some students described never having thought about thinking about company culture in their career exploration and that it was something they now will never not consider. These are conversations that were not previously had with the former curriculum. With the revised culturally responsive curriculum that included more examples of diverse people in the modules, they responded by quoting them and connecting more with what they were saying.

*“All instruction is culturally responsive. The question is:
to which culture is it currently oriented?”*

- Gloria Ladson-Billings

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

“Qualitative analytic process is cyclical rather than linear” (Saldaña, 2016, p.58). As an action research study, each cycle and phase of research contributed to the development of new knowledge and a better understanding of the problem of practice. The purpose of this study was to interrogate the UNI150 curriculum through a culturally responsive lens, to redesign the curriculum and implement a curriculum with inclusive language to ensure that all students saw themselves represented in the curriculum to promote a more equitable learning environment. This study was informed by Critical Race Theory, Social Cognitive Career Theory, and Systems Theory Framework. Through thematic analysis, I derived three themes from the data: curriculum, student experience and enacting change. These themes led to the development of five assertions. In this chapter I discuss my overall assertions through the lens of the theories that guided this study. I discuss the limitations of the study, lessons learned and unintended outcomes. I conclude this chapter by providing some implications for future research and implications for future practice related to curriculum interrogation and implementation.

Discussion of Assertions

This study included perspectives and data collected from the faculty associates who had experience using the UNI150 curriculum before the redesign, students who received the redesigned UNI150 curriculum and myself who participated as the researcher and participant

in the interrogation, redesign, and implementation of the UNI150 curriculum. Through this action research study, five assertions emerged:

1. By interrogating the curriculum together, we created a more culturally responsive curriculum
2. Diversity-related curriculum should be developed with intentionality
3. Students understand and value diversity differently
4. Representation matters for UNI150 students
5. Affecting curriculum change is challenging.

Assertions 1, 2 and 5 were where the faculty associates, in sharing their own experiences, inspired me to push through barriers that stood in the way of conducting this research study. The faculty associates expressed their desire to make changes to the curriculum, expressed the push back they received, and their own knowledge of culturally responsive pedagogical practices solidified for me that this research study had the potential to affect change in the department. It was clear that faculty associates should be involved in such curriculum change processes because they are the ones who interact most with the curriculum and the students who receive it. The faculty associates were a critical component to the development of new knowledge in this study.

Assertions 3 and 4 were derived from the student's interaction with the redesigned UNI150 curriculum and implementation through a culturally responsive lens. From the initial cycles of research, I knew that the students deserved a more culturally responsive curriculum. From students expressing their feelings about certain assignments to the data collected from the post-course survey, they provided me with enough evidence to prove that a change needed to be made to better serve them. The students were engaged in the conversations in

the intervention and provided me with the opportunity to put CRP into practice. While implementing the revised curriculum, I was able to better engage in conversations with the students, students were more responsive and not one student expressed strong feelings about the curriculum eliciting negative feelings like they had with the prior curriculum.

Interrogating, redesigning, and implementing a culturally responsive curriculum was harder than I thought it would be and for reasons I did not anticipate. I learned that this process requires a collaborative approach. The faculty associates, the students, and I all participated in this process in different ways. What was lacking in the collaboration was the support and participation of the department. This lack of support and participation contributed to challenges I did not anticipate. Fortunately, with support from the institution, the study was able to push through this challenge and interrogate, redesign and implement a new curriculum for my section of UNI150.

Theoretical Connections

In this section I describe the theoretical frameworks chosen to help guide this work and make connections to the assertions derived from the study. The guiding theoretical framework for this study was Critical Race Theory with additional theoretical support from Social Cognitive Career Theory and Systems Theory Framework.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) in education is described by scholars Daniel Yosso and Tara Solorzano (2002) as, “a framework or set of basic insights, perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze, and transform those structural and cultural aspects of education that maintain subordinate and dominant racial positions in and out of the classroom” (p. 25). One of the tenets of CRT that contributes to the perspectives that are used

to create this transformation is the use of counter-storytelling. Counter-storytelling has been used as a form of resistance against the predominant narrative and to highlight the experiences of marginalized students/members of society. Culturally responsive pedagogical practices are informed by CRT in that it highlights an approach to teaching and learning that addresses the sociopolitical context of whiteness within academic institutions while focusing on empowering students from all cultural backgrounds to achieve academic success (Hayes & Juarez, 2012). Both counter-storytelling and CRP were used to inform aspects of this study and contribute to the social justice movement within academia.

Comparisons can be made between assertions two, three and five, which were: *diversity-related curriculum should be developed with intentionality, students understand and value diversity differently, and affecting curriculum change is challenging*, to aspects of CRT's value of counter storytelling and CRT's influence on culturally responsive pedagogy. Counter-storytelling has been used to acknowledge oppressive practices and the efforts made by the predominant culture that enact institutional authority, usually at the expense of marginalized communities and underrepresented minority students. In this study, counter-storytelling was used to describe the resistance to change the curriculum or actively participate in the change process by the director of the department. Stories from students of color being "triggered" by the original curriculum were shared and instead of making decisions to better support those students by making curricular changes, decisions were made that supported the continuing and systemic perpetuation of the predominant narrative. In alignment with CRT and to contribute to that shift in narrative, a culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) lens was applied to the interrogation and implemented into the curriculum. To successfully teach all students, not just those who most closely reflect the dominate

culture, we must possess the knowledge and skills to implement and assess a culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2000). The focus group with the faculty associates began by assessing their knowledge of CRP and their ability to effectively implement CRP in their classroom. While faculty associates had not received CRP training from the department, they were all aware of CRP practices and the value of including CRP practices for our students.

Social Cognitive Career Theory

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), developed by Robert Lent and Steven Brown, was used in this study to inform how best to approach career exploration with undergraduate students in the UNI150 Major and Career Exploration course. Of particular interest for this study was the concept SCCT describes as perceived barriers. One such perceived barrier described in this study was lack of representation in the workforce. I selected this theory to understand the thought processes that go into a student's career decision making and explore how lack of representation might or might not play a role in a student's career decision making process.

This study concluded that the inclusion of representation of more culturally diverse careers and companies had a positive impact on students. This was described in assertion four, *representation matters for UNI150 students*. The study also found that students who saw themselves represented in the careers they explored expressed how valuable that was and how much more confident they felt as they embarked upon their career exploration. This aligns with SCCT as it describes perceived career barriers, such as lack of representation, as negative contextual influences related to adverse learning conditions that can affect career decision making self-efficacy. The inclusion of more diverse representation in the workforce and curricular activities wherein students explore what a diverse workforce looks like,

created an opportunity to explore more positive contextual influences. This parallels SCCT suggestions that contextual factors such as perceived barriers, “constitute the perceived opportunity structure within which career plans are developed and implemented” (Albert & Luzzo, 1999, p. 432). This is an important outcome to highlight as the shift into developing more knowledge around how best to work with students from diverse cultural backgrounds increases. As Lent and Brown (2017) shared in a special issue article they wrote that discussed SCCT in a diverse world:

Fortunately, the past 20 or so years have seen much progress in the diversification of career development theory and research, and the field seems poised to dramatically extend these advances, relying on a new generation of social justice-minded and internationally oriented theorists and researchers (p. 3).

