**Showcase Assignment Justification**

1. **Assignment Title**: Cultural Basket
2. **TPE**: TPE 1, TPE 2, TPE 6
3. **TPE Elements**:
   1. TPE 1:7
   2. TPE 2: 2, 3
   3. TPE 6: 2
4. **Justification and Reflection**:

The Cultural Basket I created, in which I reflect about my own culture, faith and upbringing, supports TPE 2: Creating and Maintaining Effective Environments for All Learners, and TPE 6: Developing as a professional educator. This assignment allowed me to consider the different factors that influenced my current beliefs and values, including growing up in a conservative Christian Family and later coming to recognize my privilege during college and a summer immersion trip (affect). Through those experiences and eventually joining Teach for America, I have not only acknowledged my privilege and tendency to fall into implicit biases, but have also committed to constant self-checks on how my biases might impact my teaching, and ways to steward my privilege for the benefit of my students and their families (TPE 2: 2, 3, TPE 6:2). I have since created different units in my preschool classroom that allow students the opportunity to reflect on their privilege and have found many age appropriate resources to create a culturally inclusive and responsive classroom (behavior) (TPE 1:7). One of the biggest understandings I gleamed from the Cultural Basket and subsequent personal reflection was that I have many areas of growth in regards to creating a classroom where students feel safe to reflect on their own ethnicity, and socio-economic status, and will be willing to engage in creating a culturally inclusive classroom environment (cognition). Reading books like, “Teach Like a Champion,” and other books about being a white educator in a low-income diverse student body have been helpful and will continue to be helpful in reflecting on my privilege and how to best use it to support my students.

Creating the Cultural Basket addressed the Inspire Characteristics of “Intra” and “Inter.” I am inspired to use my privilege for the benefit of others because that means I am on mission with a God who deeply cares about correcting the injustices in a fallen society and helping His children have equitable life chances. I am inspired when I see my students helping each other to achieve the same goals and caring for their friends’ life experiences and backgrounds. I hope to create an environment where my students take initiative in creating a culturally inclusive and safe classroom because they are inspired to help all of their classmates succeed and obtain equity in their educational experiences. Continuing to push my students of color to academic and social/emotional heights that society does not expect them to achieve keeps me going and is something that I am committed to growing in. Utilizing my Teach for America network and the resources that come with this group of educators committed to closing the achievement gap will continue to challenge my thinking and teaching practices in order to better my students’ outcomes and life chances.