One of the guiding principles for conducting this research was to be able to understand how to create a more inclusive classroom environment for students but also, to contribute to the social justice efforts that preceded the initial cycles of this research and those that were described in Chapter 1. While the group of students studied for this research were not as racially or culturally diverse as other courses I have taught, all students responded positively from the development of new knowledge centered on exploring diversity and inclusion efforts in the workforce.

The Systems Theory Framework

The Systems Theory Framework was developed over 20 years ago (McMahon & Patton, 1995) and was chosen for this study because of its focus on the individual who constructs their own understanding of career within a given context and to better understand

how systems interact and potentially influence career development. “The STF depicts both the content and dynamic process of career development” (Patton & McMahon, 2021, p. 51). The STF aligned well with the constructivist approach I decided to take in that it promotes that the building of knowledge structures requires effort and intention. Additionally, STF, with origins in Systemic Thinking, describes how necessary it is to think of systems as wholes rather than parts (McMahon & Patton, 2018). Systemic thinking in STF highlights the interactions between micro and macro systems to help understand change processes within those systems of influence. STF was used to highlight the systems of influence that help people, in this case students, determine their career path. STF also connects the context, the department where the UNI150 course is housed, and the people who are facilitating that career exploration, as a part of the system of influence.

Change is constant and systems have the potential to change all the time. Unfortunately, change does not always come easy. Assertions one and five, *by interrogating curriculum together, we created a more culturally responsive curriculum and affecting curriculum change is challenging*, highlighting how difficult the curriculum change processes can be, that change can happen in collaboration with others and the influence of curriculum change systems. Through the focus groups, faculty associates and myself included, were able to discuss the resistance to change the curriculum we had all experienced. Together we were able to reflect on these interactions and on our shared knowledge of culturally responsive pedagogical practices to create a more culturally responsive curriculum for our UNI150 students. STF highlights the value connectedness, meaning making, agency, reflection, as well as learning (Patton & McMahon, 2020). Using this STF concept in conjunction with CRT, I was able to create an environment for students

and faculty associates wherein they felt heard, seen, and valued. I was able to better understand the systems that play a role in the process of creating stronger career pathways in addition to the systems that influence career education through STF.

Limitations of the Study

In this small-scale study, information was collected from people that interacted most with the UNI150 curriculum. Still, despite the amount of information gathered, there were still limitations to the study. The limitations of the study include the type of faculty participating in the study, for additional data, the possibility of having had additional participants, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Faculty Participants

Given my experience teaching the course, participating in faculty meetings, and hearing concerns faculty shared during those meetings, I determined it best to only invite faculty associates to participate in the study. Faculty associates typically teach the majority of the UNI150 sections offered each semester, so they were a group that had knowledge of the course and its curriculum. I believe the faculty associates might not share their feelings freely if their superiors were in the focus group. Knowing this, I made the decision to not invite program administrators, or program directors to participate in the study. Sentiments the faculty associates shared in the focus group for this study reflected that faculty felt when they did share their ideas about course modifications or course concerns, their suggestions were never heard. I was apprehensive to include other members of the department for that reason. Knowing this was a sensitive topic for faculty associates, I mitigated this limitation by creating a safe space for the focus group and protecting faculty identities in the presentations of findings. While this was a boundary or limitation that imposed in the design of this study,

I recognize that the inclusion of different types of faculty members teaching the courses might have provided a different understanding of what the source of that resistance might have been, and/or provided different perspectives about the process and need for interrogating the curriculum through a culturally responsive lens.

Participant Groups and Size

There were two participant groups in this study, faculty, and students. While small sample sizes do not always equate to a limitation in action research and qualitative studies, I bring up the group composition and size to discuss the ways each bound how the study was implemented. First, as noted above, the faculty group included only faculty associates, part time instructors, teaching the UNI150 course on the Tempe campus (which is one of three campuses for the University). While I have clearly defined the participant group to support the transferability of the study, in future iteration of this type of research, I recognize that including more and varied instructor roles (faculty teaching on different campuses and full-time lectures along part time faculty associates) would offer different perspectives about the course curriculum, the curriculum change process, and students experiences in UNI150. In expecting the faculty participant group in this way, future research would also need to attend to the power differentials present between part time and full-time employees. Increasing the pool of people who taught UNI150 and interacted with the curriculum could have provided additional information to analyze.

The second participant group was the students enrolled in UNI150 during my spring 2021 semester of the course. Of that cohort of students, only 50% consented to participate in the study. I wished more students had consented so that I would have more artifacts from the students to analyze how the redesigned curriculum was received. However, of those that did

consent to participate, the make of the participating students was consistent with the make of the class as a whole: mostly white, exploratory students, all taking UNI150 for the first time. Knowing now how difficult it was to get students to consent, in future iterations of this work, I would encourage teacher researchers to work collaboratively, implementing the student across more than one section of the course. Given the tight timeline for this study, a collaborative approach was not doable. If given the time, opportunity, and support from the department, I would have chosen a faculty associate who was in the focus group and had a UNI150 course in the same semester I did, to implement the same redesigned curriculum, collecting artifacts and surveys from both student cohorts. It is important to assess the efficacy of culturally responsive pedagogical practices and it would be good to do it with a bigger pool of students.

Pandemic

When I initially set out to do this work, I envisioned that I would be in a physical classroom with students. I envisioned that I would be facilitating the redesigned course with students engaged in in-person discussions. As a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic, ASU had to shift to an asynchronous learning environment which meant that I had most of my students online via Zoom and a handful or sometimes none, in person. It was a struggle to engage in critical discussions within this Sync space. Oftentimes, students who were attending class via Zoom in had their cameras off and other times students could not engage due to technical difficulties.

Additionally, while not a focus of this study, anecdotally, I know that the pandemic had an impact on students' well-being. By the time my intervention started, the 2021 Spring B semester, all students and instructors had been in a full-blown pandemic for well over a

year. Students in Spring 2021 had not gotten a spring break. Students had been in school for 15 weeks straight. The pandemic hit Arizona and lockdowns began in Spring 2020, so students had experienced a world of varying emotions and responses to the pandemic. This level of uncertainty in addition to the different learning environment had to have had some impact on the level of student participation in the study and may have been a factor in so few students consenting to participate in the study, which took place during the final weeks of the Spring 2021 semester.

Lessons Learned

As a researcher, I was able to learn that the process to effect change is difficult, yet necessary. It is difficult to effect change without a system of support. I had anticipated that I would receive more support from the head of the department that houses the UNI150 course and while I did not receive the level of support I had hoped, by collaborating with the faculty associates, I was still able to effect change within the department. Change can happen through collaboration. What I did not anticipate was receiving pushback in the effort to affect change, from the department.

Finding the best ways to implement cultural responsiveness into the UNI150 was much more feasible with the support and feedback from the faculty associate focus group, the information from previous cycles of research and my own research was much more feasible than encouraging the department to acknowledge that changes needed to be made. I imagined that the redesign, which included the interrogation of the curriculum, would be the biggest challenge. It was not. Navigating this process without the support from the full-time members of the department, primarily the head of the department, was the most difficult. Originally, I had received support to conduct this work. In the summer of 2020, a prospectus

that included the study proposal was provided to the head of the department. I had received no response, so I asked to set up a meeting. When we met early fall 2020, I received a few passive acknowledgements of my efforts to create a more inclusive classroom environment by interrogating the UNI150 curriculum but nothing beyond that. As the study progressed, I did my best to illustrate the need for a curriculum evaluation with data from previous cycles and supported with information from the literature. I reflect on how I might have been able to approach this better and/or receive more support from the department head and I believe that perhaps gathering faculty and non-faculty in the department to discuss this issue, early on, might help impress upon the entire group and everyone that interacts or is connected in some way with the UNI150 curriculum, the intentionality of this effort. Instead of describing this effort as a stand-alone study with implications just for my own class, I would describe the potential impact long term and for the larger context.

I learned that my voice matters. As a researcher of color, student of color and woman of color, it was difficult to experience pushback to advocate for a more equitable classroom for my students. What I experienced, unfortunately, is not uncommon. Gatekeeping, the invisibly barriers put forth to withhold/protect access to knowledge, exists in academic spaces and hinders the forward movement of change processes. My hope was that the data would speak for itself, but it was not enough. I learned that despite those pushbacks and barriers to accomplish this work, it is critical to create change for all students. Students deserve us, as educators, to advocate for them and even when that gets tough, as it inevitably will, they are worth the effort. As an action researcher, you think change will happen in one place, within your study, but change can happen elsewhere too. I learned that you could create change by creating conversations too.

Lastly, I learned that as an educator and researcher, I have the power to effect change and develop new knowledge. It is likely that my ideas will not always be well received. I learned that despite that, I must always remember my reasons for conducting the research. At the forefront of my mind every time the department pushed back or did not participate in the process, I remembered my students that had been negatively impacted by the original curriculum and the faculty associates in our team meetings. Centering myself in the change effort is also critical as an action researcher so that I too, learn new ways to put theory into practice. As an educator, I learned that I have a voice and must always use it to advocate for marginalized students.

Unintended Outcomes

THE DEPARTMENT CHANGED THE UNI150 CURRICULUM! The department decided to change the UNI150 curriculum after a little over 10 years without any significant changes. The changes to the curriculum were because of the conversations this study started. A critical reflection of curricular practices began because of this study. The department shared that it did make changes to the UNI150 course, to the diversity section, but did not share what it was specifically. Still, I consider this a major win and unintended outcome.

As an action researcher, you think change will happen in one place, within your study, but change can happen elsewhere too. Openness to “what-ifs,” can help in the exploration of your problem of practice and in your efforts to affect change. I recognized that things started to change outside of the scope of my intervention. I understood that in interrogating this curriculum, it might lead to changes needing to be made. Those changes, I understood at a surface level, might cause a little discomfort and that that discomfort might

affect me in some way. I just had no idea to what extent. When I received push back from the department head, pushback described by some of the faculty associates too, I was overwhelmed. I assumed that without support from people in charge of implementing changes and without that collaboration in the development of potential changes, the likelihood of ANY changes happening in the department would be slim. This thought affected my own personal morale and confidence to pursue this effort. Staying true to the work, perseverance, and evidence from the data that this needed to be done helped me stay the course.

I am grateful for the opportunity to conduct this work. In her book, *The Dream Keepers* (2009), Educational anthropologist Gloria Ladson Billings, who has explored Critical Race Theory in education and helped develop the culturally responsive framework, noted “all instruction is culturally responsive. The question is: to which culture is it currently oriented?” This question is one that helped shape this inquiry and exploration of the problem of practice. It is also a question that will continue to inform the work that I do as both a practitioner and a researcher. I will always advocate for marginalized members of academia and society, regardless of whatever pushback I receive. I am grateful for the opportunity to have been able to do that with this research and to have been able to contribute to the conversation because curriculum interrogation through a culturally responsive lens is an act of social justice.

Implications for Future Practice

This study created several implications for future practice within the higher education context. Specifically, I highlight implications that stemmed from both phases of the study:

both the curriculum interrogation and the curriculum implementation using a culturally responsive lens. I also propose steps that can be taken to incorporate both in future practice.

Curriculum Interrogation Through a Culturally Responsive Lens

A collaborative, consistent and critical evaluation of a curriculum is a curriculum interrogation. It is critical that curriculum interrogations be done collaboratively. Departments should allow for full time and part time faculty participation in conversations related to their teaching experience, their experience with the pre-designed curriculum and working with students as they engage in the curriculum for students. Additionally, for a course like UNI150, which is offered on multiple campuses and as an online course, and as such, serves different student populations based on class location and modality, it is important to gather input from faculty involved in all these course contexts. This will allow for a more consistent development of knowledge related to the curriculum and classroom experience.

The curriculum interrogation conducted was made stronger because of the participation from the faculty associates but also because of the critical lens with which it was reviewed. A curriculum interrogation through a culturally responsive lens can create not only a stronger curriculum but one that consistently promotes inclusivity. Ensuring the curriculum is consistently evaluated for inclusivity and effectiveness is culturally responsive.

Curriculum Implementation Using Culturally Responsive Pedagogical Practices

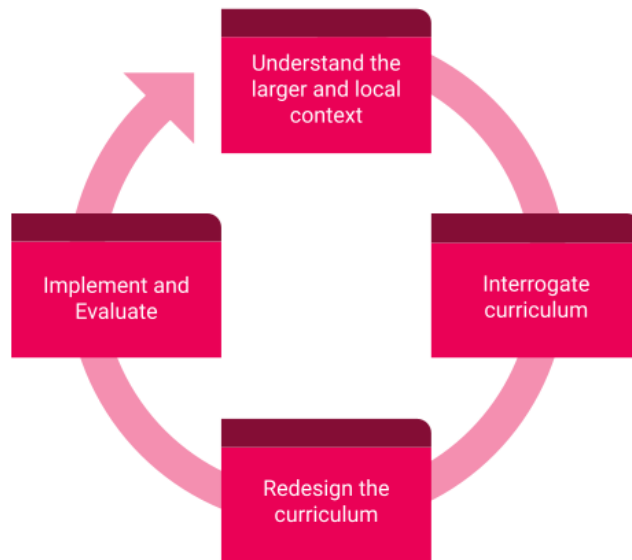
The faculty associates I worked with were knowledgeable on CRP. One of the first questions I asked them was what their comfort level was using/implementing CRP. It would be helpful to include CRP information or history in faculty training to provide all instructors with the same information at the start of the semester. This training can include the history of

CRP, the practice of CRP and the impact of CRP on students. In addition to offering a one-time faculty training, throughout the semester instructors should be supported in their efforts to implement curriculum through a CRP lens. This ongoing support might include time during faculty meetings to raise concerns and/or share success stories related to their efforts of implementing CRP practices.

The process I propose for interrogating and implementing a CRP curriculum is cyclical, as presented in Figure 4. At any time in the process, there may be a need to revisit the previous action or look ahead to the next. These actions are not mutually exclusive. The idea, though, is to create a process for the critical review of curriculum that attends understanding URM students and developing curriculum and pedagogies that support all students' learning, including our URM students. In Table 11, I provide a detailed description of each action in the curriculum interrogation process.

Figure 4

Curriculum Interrogation Through a Culturally Responsive Lens



Note. Actions for Interrogating Curriculum Through a CRP Lens

In Table 12, I provide details for each action related to interrogating and implementing a culturally responsive curriculum. Investing in a continuous evaluation with attention across the actions of each step is critical for the effectiveness of this process. This process and framework are useful and important, not just for colleges, departments or faculty beginning this work. This framework is also important for those who are already doing or have done this work. Even in contexts where curriculum interrogation has been done and is supported, it is necessary to constantly reflect on and revise our courses, our curriculum, and our teaching practices. In this way, the work to be culturally responsive is active, consistent, and always ongoing. This is not static work or work that can be done once and not again. It requires practitioners to be intentional and always work to create student-centered learning environments.

Table 12

Actions for Interrogating Curriculum Through a CRP Lens

Action	Description of Action
Understand the larger and local context	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Who are your students?● What is the demographic of students the university serves?● What is being done in similar contexts at the national level?
Interrogate the Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Review the curriculum. Conduct a content analysis of the curriculum● Use a checklist to ensure that the curriculum is tending to the specific needs of the students in the local context● Critically analyze the language, the usage of diverse examples and opportunities to create more

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> representative examples in the curriculum ● Seek feedback and support from the faculty interacting with the curriculum. Work collaboratively
Redesign the Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use all of the information acquired in the first two steps to create a more inclusive and culturally responsive curriculum
Implement the Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement the redesigned curriculum ● Provide students with a post-course survey that asks reflective questions and can provide feedback on the efficacy of the culturally responsive curriculum ● Continuous evaluation of the effectiveness of the curriculum is important.

It is important to note that affecting change and implementing change processes looks different for everyone. For me, this process was emotional and the experience of trying to affect change in a department that was not as eager to do the same, took an emotional toll on me. For future practice and implementation of this framework I would advise that there be time set aside for reflection and rest. Reflect on why you are doing this work, why this work matters to you and who will benefit the most from your efforts. Taking time to rest as this process continues too, is an act of social justice. We must always be mindful that while we might be agents of change, we are also not immune from experiencing the negative effects of the systems we are trying to change.

Implications for Future Research

Through this study I found that while the process to interrogate and implement curriculum through a culturally responsive lens is challenging, it is possible. Through a collaborative effort with the faculty associates and perseverance, the curriculum for UNI150

was changed after 10 years. I would like to highlight four implications for future research to expand upon some of the concepts that emerged from this study.

Expand the Recruitment of the Collaborative Team

For this research study, I intentionally recruited faculty associates for the focus groups. We had already built a rapport; they had expressed concern about the UNI150 course in our team meetings and they were perfect for this action research study. Still, to increase transferability of this effort, it might be beneficial to expand recruitment to include more faculty, in this case the lecturers, or the whole department that interacts with the curriculum so that they might be involved in the interrogation and implementation. Adding in additional perspectives, varying levels of understanding but also, additional participants who presumably might have influence on the change process might strengthen this process overall and provide valuable insight.

Investigate the Possible Effect of Lack of Representation on CDMSE

Understanding the possible effect of lack of representation on CDMSE can be a strong contribution to the career education literature. Thinking about the impact lack of representation of diverse members of the workforce has on students, CDMSE can provide a valuable framework that would inform how we provide career education for exploratory students. Originally, I thought to include the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale (Betz and Luzzo, 1996) form informed by the SCCT but I was not able to. This survey was specifically geared towards career decision making self-efficacy and understanding students' process for selecting a career path. The decision not to use this survey was made to create a survey that encouraged students to reflect more on their interaction with the curriculum more so their own career exploration process. For future research, I would modify the CDSE to be able to

gather a strong grasp of students' career decision making and integrate reflective questions about the curriculum that includes questions related to representation in the workforce. It would be good to assess students' level of career decision making self-efficacy and if the representation of diverse members in the workforce that would be provided in the curriculum had any impact on their CDMSE.

Explore the Resistance to Curriculum Change

More research could be done regarding resistance to change. More data could be collected to reflect departmental support/collaboration, or lack thereof, in the effort to affect curriculum changes. Lack of departmental support was described in the focus groups by faculty associates and was evident in analytic memos, but the source was not. Why was there so little support for this effort? Why pushback on creating a more equitable classroom for students? More data collected at the departmental level perhaps could help provide evidence as to what the source of the pushback was to try to mitigate the issue moving forward.

Additionally, focus on the curriculum change systems would be beneficial to research. This system for curriculum change exists within faculty capacity to use the curriculum in the classroom but it also exists even outside of the department. This can be better understood through more research focused on exploring all systems involved in the curriculum development and change process and the impact they have.

Interrogate Curriculum as an Act of Social Justice

The primary source of inspiration for this study was to be able to create more equitable classroom environments for students. After the social justice movement of 2020, more needed to be done to meet the needs of our increasingly diverse student population. My goal was to start within my local context and that was UNI150 and with the curriculum. It

took a concerted effort to move this study forward, but the effort did not revolve around the content of the curriculum more so, it involved the people that were in the position to facilitate the curriculum changes more efficiently. More work and research can be done to critically evaluate the curriculums we use to ensure that students see themselves represented within them. This effort is an act of social justice because advocacy for all marginalized communities is an act of social justice. We need to ensure that when students enroll and pursue higher education, that their experience is positive and not the perpetuation of oppressive systems. Curriculum interrogation can be an act of social justice and more research can be done to expand upon this idea in different departments across the university and at different institutions. ASU is a Predominantly White Institution (PWI), but what would this effort look like at a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) or a Minority Serving Institution (MSI)? To these efforts, additional theoretical frameworks can be used, such as the Community of Cultural Wealth Model (Yosso, 2005).

Conclusion

Curriculum interrogation through a culturally responsive lens is a critical exercise in the development of equitable classrooms for all students. Participating in efforts that critically examine our instructional practices is necessary to ensure that we are creating safe spaces for students, where students feel heard and seen and supported. When curriculum interrogation is facilitated in a collaborative way, it increases the intentionality of the effort. It creates a knowledge sharing community, more equity-minded instructors, and a better classroom experience for all students.

The global COVID-19 pandemic and social justice movements that preceded this study provided for academic institutions the opportunity to change what had been done

before and facilitate much needed changes within the academy. We must continue to evaluate the aspects of our academic processes that most impact our students to affect positive change, learn how best to support our students moving forward, and to relinquish the notion that we must always do what had been done just for the sake of doing it. Curriculum interrogation through a culturally responsive lens creates changes within departments and universities that positively impacts students and creates more equitable classrooms.

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APPENDIX A
UNI150 ASSIGNMENT

UNI150 ASSIGNMENT

Diversity and Representation in the Workforce (10 points)

Let's think about Diversity and Representation in the workforce for a moment. What is Diversity? Diversity relates to the unique identity differences along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual diversity and orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, or religious beliefs. What is representation? Representation is the presence of a specific demographic in each setting.

For the purposes of this assignment, we want you to think about diversity and representation as it pertains to the workforce. As you prepare to make decisions related to career and majors moving forward, it might be helpful to think about what role, if any, diversity, and representation might have in those decisions.

The following TEDtalks might be helpful in providing some insight into this topic. Please do view them in order to help guide the responses to the questions below.

- [Kenneth Johnson: Diversity in the Workforce](#)
- [Rocio Lorenzo: How Diversity Makes Teams More Innovative](#)
- [America Ferrera: My Identity is My Superpower -- Not An Obstacle](#)

Please read each of the following questions carefully and provide your response to each in at least 600 words.

1. How do diversity and inclusion efforts in the workplace impact society?
2. What are some reasons for pursuing diversity and inclusion efforts in the workforce?
3. Think about your own identity and position yourself in the conversation now. How would working in an environment that is more inclusive and has made concerted efforts to attend to issues of diversity and inclusion, impact you?

4. Thinking about the efforts you will make to select a major and career, how important is it to you, that companies invest in these efforts to create environments that are more inclusive and why?

Please remember to include word count, 12 pt. type, double spaced, and submit to Canvas.

Rubric:

	Limited / Not Addressed	Adequate	Excellent
Questions 1-4 (2 pts each)	Topics briefly addressed without explanation. Some component of question not present. (.5pt) / Nothing present. (0pt)	Bare minimum responses. No deeper explanation or reflection. (1pt)	Thoughtful and introspective responses. Analysis skill (<i>why and how</i>) utilized. Demonstrates synthesis and integration. (2pt)
Overall Assignment Writing (2pt)	Numerous spelling and grammar mistakes. Incomplete sentences. Not in paragraph/essay format. Does not meet length requirement. (0pt)	Incomplete sentences and frequent spelling and grammar errors. Paragraph format without transitions. Meets length requirement. Posted word count. (1pt).	No spelling or grammatical errors. Complete sentences and transitions. Meets length requirement with posted word count. (2pt)

APPENDIX B
UNI150 ASSIGNMENT

UNI150 ASSIGNMENT

Informational Interview Assignment (15 points)

Students will interview someone in a career field of interest to them. Students will be tasked with connecting with someone who, ideally, is not an ASU faculty member and not a family member. The goal of this assignment is to find someone who is working in a field that you are interested in and to be able to utilize resources available to you to do so. Career services has an informational interview handout with ideas to find someone to interview and sample questions for the interviews.

There are several ways you can identify candidates for this assignment and start building your professional network. Feel free to explore the following resources:

- Handshake
- LinkedIn
- ASU Career Services
- Indeed.com
- Google
- Professional or Academic accounts on: Twitter and Instagram are also options.

After interviewing the individual, answer the following questions with an in-depth and thoughtful essay (3-4 sentences per question). All papers are expected to be integrative essays done in paragraph format (4-5 sentences per paragraph, introduction, and conclusion). Essays should be 500 words (word count should be included on the document). Follow appropriate formatting such as double-spacing and 12-point font.

All interviews should be conducted virtually via Zoom or Facetime if Zoom is not an option. A screenshot of the informational interview will be required at the time the assignment is submitted. One-point extra credit for copying the instructor on an email Thank You message to the person you interviewed.

At the top of the essay, list the interview information (see below):

Interview Information:

Name:

Occupation & Place of Employment:

Contact Information:

Reflection Questions to be answered in the essay:

- What was your impression of the career PRIOR to the interview? What assumptions did you have about that career?
- How did the interview go? (Reflect on comfort level, interaction in the interview, time allotted, etc.)
- What information did you learn about the career that was of particular interest or surprising to you (factual information about the specific career)?
- What personal information did you learn about the career that was of particular interest or surprising to you (personal information relates to personal satisfactions, disappointments, experience-based opinions of the interviewee)?
- How has your view of this career changed? What are your next steps for finding out additional information about the career path you would like to follow (this does not have to be in line with this career)?

APPENDIX C

UNI150 DISCUSSION BOARD POSTS

UNI150 DISCUSSION BOARD POSTS

Diversity Reflection - Lesson 4

For this discussion post, think about some of the topics we covered in the Diversity module and in the Diversity assignment.

1. What came up for you as the most relevant to your experience?
2. What would you add to it to make it more relatable or inclusive of an experience like yours?

Informational Interview - Lesson 3

Students will interview someone in a career field of interest to them. The interview should take place via-video conferencing/Zoom. The goal is to allow you the opportunity to develop your informational interview skills so you will want to have this conversation and be able to see the person you are interviewing. In addition, interviewees CANNOT be family members.

There are many ways students can identify candidates for this assignment and start building their professional network! Here are a few ideas to explore:

- **Handshake**
 - Handshake is a new online hub for finding internships and jobs, networking with alumni and employers, and learning more about hiring events.
 - You must register using your ASU email in the format of ASURITE@asu.edu
- **LinkedIn**
 - LinkedIn is the largest professional networking platform (the equivalent of Facebook for your professional identity). In your profile, make sure you list ASU as part of your education information. Then from the “**Contacts**”

tab/menu at the top/menu bar, select “**Find Alumni.**” You should see over 200,000 ASU alumni and be able to refine your search further, e.g., by location, industries, company, and job function.

- **Indeed**

- Sign up and browse “alumni relations” in “ASU, AZ”

- **Social Media**

- If you find someone using social media platforms like Instagram or Twitter, please do elaborate as to why you chose them and how you found them.

Post on the discussion board the following information:

1. What occupation you have chosen to focus on for your informational interview and why?
2. The name and email of **two potential individuals** you might choose to interview for this assignment. If you have already scheduled your interview, include the time/date of your interview.

APPENDIX D

UNI150: COURSE SYLLABUS

UNI150: COURSE SYLLABUS

UNI 150 – Major and Career Exploration (1 credit)

Course Information:

Section: 31248

1:40pm

Dates: 3/12-4/23

Meeting Time: 11:50am –

Room: Zoom

Instructor Information:

Name: Mara Lopez

mara.lopez@asu.edu

Office Hours: Wed and Friday 9-11am

E-Mail:

Office Location: Zoom

Major and Career Exploration is designed to encourage learners to make a thoughtful decision about a major and possible career goals. This will be done through exploration of career interests, values, personality and identity; implementing research strategies to explore majors and careers of interest; and active classroom participation. The learner will work with career services on campus and conduct an informational interview outside of ASU to investigate their options and expand/create their career network.

This course is offered by the Major and Career Exploration Program of the University College. For more information about the program or college, visit our websites at: <https://cisa.asu.edu/majorexploration> or <https://universitycollege.asu.edu/>. If you have questions or concerns, please contact your instructor first, then send your inquiry to the Director of Major & Career Exploration at majorexploration@asu.edu. The college can be reached at exploratory@asu.edu.

Student Learning Outcomes

Throughout this course, students will:

1. Learn about your interests, values, personality, and identity, inform your career and major exploration.
2. Use research skills and learn more about various majors and careers of interest.
3. Evaluate information gathered to increase career decision-making self-efficacy.
4. Center yourself and who you are into the exploration of major and career exploration.
5. Conduct an Informational Interview with a working professional in a field you are considering.
6. Understand the role of diversity and representation in the workforce.

Required Text and Materials:

1. An ASU email account
2. My ASU Canvas account for this class
3. *Designing Your Major: Exploring Majors & Careers, 4th edition* by ASU Major and Career Exploration

Course Structure: The course employs in-class activities, collaborative experiences, and learning outside of class. To enable the students and the instructor to have frequent and meaningful interaction with each other and with the group, class size is limited to 19 students per section. UNI 150 is a 1-credit course that can count toward graduation in the form of an elective. UNI

150 is not an “easy A” course, nor is it remedial. You will receive a letter grade for UNI 150, no + or -.

Student Responsibilities:

1. Attend class. Notify the instructor before class meets if you will be arriving late, leaving early, or missing a class, which may result in a deduction in your final grade. Make certain to obtain any missed information and assignments from Canvas and another student.
2. Engagement. Engagement in the course is both encouraged and necessary to facilitate a fulfilling classroom experience. IF you are having trouble with your internet connection and are participating online via Zoom, you are responsible for ensuring that you can find a solution and to be able to engage in the course. Campus IT will be able to assist.
3. Turn in all out of class assignments to Turnitin prior to the next class meeting. Assignments must be submitted *before the beginning of the next class*, or they will be considered late. Late assignments will be accepted no later than one week after the initial due date and will be eligible for up to half credit. Notify your instructor if you need to submit an assignment late.
4. Complete all in-class exercises in full and to the best of your ability. In-class activities (which translate into participation points) will be graded on both effort and product.
5. Check Canvas before each class period. You will be responsible for checking Canvas the night before each class for announcements regarding any updates. Additionally, as a student, it is your responsibility to track your grade on Canvas and contact the instructor by the second-class period after an assignment grade has been posted, if there is an inconsistency.
6. For your own protection, you should keep a copy of everything you hand in, and you should keep your graded assignments at least until grades are finalized at the end of the semester.

Workload Expectations in Courses: At least 15 contact hours of recitation, lecture, discussion, testing/evaluation, seminar, or colloquium, as well as a minimum of 30 hours of student homework is required for each unit of credit (<http://azregents.asu.edu/rrc/Policy%20Manual/2-224-Academic%20Credit.pdf>). Therefore, in a 1-credit course, students should expect to invest 15 hours in class meetings (or the online equivalent), as well as 30 hours doing homework and assignments—a total of 45 hours in any given session (A, B, or C). In this course and in other courses in your degree program, your faculty is committed to this standard because it promotes the breadth and depth of learning

required in a first-rate university education. As you register for courses, keep this 45-hour per credit standard in mind.

Email Communication: ASU email is an official means of communication among students, faculty, and staff. Students are expected to read and act upon email in a timely fashion. Students bear the responsibility of missed messages and should check their ASU-assigned email regularly. *All instructor correspondence will be sent to your ASU email account.* For help with your email go to: MyASU > Service > Live Chat OR New Ticket.

Class Calendar: (All assignment descriptions are available on Canvas)

DATE	TOPIC	Course Text	Assignment
March 12	Introduction, Course Expectation Purpose of Career ASU Colleges Research		Start Portfolio
March 19	Kuder Assessment ASU Colleges Presentations Major Research & Exploration	Chapters 1 & 2	Bring laptop to class Kuder Assessment results printout (5 pts) ASU Colleges Presentations (10 pts)
March 26	Visit Career Services Informational Interview	Chapter 3	Bring laptop to class Kuder and Major paper (10 pts)
April 2	Diversity in the Workplace Advisor Visit (cohorts only)	Chapter 4	Discussion Board posting - Informational Interview Contact Information (5 pts) Career Research (10 pts)
April 9	Values Personality Introduce Innovation Challenge	Chapter 5	Diversity Reflection (10 pts)

April 16	Decision Making & Motivation Goal Setting	Chapter 6	Informational Interview Reflection (15 pts) Innovation Challenge Assignment (10 pts)
April 23	Major and Career Plan Presentations	Chapter 7	Major and Career Plan & Portfolio (15 pts)

Written Work: All written work, unless otherwise specified, must be submitted through Turnitin on Canvas. The document must be: 12-point font, double-spaced, word count posted, and in Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, or PDF format. Google Docs, SlideShare, and other formats are not acceptable. The number of words in the assignment must be listed under your name. Assignments must be submitted through Turnitin before the beginning of class on the date it is due to be considered on time. An emailed copy of the assignment will not be accepted unless this form of submission is explicitly requested in the assignment description on Canvas.

If Turnitin does not accept the format of your submission, it is your responsibility to convert your assignment to an acceptable format and submit it. Turnitin only allows one submission. If you submitted the wrong file for any reason, please email the instructor ASAP (with a copy of the correct assignment for on-time credit). If you encounter any Canvas issues, check the ASU Canvas Help for Students web page or the link below, and contact technical assistance as needed. Failure to submit your assignment on time due to Canvas issues is not an acceptable excuse.

Attendance: Studies show a direct relationship between classroom attendance and learning outcomes. Because much of the learning in ASU 101 takes place via classroom activities and group interaction, attendance is taken daily and is an integral part of the ASU 101 grade. Because our class has few in-person meetings, a strict attendance policy is enforced. Attendance equates to showing up on time, engaging, turning in assignments, and participating in class discussions appropriately. Students who miss the taking of attendance at the beginning of class will be marked late.

Each absence results in the loss of 8 points; three absences result in failure for the class (missing over 40% of class time). Arriving late to class results in the loss of four points each time. See ACD 304-04 for “Accommodation for Religious Practices” regarding absences and ACD 304-02, for “Missed Classes due to University Sanctioned Activities”.

Students who participate in line-of-duty activities shall be provided make-up assignments, examinations, or other graded coursework missed because of required work performed in the line-of-duty, without penalty. See university policy: ACD304-11; SSM 201-18:

Accommodating Active Duty Military <https://asu.edu/aad/manuals/ssm/ssm201-18.html> for details. Students should discuss individual concerns with their instructor.

Class Participation: You earn points for class participation. Engaging in thoughtful discussion, listening intently while others speak, and participating in class activities counts toward participation. Leaving early from class or conversation during class that is not on-topic will result in deductions from your participation points. Participation points are also gained by attending one mandatory individual meeting with your instructor.

Additionally, everyone in class deserves respect and consideration. Diverse opinions, values and beliefs will be respected. Please refrain from using profanity and language that may be offensive to, or that denigrates, another person or group. A student who disrupts a class may be asked to leave and can be dropped from the class. An instructor may withdraw a student from a course when the student's behavior disrupts the educational process under USI 201-10 (<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/usi/usi20110.html>). Any violation of class, School, College or University rules constitutes disruption of the academic process.

It is my hope that you will give this class and all its activities a personal sense of purpose and discover different ways you can make various strategies work for you. Your grade, but most importantly, how much you take away from this class, is fully dependent upon the level and quality of your participation.

Points of Assignments and Participation	Total	Earned
Assignments		
#1 Kuder Assessment results print-out	5	
#2 ASU Colleges presentation	10	
#3 Kuder and Major paper	10	
#4 Discussion Board posting - Informational Interview Contact Information	5	
#5 Career Research	10	
#6 Diversity Reflection	10	
#7 Informational Interview Reflection	15	
#8 Innovation Challenge Assignment	10	
#9 Major and Career Plan Presentation & Portfolio	15	

Participation & Instructor Meeting	10	
Total Points Possible	100	

This course is graded using a regular letter scale from A through E. The passing grade for this course is a “C” and the grading scale is as follows:

- | | | | |
|---|------------------------|---|------------------------|
| A | 90-100 points | C | 70-less than 80 points |
| B | 80-less than 90 points | D | 60-less than 70 points |
| E | less than 60 points | | |

Disability Accommodations: Qualified students with disabilities who will require disability accommodations in this class are encouraged to make their requests to me at the beginning of the semester either during office hours or by appointment. Note: Prior to receiving disability accommodations, verification of eligibility from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) is required. Disability information is confidential.

Disability Resource Center (eoss.asu.edu/drc)

Email: DRC@asu.edu

DRC Phone: 480-965-1234

DRC FAX: 480-965-0441

Classroom Behavior: We want to build a classroom climate that is comfortable for all. It is important that we (1) display respect for all members of the classroom – including the instructor and students; (2) pay attention to and participate in all class sessions and activities; (3) avoid unnecessary disruption during class time (e.g. having private conversations, reading the newspaper, surfing the Internet, doing work for other classes, making/receiving phone calls, text messaging, etc.); and (4) avoid racist, sexist, homophobic, or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom [this includes electronic communication and discussion board posts]. This is not an exhaustive list of behaviors; rather, it represents examples of the types of things that can have a dramatic impact on the class environment.

Establishing a Safe Environment: Learning takes place best when a safe environment is established in the classroom. In accordance with [SSM 104-02 of the Student Services Manual](#), students enrolled in this course have a responsibility to support an environment that nurtures individual and group differences and encourages engaged, honest discussions. The success of the course rests on your ability to create a safe environment where everyone feels comfortable to share and explore ideas. We must also be willing to take risks and ask critical questions. Doing so will effectively contribute to our own and others intellectual and

personal growth and development. We welcome disagreements in the spirit of critical academic exchange, but please remember to be respectful of others' viewpoints, whether you agree with them or not.

All incidents and allegations of violent or threatening conduct by an ASU student (whether on- or off-campus) must be reported to the ASU Police Department (ASU PD) and the Office of the Dean of Students. If either office determines that the behavior poses or has posed a serious threat to personal safety or to the welfare of the campus, the student will not be permitted to return to campus or reside in any ASU residence hall until an appropriate threat assessment has been completed and, if necessary, conditions for return are imposed. ASU PD, the Office of the Dean of Students, and other appropriate offices will coordinate the assessment in light of the relevant circumstances.

Prohibition of Commercial Notetaking Services: In accordance with [ACD 304-06 Commercial Note Taking Services](#), written permission must be secured from the official instructor of the class in order to sell the instructor's oral communication in the form of notes. Notes must have the note taker's name as well as the instructor's name, the course number, and the date.

Syllabus Disclaimer: The course syllabus is an educational contract between the instructor and students. Every effort will be made to avoid changing the course schedule but the possibility exists that unforeseen events will make syllabus changes necessary. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as deemed necessary. Students will be notified in a timely manner of any syllabus changes via email, or in the Announcements section on Canvas.

Trigger Warning: Please note that some course content may be deemed offensive by some students, although it is not the instructor's intent to offend anyone. In addition, some materials that we link with online might also be considered offensive, troubling, or difficult to review in terms of language or graphics. The instructor will attempt to provide warnings when introducing this kind of material; yet if they forget to do so, or if something else (in their materials or posts from fellow students) seems offensive, please contact the instructor in-person or via email, or contact the program director at majorexploration@asu.edu .

Grade Appeals: Students must first speak with the instructor of the class to discuss any disputed grades. If, after review, a resolution is not achieved students may proceed with the appeal process. Student grade appeals must be processed in the regular semester immediately following the issuance of the grade in dispute (by commencement for fall or spring), regardless of whether the student is enrolled at the university. Complete details are available in the [ASU Grade Appeals policy](#).

Drop and Add Dates/Withdrawals: If you are unable to take this course for any reason, be aware that there is a limited timeline to drop or add the course. Consult with your advisor and

notify your instructor to add or drop this course. If you are considering a withdrawal, review the following ASU policies: [Withdrawal from Classes](#), [Withdrawing as a Financial Aid Recipient](#), [Medical/Compassionate Withdrawal](#), and a [Grade of Incomplete](#).

Statement of Inclusion: Arizona State University is deeply committed to positioning itself as one of the great new universities by seeking to build excellence, enhance access and have an impact on our community, state, nation and the world. To do that requires our faculty and staff to reflect the intellectual, ethnic and cultural diversity of our nation and world so that our students learn from the broadest perspectives, and we engage in the advancement of knowledge with the most inclusive understanding possible of the issues we are addressing through our scholarly activities. We recognize that race and gender historically have been markers of diversity in institutions of higher education. However, at ASU, we believe that diversity includes additional categories such as socioeconomic background, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, veteran status, nationality and intellectual perspective.

Title IX: [Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972](#) protects individuals from discrimination based on sex in any educational program or activity operated by recipients of federal financial assistance. Sexual harassment, which includes acts of sexual violence, is a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX. ASU does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the employment, education programs or activities it operates.

ASU is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination based on sex and provides a number of resources and services to assist students, faculty and staff in addressing issues involving sex discrimination, including sexual violence. All ASU employees are mandatory reporters and are obligated to report any information they become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence.

“As a mandated reporter, I am obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence. ASU Counseling Services, eoss.asu.edu/counseling, is available if you to wish discuss any concerns confidentially and privately.”

Sexual violence, sexual harassment, stalking, and relationship violence have a profound impact on a victim's academic, social, working, and personal life, and negatively affects victims' friends and families, other students, co-workers, and members of the university community. To combat this complex social problem, ASU provides a variety of [resources](#) and [educational programs](#) designed to prevent sexual violence and other acts of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, provide information about what to do when an incident has occurred, and increase awareness of campus and community resources for support and response.

Victims of sexual violence, sexual harassment, stalking, and relationship violence are encouraged to seek support and report the incident. ASU Counseling Services is available if you to wish would discuss any concerns confidentially and privately. ASU has appointed a

Title IX Coordinator to oversee ASU response to Title IX complaints, develop training and education programs/materials for faculty, staff and students, as well as monitor trends and effectiveness of Title IX education efforts. If you or someone you know has been harassed based on sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs. Inquiries concerning the application of Title IX may be referred to the Title IX Coordinator or to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights.

Student Conduct and Academic Integrity: ASU and University College expects and requires its students to act with honesty, integrity, and respect. Required behavior standards are listed in the [Student Code of Conduct and Student Disciplinary Procedures](#), [Computer, Internet, and Electronic Communications policy](#), [ASU Student Academic Integrity Policy](#), and outlined by the [Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#). Anyone in violation of these policies is subject to sanctions. [Students are entitled to receive instruction free from interference](#) by other members of the class. An instructor may withdraw a student from the course when the student's behavior disrupts the educational process per [Instructor Withdrawal of a Student for Disruptive Classroom Behavior](#). The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities accepts [incident reports](#) from students, faculty, staff, or other persons who believe that a student or a student organization may have violated the Student Code of Conduct.

Students must refrain from uploading to any course shell, discussion board, or website used by the course instructor or other course forum, material that is not the student's original work, unless the students first comply with all applicable copyright laws; faculty members reserve the right to delete materials on the grounds of suspected copyright infringement. Academic honesty is expected of all students in all examinations, papers, laboratory work, academic transactions, and records. The possible sanctions include, but are not limited to, appropriate grade penalties, course failure (indicated on the transcript as a grade of E), course failure due to academic dishonesty (indicated on the transcript as a grade of XE), loss of registration privileges, disqualification, and dismissal. For more information, see provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity.

If you fail to meet the standards of academic integrity in any of the criteria listed on the university policy website, sanctions will be imposed by the instructor, college, and/or dean. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an academic evaluation or assignment, plagiarizing, academic deceit (such as fabricating data or information), or falsifying academic records.

Turning in an assignment (all or in part) that you completed for a previous class is considered self-plagiarism and falls under these guidelines. Any infractions of self-plagiarism are subject to the same penalties as copying someone else's work without proper citations. Students who have taken this class previously and would like to use the work from previous assignments should contact the instructor for permission to do so.

If you have any questions about your work and the academic integrity policy, please discuss your assignment or concerns with your instructor, teaching assistant, or your college Academic Integrity Officer in advance of submitting an assignment. Student resources on Sun Devil Integrity and strategies for completing your work with integrity and avoiding plagiarism are available here: [ASU Student Resources for Academic Integrity](#) or provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity for more information.

Harassment Prohibited: ASU policy prohibits harassment on the basis of race, sex, gender identity, age, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, Vietnam era veteran status, and other protected veteran status. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employees or expulsion of students. Contact the professor if you are concerned about online harassment of any kind, and he/she will put you in contact with the Dean of Students office

Mental Health: As a student, like anyone else, you may experience a range of challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These emotional health concerns or stressful events may diminish your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. ASU Counseling Services provides counseling and crisis services for students who are experiencing a mental health concern. Any student may call or walk-in to any ASU counseling center for a same day or future appointment to discuss any personal concern. Here is the Web site: eoss.asu.edu/counseling. After office hours and 24/7 ASU's dedicated crisis line is available for crisis consultation by calling 480-921-1006.

Course Evaluation: Students are expected to complete the course evaluation. The feedback provides valuable information to the instructor and the college and is used to improve student learning. Students are notified when the online evaluation form is available. The results are always anonymous and cannot be reviewed by the instructor/department until after final grades have been posted.

Academic Affairs Manual: For a complete guide to Arizona State University course policies, please refer to the [Academic Affairs Manual \(ACD\)](#).

Campus Resources: There is clear evidence that students who take advantage of academic support services perform better academically. As an ASU student you have access to many resources on campus. This includes tutoring, academic success coaching, counseling services, financial aid, disability resources, career and internship help and many opportunities to get involved in student clubs and organizations.

Tutoring: students.asu.edu/academic-success

Counseling Services: students.asu.edu/counseling

Financial Aid: students.asu.edu/financialaid

Disability Resource Center: asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc/

Major/Career Exploration: uc.asu.edu/majorexploration/assessment

Career Services: career.asu.edu

Student Organizations: asu.edu/studentaffairs/mu/clubs/

ASU Writing Centers: tutoring.asu.edu/writing-centers

ASU Police Department: cfo.asu.edu/police

International Student Resources: students.asu.edu/international/support/academic

APPENDIX E
IRB APPROVAL

IRB APPROVAL



EXEMPTION GRANTED

[Amy Markos](#)

[Division of Educational Leadership and Innovation - West Campus](#)

602/543-6624 Amy.Markos@asu.edu

Dear [Amy Markos](#):

On 3/29/2021 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Implementing Modifications of the Major and Career Exploration Curriculum using a Culturally Responsive Lens
Investigator:	Amy Markos
IRB ID:	STUDY00013685
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• IRB Consent, Category: Consent Form.• IRB Protocol Phase 2 V3, Category: IRB Protocol.• IRB Recruitment, Category: Recruitment Materials.• IRB UNI150 Assignments, Category: Other;

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (1) Educational settings, (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 3/29/2021.

In conducting this protocol, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the

INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

If any changes are made to the study, the IRB must be notified at research.integrity@asu.edu to determine if additional reviews/approvals are required. Changes may include but not limited to revisions to data collection, survey and/or interview questions, and vulnerable populations, etc.

Sincerely,

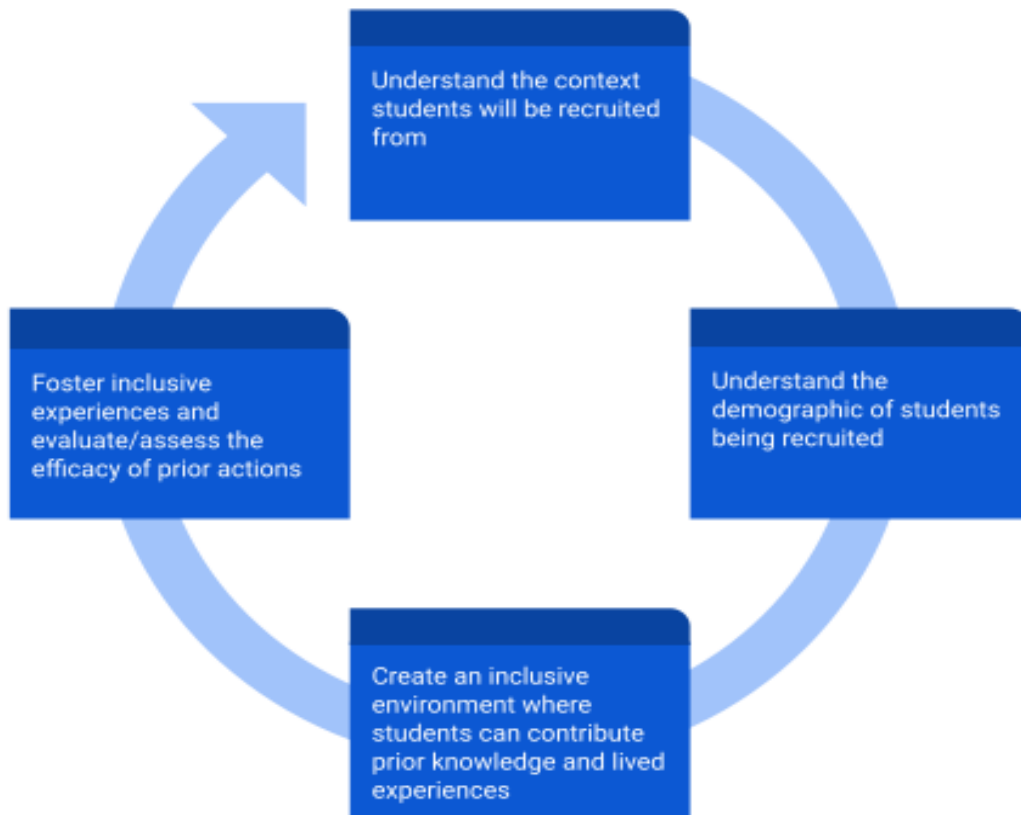
IRB Administrator

cc: Mara Lopez
Mara Lopez

APPENDIX F

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION FRAMEWORK

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION FRAMEWORK



Note. Actions for Culturally Responsive Recruitment and Retention

To be culturally responsive is to view students through an asset-based lens and to always be intentional about creating equitable spaces for them. The process for being culturally responsive is cyclical. The actions in the CRRR framework reflect that. The goal is to create a process for continuous knowledge development surrounding the recruitment and retention of URM students. These actions help can help create more inclusive learning environments and research experiences for all students.